

## **TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Malachi 4:1–6

2 Thessalonians 3:(1–5) 6–13

Luke 21:5–28 (29–36)

### ***God's Plan of Redemption Trumps Earthly Destruction and Violence***

There are signs of the Lord's coming all around: the cross that marks His Church, the violence and death of the sinful world, and the shaking of the natural order. "*There will be great distress upon the earth*" (Luke 21:23), but the faithful know that "*the kingdom of God is near*" (Luke 21:31). Therefore, "*straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near*" (Luke 21:28). Be awake and alert, and heed the words of Christ, which "*will not pass away*" (Luke 21:33). For you "*the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings*" (Mal. 4:2). He sends His preachers of repentance in the spirit and power of Elijah "*before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes*" (Mal. 4:5), in order to "*direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ*" (2 Thess. 3:5). Although you are often faithless, "*the Lord is faithful,*" and by the preaching of His Word "*He will establish you and guard you against the evil one*" (2 Thess. 3:3). Therefore, "*do not grow weary in doing good*" (2 Thess. 3:13). In the midst of calamity, believe upon the Lord, Jesus Christ.

### ***Next Week's Readings from God's Word:***

November 20: Last Sunday of the Church Year (Proper 29 C):

Malachi 3:13-18; Colossians 1:13-20; Luke 23:27-43

**INTROIT**

*Psalm 121:1, 2, 5, 7-8; Antiphon: Luke 21:33*

*Heaven and earth will pass away,  
but my words will not pass away.*

*I lift up my eyes to the hills.*

*From where does my help come?*

*My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.*

*The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.*

*The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.*

*The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth and forevermore.*

**Glorify be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*Heaven and earth will pass away,  
but my words will not pass away.*

**COLLECT OF THE DAY**

**P** *O Lord, almighty and ever-living God.  
You have given exceedingly great and precious promises  
to those who trust in You.  
Rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit  
that we may live and abide forever in Your Son;  
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.*

**C** *♪[Amen]♪*

**GRADUAL**

*Revelation 7:14b, Psalm 84:5*

*These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.  
They have washed their robes  
and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.  
Blessèd are those whose strength is in you,  
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.*

**RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS**

*After each petition:*

**P** *Lord, in Your mercy,* **C** **hear our prayer.**

## **Malachi 4:1-6 (ESV)**

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.<sup>2</sup> But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.<sup>3</sup> And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

<sup>4</sup> “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

<sup>5</sup> “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.<sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

## **2 Thessalonians 3:1-13 (ESV)**

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you,<sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith.<sup>3</sup> But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.<sup>4</sup> And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command.<sup>5</sup> May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

<sup>6</sup> Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.<sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you,<sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.<sup>9</sup> It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.<sup>11</sup> For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.<sup>12</sup> Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

<sup>13</sup> As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

## **Luke 21:5-36 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, [Jesus] said,<sup>6</sup> “As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”<sup>7</sup> And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”<sup>8</sup> And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them.<sup>9</sup> And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”

<sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. <sup>12</sup> But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. <sup>13</sup> This will be your opportunity to bear witness. <sup>14</sup> Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, <sup>15</sup> for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup> You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. <sup>17</sup> You will be hated by all for my name's sake. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup> By your endurance you will gain your lives.

<sup>20</sup> "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. <sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, <sup>22</sup> for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. <sup>23</sup> Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. <sup>24</sup> They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles,

until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

<sup>25</sup> "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, <sup>26</sup> people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is 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> Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

<sup>29</sup> And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup> "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."