

Homily on Mark 13:24-32

November 16, 2018

Intro: As the Church prepares for Advent, the celebration of Jesus second coming, she gives us this Sunday Jesus' final discourse on the end of times. It is related differently in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and not treated at all in John.

Mark is the first gospel to have been written. His church is reeling under persecution by the Jews, and then by what must have seemed the end of time for the Jews---the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. It was the destruction of God's presence to his chosen people. To his church Mark records the message of Jesus about the end of time, which they expected to be imminent. STAT. ASAP.

In today's gospel Jesus predicts his community's persecution by Rome, and the Jewish war with Rome which led to the destruction of the temple. But this is not the end of time. The end will be marked by earthquakes, famines, and other celestial phenomena, and after that period, Jesus will return as the Son of Man to rescue his chosen ones from tribulation, presumably go eternal triumphant rest.

Then come the two contrary statements which end this discourse. First Jesus says that the generation listening to him will not die before all this takes place. Then he admits that he, as the Son of God, does not know when these things will take place.

The early Christians stressed Jesus' prediction that He would return as judge during their own lifetime. Paul, for example. But by the time of Luke's gospel, some 50 years after Jesus' death, that early generation who had heard Jesus promise had died out, and still Jesus had not come. Luke stresses the second of Jesus' statements---we, like Jesus, don't know when the end of time is coming. But Luke indicates that there will be a long period---the age of the Gentiles---before the end comes. John's gospel, some twenty years after Luke, moves the movement of judgment to each person's own decision for or against Christ. The way you believe and live your life is the content of the last judgment for you.

So what do we make of this some 2000 years later? What does the last judgment at the end of time mean for you?

First, the last judgment is the meaning of your life. If you have believed in Jesus and lived his message, you will live in eternal joy with God for all eternity. (Dan 12:1-3). If not, you are lost for all eternity. Nothing else in your life matters---your business, your financial security, your trips here and there, even the future of your children---all of this must be seen in the light of your commitment to Christ, your living for your world as he lived his life for his.

Second, the Eucharistic prayer Deliver us O Lord after the Our Father ends with "as we await in joyful hope, the blessed coming of our Savior Jesus Christ." Are you waiting in joyful hope for Jesus'; coming? Our faith is that all our feeble efforts to bring justice and love to our world, will finally come to pass with Jesus. Our belief that Jesus will final bring in the perfect reign of God a reign of perfect justice and peace, gives meaning to our daily struggles.

We don't know when the end of the world will come. Some think that it will come when a huge meteorite strikes the earth, like the huge one that created our moon and set us on our present orbit around the sun. Some think we will destroy life on earth with our own carbon excesses. Some think that the end will come when we all begin to live the justice that Jesus came to bring. But after 2000 years I wonder if our human world is much better off than it was at the time of Jesus. So we don't know when it will be

But our belief that Jesus will bring perfect justice, peace, and love for all eternity is the belief that drives us to seek justice in this life. Every bit of the justice that you bring into the world now is part of the justice that Jesus brings to perfection.

Your life is good news.