

21th Sunday after Pentecost

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 46:1-7

THEME: God is Our Refuge

SONG: CW21 863/ CW93 200 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

VISUAL: A toy castle or fortress

OBJECT LESSON

Have you ever played with a castle or fortress before? Why might a king and queen and their people be safe in a castle/fortress? The enemy is outside with his soldiers, but they can't attack because the walls of the castle/fortress are too high and too thick. The king, queen, and people are safe in their castle/fortress.

BIBLE TRUTH

There are a lot of things we can be afraid of in our world. What are some things you are afraid of?

We can be afraid of getting sick or hurt. Or we can be afraid of the people we love getting sick or hurt. We can be afraid of weather and nature – of the waters roaring and foaming and the mountains quaking, like our psalm describes. We can be afraid of our enemy, the devil, coming after us with his demons and bad people.

This fear can cause us to run away from God. To think he's not big enough to protect us. To wonder if God is strong enough to keep us safe. Read Psalm 46:1-7

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

There may be a lot of things that make us afraid, but God is like a castle or a fortress. When you believe in him as your Lord and Savior, then God keeps you safe. He is your refuge. That means a safe place. He is your strength – even when you feel weak. Even when you see bad things in our world and nature, God reminds you not to be afraid. He is bigger and stronger than our world and nature. He is the Creator of our world and nature!

And he's our Savior who gave his life to defeat our worst enemies of sin and death! Even when our enemy, the devil, tries to make you afraid so you run away from the shelter of Jesus, you don't need to be afraid. God is stronger than the devil. He is the Lord Almighty. He provides you with his Word that is like a stream of water which refreshes and strengthens you.

This is where Martin Luther found strength and refuge when he was attacked for teaching that we are saved completely and only by Jesus. He found strength in God's promises. He went to the Word. That is why you have devotions and Bible lessons and memorize Bible passages. That is how God protects you from your enemies. That is how he gives you the forgiveness of sins and reminds you that you are his baptized children.

So don't be afraid. Find strength and safety inside the fortress of our God."

PRAYER

Dear God, too often we become afraid because we forget who you are. Anytime we become scared, send your Holy Spirit to remind us that through faith in Jesus as our Savior, we have nothing to fear. You are with us. You are the Lord Almighty. You are our refuge and strength. You are our fortress. Thank you for promising to always be with us. Amen.



22nd Sunday after Pentecost

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 21:1-6

THEME: No place like home

SONG: CW21 889/890 - CW93 214 Jerusalem the Golden

VISUAL: A sign that reads, “No Place Like Home” or “Home Sweet Home”

OBJECT LESSON

Have you ever seen a sign like this in someone’s house that reads, “There’s no place like home”? When might people think that a sign like this is very important? Maybe if it’s a soldier who has been away from his family for a long time. Or maybe when someone has been sick and in the hospital for months. Or maybe a college student who has been away at school all semester.

All of them have been somewhere else for a long time. But they feel good coming home because there’s no place like home.

BIBLE TRUTH

If we’ve been gone for any length of time we may love coming back to our homes. And that’s great! That’s probably where our family is, our clothes are, and our pets are. Our friends are nearby. It’s great when we’ve been gone for a long time, and we finally get to come home.

Jesus allows his apostle John to see a picture of what our new home in heaven is going to be like. Read Revelation 21:1-5.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Did you hear how many times John uses the word “new” to describe heaven? He says he saw a new heaven and a new earth where we will live in the new city of Jerusalem the Golden.

John describes everything as “new” because as much as we love our home we have, the city we live in, and the beautiful trees, streams, and hills around us, they will one day be gone.

That’s because as nice as everything here might be, it is still filled with sin. That’s why we get sick, suffer from floods or tornadoes, our houses get old and fall apart, or things don’t work very well. You and I are sinful people living in a sinful world.

John reminds us that he saw Jesus sitting on his throne in heaven and heard him say, “I am making everything new!” Jesus is in charge, and he will make it happen. Jesus’ words gives us comfort and joy because Jesus has made us his people by his blood shed on the cross. He claimed you as his children when you were baptized. Whether things in our homes are good or bad, nice or tough, pleasant or difficult, Jesus will give us something better, something perfect, something brand new, made just for you!

Through faith in Jesus as your Savior, you know there is a room waiting for you in the city of Jerusalem the Golden in heaven. You can imagine a sign in your room that reads, “There’s No Place Like Home!” That’s because it’s Jesus’ home! And it’s your real home, too!

PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for making a new home for us in heaven. Whenever we are having difficulties here in our homes or suffering from our sins here on earth, remind us of our new home you have won for us through your life, death, resurrection, and ascension. This promise of a new home gives us comfort and joy. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

23rd Sunday after Pentecost

SCRIPTURE: Luke 21:5-19

THEME: Do not be afraid of the dangers of the last days

SONG: CW21 495/ CW93 25 The King Shall Come

VISUAL: Comb or hairbrush

OBJECT LESSON

What are some things you might be afraid of? I know people who are afraid of flying. Others I know are afraid of bugs and spiders. Others are afraid of heights. Still others are afraid of clowns. Have you ever been afraid of hair? That sounds silly, but it's a real fear. It's called "trichophobia." It's the fear of seeing, touching, or combing hair.

BIBLE TRUTH

One day Jesus told his disciples about some very scary things that were going to happen. These are things that the disciples may see happening. These are also things that you and I may see happening. As I read these verses, try to remember all the scary things Jesus mentions. Read Luke 21:10-17.

Did you notice all the scary things Jesus mentions? Why are each of these events scary? He says we may see wars as nations fight against each other. Wars are scary because people are fighting and dying. There will be earthquakes. Earthquakes are scary as the earth shakes beneath people's feet. There will be famines. Famines are scary because there isn't enough rain so there isn't enough food or water for people to eat and drink. Jesus says there will be horrifying (that means really, really scary) things in the heavens – in sky and space.

Jesus says that Christians will be arrested and put on trial before governing authorities. Even people's families will turn against Christians. That's scary because it seems like we as Christians will have nowhere to go – not to our families to protect us and not to our government to keep us safe.

We will be tempted to become afraid and give up. We might not be afraid of heights or bugs or flying or clowns or hair. But it sounds smart to be afraid of wars, earthquakes, hunger, and jail.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Jesus gives us this wonderful comfort at the end of these verses where he is telling his disciples not to be afraid. Read Luke 21:18-19. Jesus says that there is no reason to be afraid of any of these things because not even a hair on your head will be lost or even out of place ... unless Jesus allows it.

That means that Jesus is going to protect you through all these scary, horrifying, and terrifying things. Jesus loves you so much that he is with you in these really bad things. When the earth is shaking, Jesus is right beside you protecting you. When you are hungry or thirsty, Jesus is there with you watching out for you. When you are put in jail for believing in Jesus as your Savior, Jesus is keeping you safe. What happens if any of these scary things hurt you or even cause you to die? Then Jesus is still with you ... because you go to heaven to be with Jesus! Jesus has won life for you by his death on the cross. He has already given you a place in heaven with him. You can be certain of it.

Even when all these scary things can happen to us and around us, remember this wonderful promise from Jesus. "Not even a hair on your head will be lost." Wow! I guess there really isn't a reason to be afraid.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you teach your disciples that there will be a lot of scary things that will happen. Thank you for the comfort of knowing that you will always be with us during all these scary times. You will keep us safe here on earth. So safe that we don't even have to worry about our hair. Whenever we are scared, send your Holy Spirit to remind us of your wonderful promises! Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

24th Sunday after Pentecost

SCRIPTURE: Luke 12:35-40

THEME: Dressed and ready for service

SONG: CW21 486/ CW93 206 Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying

VISUAL: Old clothes on a hanger and a flashlight

OBJECT LESSON

I want you to imagine that you're at home one night when there's a bad storm. It's so bad that it knocks out the power. Now it's dark in the house. The storm has also caused pouring rain for the past few hours.

You hear your dad call your name from the darkness of the basement. Water is coming in, and he needs your help moving furniture and cleaning up the water. It's urgent. He needs you immediately. Are you ready to work? Do you have a flashlight and old clothes ready to go?

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus teaches us about being ready. He's talking about having our good clothes and oil lamps ready for a wedding banquet. Read Luke 12:35-40.

With this lesson, Jesus is really talking about being dressed and ready for the Last Day – Judgment Day – when he returns. But we are often tempted to be lazy, to put things off, to think there is always more time. That's why we can often be lazy about going to church, or we put off praying to God, or we think there will be more time to read our Bibles (or have them read to us). The devil enjoys it when we aren't "ready to go" with our faith.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

That's why we listen to Jesus' warning. He wants us to always be ready to go. The picture he uses with clothes and a light means we are ready at any moment. There is no time for delay. When Jesus wants to put us to work for him right now, we want our faith to be ready to go to work. If

Jesus calls us home to him through an illness or accident, we want a saving faith that means we're ready to go to heaven. If Jesus returns on the Last Day, we want a faith that means we're ready for Jesus' return.

If Jesus comes soon and it's Judgment Day, you are ready because you are clothed in Jesus' perfection and washed in Jesus' blood at your baptism. If Jesus delays and doesn't return for a while, you are ready. If Jesus needs you to do some work for him, you are ready to serve and help others. If Jesus doesn't need you right now, you are ready for when he does need you.

How can you be ready for Jesus? You can only be ready by hearing and believing God's Word. God's Word that is heard and read in school, chapel, worship services, Sunday School, devotions, sermons, and more. It is faith in God's Word that makes you Jesus' servant. It also prepares you to serve Jesus daily, faithfully, and readily.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you call us to be dressed and ready for service. Send your Holy Spirit to work faith in our hearts through your Word. Keep us faithful to you and faithful in serving you. We pray that you keep us always ready for the time when you return. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS