

Sunday, December 2, 2018
Jeremiah 33:14-16; Luke 21:25-36
Theme: "PREPARE THE WAY-STAND"

Today marks the beginning of Advent and we are studying from the prophet Jeremiah and the gospel of Luke...

We will begin with Jeremiah...

Jeremiah spoke to God's people in the latter days of Judah...
Judah was the the fourth son of Jacob and Leah...
The southern part of ancient Palestine was occupied by the tribe of Judah...
Jeremiah's prophesy was about the Messiah and the New Covenant...
He honored the law of the Lord...
He valued the importance of the temple and the priesthood...
After he answered the call, Jeremiah served the Lord and the people of Judah to his best...
He was a deeply spiritual man, wholly dedicated to God...
Even though he was shy, his fervent love for God and God's people never decreased...

Jeremiah became an object lesson of a man whose commitment to God enabled him, by the grace of God, to overcome his natural shyness
He was not discouraged because of his condition...
He lived in the face of severe opposition and tragic circumstances...

His personal sorrow over the messages that he had to delivered often caused him to weep for his people in a manner unparalleled until the man of sorrow would come...

These were trying times for Judah...
The political events were rapidly changing...
With the death of the godly Josiah, Judah's apostasy (the abandonment of a religious or political belief) quickly resurfaced...
Jeremiah repeatedly warned of resulting judgment, which finally occurred through many wars...

Even though Jeremiah's message was one of pending judgment upon Judah, he also delivered news of great consolation...
God would have mercy on a repentant people in a great New Covenant...
The promised blessings of the old would be realized...

There is coming a day when God will institute justice against injustice...
Look at our world today and tell me what do you see...
*There are inequalities...
*There are indifferences toward each other...
*There is little compassion, love, unity, and common interests in our society...

Each situation I have mentioned is directly responsible for the break down of our society...
But Jeremiah says to us today that the end to all of these things is about to come...
He offers words of HOPE & JOYFUL EXPECTATION...
Jeremiah's message is one that teaches us to prepare the way to receive God's promised release and deliverance...

Social restoration is on the horizon...
Spiritual restoration is on the horizon...

A season of celebration, possibilities, and opportunities is at hand...
STAND and see the salvation of the Lord...

Luke affirms this message...

As we wait, reflect and prepare during this Advent season, let us do do as individuals as well as the body of Christ...

The future may look dark right now and fill with hopelessness, anxiety, and distress...

Jesus says to us today through the words of Luke: "Now when these things begin to happen, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (21:28...)

I hope and pray that these words will challenge and deepen our faith as we strive to improve our relationship with each other and with God..

I also pray that these words will ground us spiritually and move us into a more faithful stewardship of prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness...

If you are here today and you feel inadequate or broken or bruised, the Lord says, **STAND UP AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS...**

Paul reiterates this message in first Corinthians 4..,

(2 Corinthians 4:7)

[7] But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us...

[8] We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed...

This is reason to **STAND UP AND LIFT UP OUR HEADS...**

We are perplexed, but not in despair...

This is another reason to **STAND UP AND LIFT UP OUR HEADS...**

[9] We are persecuted, but not forsaken...

This is reason to **STAND UP AND LIFT UP OUR HEADS...**

We are struck down, but not destroyed...

Another reason to **STAND UP AND LIFT UP OUR HEADS...**

[10] We are always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body...

Another reason to **STAND UP AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS...**

As we transition to the Lord's Table, I encourage you to take heart...

Even though there are strange things happening, we are safe in the arms of the Lord...

I invite you to tune in to Christ News Network (CNN) and be alert because something is about to sprout up; it is a thing of promise...

It is Christ who will return to redeem us and restore us...

STAND!!!

Amen!