

## You Are Safe

- ✦ because God's judgment is right (v.5)
- ✦ because you believe God's Word (vv.6-10)

In the name of Jesus Christ, whose promise secures us as members of God's family:

Our *Welcome Home* Sunday messages have focused on *Our Need for Christian Community* and last week the Reformation truth that here *You Are Free to Be Yourself*. As we were finishing up last Sunday's sermon, we talked about how much we want to be our New Self, those loving and kind, loyal and strong members of God's family who keep growing up as we receive Christ's Holy Supper. Today's Scripture readings are bringing us to a subject most people will either deny or at least avoid talking about. Yet because God says so much about Judgment Day in the Bible, we need to not only address it, but to discover why we can be so confident to actually look forward to the Last Day with eager anticipation. Isn't ironic that Americans spend twenty-one billion dollars a year for physical safety, yet homes are burning and hearts are still breaking. Terror grips many in fear for the end of this planet. God's grace opens His Word to reveal the mystery of the Last Day for us and for all. Rest assured **You Are Safe**...

### ✦ because God's judgment is right (v.5)

We all struggle with overconfidence or anxiety and depression of some sort. We don't always feel safe. Some fear this planet will not survive a few more decades. We cannot accurately predict, much less control the weather, prevent wild fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, yet some insist we can save the planet with the right laws. Did they miss God's rainbow promise to Noah? ***"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."*** (Genesis 8:22 NIV84)

Did they miss God's Son in that storm tossed boat? Jesus stands up and rebukes the wind and waves, ***"Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.***" (Mark 4:39 NIV84) I want to listen to Christ alone because He controls the weather. This is Jesus' advice about climate change: ***"There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And on the earth nations will be in anguish, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the surging waves, <sup>26</sup>people fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming on the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>But when these things begin to happen, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near."*** (Luke 21:25–28 EHV<sup>1</sup>)

No one will miss Jesus coming in the clouds as promised with all His holy angels. By faith ***"you are in Christ Jesus"*** like a firefighter wrapped in love more miraculous than a Fire Blanket that can withstand up to 3000 degrees Fahrenheit.<sup>2</sup> God promised: ***"On that day the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be dissolved as they burn with great heat, and the earth and what was done on it will be burned up."*** (2 Peter 3:10 EHV) Wrapped up in Christ Jesus is your ***redemption***. (1 Corinthians 1:30) Jesus paid the price to reconcile us to God and each other – his innocent life and shed blood.

If you and I had to fight a fire, we would need the right equipment and training to trust, "This blanket will protect you." The Lord's Apostle Paul was training the Christians back in Thessalonica, suffering fires of persecution. Patient endurance and faith kept them increasing in love for each other and made them a model congregation. Paul boasted about them: ***"All this is evidence of God's righteous verdict that resulted in your being counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also suffer."***

<sup>1</sup> EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2017. NPH: 800-662-6022; also Amazon-Kindle.

<sup>2</sup> <https://newatlas.com/sunseeker-fire-blanket/34442/>

**God's righteous verdict** was also in last Sunday's sermon. It's that New Covenant declaration of pure grace from God about all our guilt and sin. If you only memorize one other Bible passage besides John 3:16, treasure this one in your memory. Treasure it like firefighter with his backpack Fire Blanket ready to deploy. God says, **"I will forgive their guilt, and I will remember their sins no more."** (Jeremiah 31:34 EHV) Take to heart what Jesus said on the cross as He was just about ready to give up His life for you. After always saying and doing the right things under God's unflinching, holy law, Jesus died the only innocent death ever under God's wrath for all people. What does Jesus say, **"It is finished."**

If you're not sure this applies to you, then do what today's birthday boy advised. Luther suggest that you pinch yourself. If you're still on this planet, it will hurt. Then memorize this for healing: **"God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life."** Keep going: **"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God...The one who does what is true comes toward the light, in order that his deeds may be seen as having been done in connection with God."** (John 3:16-21 EHV) In the light of God's love in Christ **You Are Safe. Because God's judgment is right**, you will stand before God – redeemed, restored, forgiven, reconciled. As Jesus loves to say, **"Peace be with you."** God's justice is on your side...

### ✦ **because you believe God's Word (vv.6-10)**

So why do the worldly "wise" hate Christians? Irrational it was then and is now. Jesus says, **"If the world hates you, you know that it hated me first."** (John 15:18 EHV) All He ever did was help and heal and love His enemies. He taught us to do the same. The first hospitals were started by Christians. During dreadful plagues unbelievers would throw their sick relatives out in the street. Christians would come along and scoop them up to take them home for healing. Love in the face of persecution spread Christianity fast and far. Christians loved each other especially when their blood stained arena sands.

What I have to tell you now is not our first choice, or God's for that matter. God wants everyone to be saved. So do we as we keep spreading God's verdict of grace while there still is time. But for those who refuse to repent and **believe God's Word**, just condemnation remains: **"Certainly it is right for God to repay trouble to those who trouble you, and to give relief to you, who are troubled along with us."** **Relief** comes through God's Word of peace during and after He brings an end to earthly persecution.

And yet there is a Day of reckoning: **"When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his powerful angels, <sup>8</sup>he will exercise vengeance in flaming fire on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."** Two groups: The first does not **know God** because they refuse to acknowledge the evidence. We're surrounded by God's creation which we still have not figured out and which we cannot control. The evidence is unmistakably clear that our Creator is wise and powerful. Every conscience must admit that God hates sin. The whole world is accountable to God to find out who He is and worship Him. The second group does not accept what Christ said on the cross: **"It is finished."** They insist there must be more merit from other sources, more works than those of Christ alone. The Gospel commands us to accept only Jesus and not to put cheap varnish on the diamond of pure grace. Our **Righteousness** lived in mercy and gives all we need with His innocent life and shed blood. Unbelief **"will receive a just penalty: eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from his glorious strength, <sup>10</sup>on that day when he comes to be glorified among his saints, and to be marveled at among all those who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed."**

One pastor grew up on the prairie. To escape from wild fires they needed a place to run and a way to protect their homes. As smoke rose on the horizon, they would scorch an area around the ranch house in a controlled burn to remove the fuel for the fire. The area had to reach far enough to keep embers away, more dangerous than flames. Family and friends would run there for safety as we run to Christ for refuge. Christ is the only place where Judgment Day will prove that **You Are Safe**. Here in Christ is room for all we love. **God's judgment is right** in your favor. **You believe God's Word**. **"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."** (Proverbs 18:10 NIV84) Amen.