

+ IN THE NAME OF JESUS +

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
The Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost
 November 17, 2024

“UNSHAKEABLE FAITH”

Mark 13:1-13

“The one who endures to the end will be saved” (v 13). That blessed end is our Lord’s _____ in glory, and God’s people y_____ for it. But will we make it? In a world where everything is being _____, where can we get such an unshakeable faith? We can’t get it from this world. Jesus directs our eyes past the “sh_____” things of earthly life. Unshakeable faith must be built on God’s unshakeable t_____, which teach us (1) how to p_____ through life’s troubles; (2) what to do as we _____; and (3) who we can r_____ upon.

“UNSHAKEABLE FAITH”

I. UNSHAKEABLE FAITH LEARNS HOW TO P_____ THROUGH LIFE’S TROUBLES.

...and troubles there will certainly be. Jesus forewarns us: On the one hand, these troubles are indeed s_____ of the end. On the other hand, they don’t reveal to us the t_____ of that end.

Jesus describes these troubles as “b_____ p_____.” Time is p_____ with His new creation. We know the gestation period of a baby – 267 days. We do not know the gestation period of the new h_____ and e_____. We only know that Christ has promised His return for us and, as we wait, we are feeling the labor pains of this new c_____. We want them to be quickly over. But don’t jump to conclusions, Jesus warns. Yes, they are signs of the _____; but they don’t necessarily mean that end is i_____. *“When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet” (v 7).* Wars and their rumors, earthquakes and famines signal the approaching end in a g_____ way, but such signs have been around as long as _____. They remind us that the end is coming, but tell us nothing about when it will a_____.

Still, Jesus’ words give faith a big a_____ that enables us to persevere through these troubles. Painful? Yes; but not m_____. They signal the new life in Christ that is already on its way. So, while the world screams that *“the sky is falling,”* faith in Christ calmly t_____ to God’s truth: These troubles, whatever they are, are tools our gracious God uses to s_____ us in faith. This is the God who used Cyrus and Caesar, Pharaoh and Pilate, all of whom did not know Him, to work His will and our s_____. You have His promise that He is working through the events of a dying world to cause *“all things [to] work together”* for the good of His Church (cf. Rom 8:28).

II. UNSHAKEABLE FAITH LEARNS WHAT TO DO AS WE WAIT.

A. Preach the Gospel to all the nations.

Our God is the God of _____, and it is His holy will that, before He brings this dying world to an end, that *“The gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations” (v 10).*

How can we be surprised? We think of St. Peter’s words: *“Since all these things are thus to be d_____, what sort of people ought you to be?” (2 Pet 3:11–12).* But then he answers his own question: *“What sort of persons ought you to be in lives of h_____ and g_____, waiting for and h_____ the coming of the day of God.”* In other words, an unshakeable faith centers its life, not around all this stuff that *“is to be _____,”* but in the promise of Christ’s r_____.

But notice: St. Peter tells doesn’t just tell us to l_____ for the Christ’s coming, but to h_____ it. How can we do that? *“The _____ must first be proclaimed to all nations” (v 10).* This comes as no surprise to faith. It flows from the very _____ of God! The God who in love created and redeemed you, piling all your _____ onto the back of Christ Jesus, has that same love for all the world. So Peter also reminds us that *“[t]he Lord is not s_____ to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach r_____.” (2 Pet 3:9).* God *“desires all people to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4).* Unshakeable faith works to hasten the Lord’s return by sharing with all the world God’s love in Christ.

B. In this task, each has a part.

I have heard stories from WWII about a time when our nation was perhaps more unified than at any other time. The war had given us a common _____, and all had a part to play in reaching it. Some kissed their loved ones goodbye and went off to _____. Others took their place in the f _____. Even kids got involved, collecting scraps of metal. The whole nation endured rationing – and all for the sake of the war effort.

That is how God's people are to be toward this m _____ that flows from the very heart of God. Jesus has warned us that in the latter days, "[B]ecause lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow _____" (Mt 24:12). Too often, that describes us. We see lovelessness and self-centeredness all around us, and we fight against it by becoming loveless and self-centered ourselves. What we must realize is that this happens because we have grounded our faith on the wrong things, the _____ things of this earthly life. Look past all of that! Grab onto the e _____ things of God, the things He has revealed and d _____ in Christ Jesus His Son!

III. UNSHAKEABLE FAITH HAS LEARNED WHO TO RELY UPON.

A. In the worst case scenario (persecution):

Jesus speaks directly and bluntly about it: "And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit" (v 11). Surely the God who gave speech to a reluctant _____ and who brought repentance from N _____ in spite of an uncooperative Jonah – surely that God will supply us as we go about the work which is closest to His own heart, which He Himself has given us to do!

B. And throughout our lives.

If He promises to supply us in that greatest time of need, how much more will He p _____ for us in all the other circumstances of our earthly lives, as we go about the work He has given us.

Unshakeable faith knows the God it can r _____ upon. "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things" (Rom 8:32)? Faith has learned that such a God can be t _____. It has come to know Him as God who took our p _____ onto Himself, and took our place under the wrath of God. It knows Him as the R _____ O _____, who conquered Death for us, the One who right now r _____ over all creation for the sake of His Church. It knows Him as our great H _____ P _____, who endlessly intercedes for us before the Father's throne. And it knows Him as the G _____ Sh _____, who leaves behind the ninety-nine who are not lost in search of the one who is.

Our Lord referred to His disciples as "you of l _____ f _____" (Mt 6:30). That reflects our broken, sinful condition. But thankfully, God has given Himself as faith's firm f _____, and grounded in Him, even a l _____ f _____ becomes unshakeable.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

FOR REFLECTION:

1. How does Jesus help us to view the troubles of earthly life as a good sign?
2. In what way can the Church hasten the coming of the Lord's day?
3. Upon what must faith be built if it is to be unshakeable?