



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

November 14, 2021

Pastor James Enderle

3rd Sunday of End Time: Saints Triumphant

First Lesson: [Daniel 12:1-3](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 118

Second Lesson: [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Mark 13:24-27](#)

God Will Gather the Elect

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

I don't know if you recognized the theme in a lot of the readings that we read, about distress, that there is distress and, in fact, all the readings talked about how things would get worse; that there would be an even greater distress. Today as we look back at what earlier this week was Veterans' Day (we got to see a lot of the Veterans from our congregation who have served and are currently serving), there is not a more distressful and stressful hard situation I could think of than war. To train for war, to go out into war and to put your life on the line for people and for our country is very distressful. People come back and it's not always easy to come back from that distress. Think of the wars that we've seen in the last 100 years. There is a lot of distress.

So you have to ask the question, there has been distress and we know that and can think back to some of the wars we've seen and we thank all those service members who have fought and served and gave time and even their lives for their countries. And then you think though, is the distress getting worse? Isn't that what the text talked about? There will be distress and the distress will become war.

How do we think about that? How should we think about what he is telling us? That before Jesus comes again, the distress that we face will get even worse. Look at the situation where Jesus is talking to His disciples. This is from Matthew 13. It says: ***"But in those days, following that distress..."*** Okay, we have to go back a little bit to the context. What is Jesus talking to His disciples about? At the beginning of Mark 13, that's when the disciples look up at the temple and they say "Look at this magnificent building. Isn't it just magnificent?" What could we relate that to today? The closest thing that I could think of (and I was up there recently) was near Lambeau. You go up near Lambeau Field and you see a magnificent building. It towers over Green Bay. You

can see it as you come down from the ledge. It's magnificent. When Jesus looks at this magnificent building, this temple that towered over Jerusalem, what does He say? "Oh, yes, it's magnificent"? No, He doesn't say that. He says, "There will be a day when one stone is not left on another. This temple is going to be destroyed."

You have to wonder what the disciples must have thought of that. At that time they were being ruled by the Romans. Things weren't very good. And now Jesus is saying their beautiful temple, the temple that God has given them, is going to be destroyed? Jesus is telling them that there is distress now and there is going to be even more distress to come in the future. He is warning them because we need to know. We need to know what we are going to face. We need to know what is ahead. He gives us this comfort though to prepare us. It's easy to say "How could it get any worse than it is now." Or, "Remember years ago... that great war," or whatever times are. We know that this distress that is around us is going to be here. It's here because of sin. It's here because of the sin in me, the sin in you, the sin in all of us around us and it infects every relationship. It infects our work. It infects our families and our relationships in our families. It infects our schools and our governments and how nations treat each other.

The reason this is kind of important, knowing that there is distress now and it is going to continue is because the world, in their thinking today and how evolution is taught now in everything, people in economics and sociology, they say "Evolution means we are always getting better." So the rest of the world often gets surprised when things start turning worse, when things don't improve, when people sin, when people are selfish. But this is the world we live in and we need to know that because we're not in heaven. God gives this world that has been infected by sin because of the sin of man, but what does that do, knowing that we have distress and this distress will increase? It makes us yearn for a better place. It makes us see in our hearts that this world is not enough. There is a better place and we know God has prepared that for us.

So God tells us of this distress and that there will be more distress but He tells us this to give us comfort. It describes how the last days will be when Jesus returns. It's an interesting picture He gives us. **"...the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."** Any doomsday movie or TV show about the end of the world, I don't think they could even match what this describes; the end of time. But there is something very amazing about it. **"At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."** This man that was scorned and looked down upon and shamed and rejected, how will He return? With glory and power and EVERYONE, everyone will see Him; those alive and even those who have died. They will rise and they will see the Son of Man. What will He do? **"...he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds..."** Jesus will return in glory and He will gather us to eternal rest.

Eternal rest is so needed because of that distress we face, because of the sin in our lives, because we are never at rest in this life. We are always searching for more or searching for that peace. The world offers it in so many ways but it cannot give us it. So the Lord comes to gather His elect; those who believe, (it says in Daniel) those whose names are written in the book.

Why is it important that we use the word "elect." Election is not always the easiest topic to talk about. It's hard sometimes for us to understand. It's very important to see that election is only talked about in the positive sense for believers. Why is it important? Because God has chosen us and given us faith and calls us to be His. This is important because then it's nothing about me. God doesn't say the good and then the bad, those who deserve it, those who have earned it, because if He said those who deserve it, who would be there with Him? I know I wouldn't. We all have fallen short of the glory of what is expected of us. So knowing we have fallen short, that we're sinful, that we cause so much of this distress and those around us cause that distress, God doesn't make it about us for who goes to heaven. God makes it all about Him and the work of Jesus. Jesus has died for YOU and has given you faith through the Holy Spirit and made you part of the elect; part of the elect so that we don't have to worry. We don't have to fear because He has forgiven our sins based upon what He has done, not because of what I have done.

So we rejoice, even though there is distress. He will give us eternal rest because He has called the elect. Because of this then, we don't grieve like the rest. It doesn't mean we don't grieve. It doesn't mean that there isn't sadness and loss and death. Those loved ones that we know and have spent time with that are so dear to us, we don't get to see them right now. So we never say "don't be sad" or "don't grieve" or give a certain amount of time of when you should grieve. But we don't grieve like the rest because we have hope; hope that is not like the world's hope, "I wish," "I want this to happen," right? We have hope that is a certainty because He calls the elect. God has made this clear to us that those He has called, those He has sanctified, those He has washed clean through Baptism are forgiven. Now they are wearing white robes and worshiping before the Lamb forever, so we do not grieve like the rest. But we have a hope and peace and joy of knowing where our loved ones are. It's not in doubt. It's not a question. It's such a certainty that warms our hearts and gives us joy. Joy because that's where we'll be too. Much of the world, when a loved one dies, is filled with questions and fears and sadness. They don't know what is ahead and they don't know if they'll ever see their loved ones again. But for us, we know that a reunion is in store and that they are in a better place. They are in a perfect place. They are with their Lord forever! They win. They are now in perfection and they don't have to worry about this distress that we are in. Whatever the time may come, maybe when we're still alive, and the Lord returns, or the day that the Lord calls us home, we will have a reunion with them, a joyous reunion that means we too will be with them and with our Lord forever.

Our Lord, on this Saints Triumphant, doesn't sugar-coat it and tell us that life isn't hard (that there isn't trouble, there isn't distress), but He gives us such comfort and hope and tells us to be at rest for He has called us. He has called His elect home. And He will call His elect home to be with Him forever. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:7.](#)) Amen.