

Walk in Remembrance of Jesus

☆ **Good News long foretold (vv.8-10)**

☆ **Good News worthy of trust (vv.11-13)**

In the Name of Jesus our Savior for whom we get ready in hope-filled watchfulness, dear Christians:

Years ago we had trouble with the church doors. The safety bar was out, but come in Monday morning, pull the door, still unlocked! Property Committee members adjusted the tension, still not locking. Finally someone squirted a little WD-40 down the threshold to ease the catch into the slot. “WD” – *water displacement*; “40” – because it took forty tries to get the oily formula just right, originally for space ships to slide through the atmosphere, but now hundreds of uses here on earth. Just a little of that light oil, pull on the door from the outside as you leave, then we’re better prepared to stop thieves.

In today’s Gospel Jesus says, “*Be alert, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: If the master of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house to be broken into. You also need to be ready for this reason: The Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect him.*” (Matthew 24:42-44 EHV) To meet Christ on Judgment Day, you can’t just tweak your life a little. No forty chances to get it right. Forget *water displacement*; enjoy God’s *water placement* with His promises on your head in Baptism. Be ready for His second and final advent. **Walk in Remembrance of Jesus.**

☆ **Good News long foretold (vv.8-10)**

Ever since our first parents, Adam and Eve, fell into sin, the darkness in this world has depressed people’s souls. We sense there is someone or something out there. Seriously, this wonderful world could not have happened by chance. But what is it? How do we reach that light? How to escape this darkness?

For God’s chosen people of Israel, the LORD pictured His light with oil lamps in the tabernacle which the priests kept burning from morning until evening. Like everything else in the Old Testament, this light shined ahead to Jesus who said, “*These are the Scriptures that testify about me.*” He also said, “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*” (John 5:39; 14:6 NIV84) Various places in the Old Testament show how this oil symbolized the Holy Spirit. (1 Samuel 10:6; 16:13) For all those B.C. centuries God wanted His people ready to “**Remember Jesus Christ...**” The entire focus is on Advent – Christ coming first to be crucified, rise and ascend; Christ coming again as Judge. Critics try and cynics cry. “By powers of empire banned and burned” (CW 291:2), but they cannot snuff the light of God’s Good Book.

One great example is Isaiah, where we have today’s Old Testament Lesson. Did you see the Advent light? “**O house of Jacob, come, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.**” (2:5 EHV) Those original Hebrew words were so carefully, hand-copied by scribes, a job you would not want. They could count from both ends of your scroll to the exact middle word and letter. Any errors, and weeks of work get buried. God’s Word – zero mistakes. That’s why the Dead Sea Scrolls were such an awesome find. Shortly after WWII, a scholar in a shop in Jerusalem was shocked to find ancient writing on the leather used to repair his sandals. Turns out a shepherd boy had thrown a rock into a cave overlooking the Dead Sea, just trying to scare his sheep back out. The rock hit a clay jar holding a scroll. Then hundreds more in multiple caves were found and sold all over the world, even sandal shops! The Dead Sea Scrolls witness that our Bible did not change significantly over 2000 years. Isaiah was one scroll of prophecies hundreds of years in advance. Only God can foretell the future and only God can make His plan happen.

“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my Gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal.” As far as we know, soon after Paul wrote these words he was beheaded by evil Emperor Nero. Secular and church authorities kept trying to snuff out the Light of Christ. No one wants to think about Judgment Day unless you’re sure of the verdict in your favor. Once scholars like Martin Luther find it, they can’t let it go no matter what. So Luther too was declared an outlaw who had to hide from authorities because he preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Luther hid out in the Wartburg Castle. Hence the name for our Wartburg Project and the *Evangelical Heritage Version* (EHV). During his nine months in the Wartburg, Luther translated the whole New Testament into German for his people. He was in hiding, ***“But God’s Word is not chained.”***

“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” God shines the light of Christ all the way back into eternity when God already knew you by name. He lined up your life to be baptized, even as a baby, hear and believe God’s Word. Christ shed His blood to save you, and His Holy Spirit keeps you in faith to **Walk in Remembrance of Jesus** in His **Good News long foretold**. Listening and believing the Bible shows you are among ***“the elect,”*** the chosen ones of God. God chooses His team, not by the players, but by Christ, His skill and hard work. He chooses spiritual losers who win with Christ by faith, but still need our Leader to tell us to ***“walk decently as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual sin and wild living, not in strife and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not give any thought to satisfying the desires of your sinful flesh.”*** (Romans 13:1f EHV) From all eternity, purely out of His loving kindness and tender mercy (Ephesians 1:4-14) He chose us. Isn’t this all the more reason to keep the Christ-light burning and be ready when Christ comes? Truly this is...

✧ **Good News worthy of trust (vv.11-13)**

“Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” God’s Word still shines in darkness that cannot overcome it.

*“What God had foretold about the coming Seed had to be fulfilled in Jesus of the New Testament if He was indeed the Messiah, the Christ. He had to come from the descendants of Shem. He did. He had to come from the descendants of Abraham. He did. He had to come from the tribe of Judah. He did. He had to come from the family of David. He did. He had to have a virgin mother. He did. He had to have His birthplace in Bethlehem. He did. He had to have both a human and divine nature. He did. He had to spend most of His ministry in Galilee. He did. He had to live and die according to His human nature as a perfect human sacrifice. He had to live and die as God’s divine Seed that through death He might be the Tree of Life for all....All that He did.”*¹ Truly the cross is “proof that cannot be argued away.”²

For this **Good News worthy of trust** believers are willing to **Walk in Remembrance of Jesus** no matter what the personal cost. A century before Luther in Germany, a popular professor at Oxford, England, John Wycliffe shone the light of Christ so brightly in his Bible teaching that church authorities ordered him not to preach. So he went to work translating the Bible into English. Before the authorities could execute him, he died of natural causes. Official hatred was so powerful that forty-one years later Wycliffe’s bones were dug up, burned and his ashes thrown into the river. From there they flowed down into the sea. One biographer said this was symbolic of his doctrine spreading throughout the world.³

“Remember Jesus....” dying and rising again to shine eternal brilliance of Advent into our hearts. God forgives all your sins and His light in your life. **Walk in Remembrance of Jesus.** Amen.

¹ Kauffeld. *Eleven Divine Portraits of Jesus, the Messiah in Old & New Testament.* 2006, p. 60f. www.booksoftheway.com .

² Balge, Richard D. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin. Retired 2002.

³ Morgan, Robert J. *On This Day.* © 1997, Thomas Nelson, Inc. DailyReader © 1999-2001, Wheeler/ Rairdin. Laridian.

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