Luke 21:33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

 It is a wonderful thing that in the past months our Bible Class on Wednesdays has been studying the Book of Revelation. Revelation makes you think about the difficulties that the Church will face and often those difficulties tell us that not only will God’s children suffer and be persecuted but that even the children of this world will suffer and have difficulties as the world gets deeper and deeper into sin.

 So in that regard, how do we, God’s children, endure what is yet to come? Well, I am a fan of the thought, “Jesus said it would be and since it is what is happening, I am not going to panic but rather will simply sit back and marvel at the fact that Jesus was right!” That is not a “fatalists” point of view that is really a Christian point of view. For that matter you can see Jesus pointing you to that kind of view if you just pay attention to the words found for us in verses 25-28. In those verses we are told that even in the sun, moon, and stars signs would be seen. These signs are such that it puts the world on edge. It says the world will **“be in anguish, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the surging waves, people fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming.”** If you just contemplate those words alone you grasp that interesting, should I dare say, “destructive,” things are going to be going on and the world will be at a loss.

 We are told all of these things are a prelude to Jesus coming for the Day of Judgment. Yet as children of God we are told: **“But when these things begin to happen, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near.”** In other words, we are to have a completely different viewpoint and attitude about these things. We don’t panic. We don’t fall into anguish, perplexity and fear. We simply trust that God is doing what He said, that God is in action and just as the Lord promises: **“I am with you…I will never give you more than you can bear…all things will work out for your eternal life and salvation.”** So we can do exactly as these words tells us, **“Stand up and lift up your heads.”** Those are not words of fear and anxiety but words of excitement and wonder. We have this attitude because we grasp, **“our redemption is near.”**

 But will we? Will that be our view and attitude? In truth, that is the very challenge of faith isn’t it? Faith (the definition of faith does not change) is about trust and reliance. Or as Hebrews 11: 1 says, **“Faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced about things we do not see.”** That is what faith is. It is “being sure, convinced about things we do not see.”

 Perhaps there is the problem? I think the world causes that problem but we Christians without thinking about it just jump on the world’s bandwagon. The world sits back and says, “Yeah, but how can you be sure about anything? How can you know? How is it that you even think you are the right ones and all the other religions are wrong? How can you know?” And as the world speaks, as we hear them whine and complain about nothing being sure and certain, we get into the same pattern.

Of course, in truth, sometimes we don’t know, what I mean by that is that sometimes there is what we should know as God’s children and then there is what we actually remember. For instance, everyone who has ever been in any Confirmation class of mine, be you adult or child, you know that I have always highlighted that wonderful sentence found on page 25! That sentence says, *“The Lutheran Church has always considered the catechism the very least that every Christian should know about Bible teachings.”* The Catechism is the very least! Yet how many of you could even recite two commandments and meaning? How many of you could recite the Articles and meanings? At one time, if you are a Lutheran, you learned them. Do you still know them? Do you review and renew your understanding of God’s Word by reading through the Catechism every year? People, it is “the least” you should know!” Not knowing your Catechism is like trying to be a banker without knowing how to add and subtract! Yeah, sometimes we don’t know.

What is it we should know? Well, Jesus plainly tells us in our text for today. That’s the text we highlighted for ourselves. Our theme will be: **GOD’S WORD, OUR KEY TO LIFE.**

Now since I started by highlighting the importance of the Catechism, let’s just use the catechism in our lesson for today. It is clear from Jesus’ words that “the Word of God” is absolutely important to our faith. How does the catechism start? It asks us how we know there is a God? It points us to our natural knowledge but then reminds us that our natural knowledge is not sufficient simply because of sin and the fact that no matter how long you stare at creation it is never going to tell you about Jesus and the cross. All of this leads to question 5: *“Why then do we need the Bible?”* The answer is important: *“We need the Bible as a light that reveals to us what God has done to save us.”*

I have to tell you I love that answer. It does not say, “We need the Bible to show us what we must do in order to be saved” but focuses on the truth that the Bible reveals: what God has done to save. It is about the wonder of God. Now, I don’t know about your church, but in my church and synod I can tell you that we believe absolutely that God has revealed himself. Seriously, think about this. If your church teaches that God CAN’T clearly reveal himself and that we can never be sure about God then what is the point of your church? God’s Word is the revelation of God saving of our souls.

As you go on in the Catechism we then learn of the Old and New Testaments, what they are and what books are found therein. After that we talk more about the Bible. That we believe the Bible to be the *“The living and powerful Word of God.”* We talk about verbal inspiration. That’s the teaching that says that even though God used human writers, those writers wrote only what God wanted them to. Again, go back to what I just said in the last paragraph. If your God isn’t capable as God to clearly reveal himself, then what are you worshipping? My God, my Church’s God did that! Clearly, precisely and without doubt, told us exactly what it is that we need to know for salvation. Now a precaution here. If your church’s teaching continuously focuses on what you need to do for salvation that is already a problem. It is work righteousness. Any manmade, actually every manmade religion does that. The true God has revealed what He has done to save us!

Then comes the question and answers that are so important for our lesson today. Question 11 has two answers. It asks this: *“Of what are we assured by the fact that the Bible is God’s Word?”* As I said there are two answers to this question. But first, really give that question some thought. If you don’t think the Bible IS God’s Word, but only think the Bible CONTAINS God’s Word isn’t there a problem already? If the Bible only contains God’s Word (what so many churches today teach) then which part is God’s Word and which is not? Who decides that? The clergy, the scholars, maybe the scientists, or I know, everybody gets to pick and choose for themselves! Please note that there will never be any “assurance” for you. Every time you proclaim something, someone can say, “I don’t believe that” or “That’s just your opinion.” You have taken yourself out of the realm of faith because you have nothing to believe. There is no assurance, nothing to trust, no truth to be found. Just you. You get to be your own God. That makes me shutter.

Answer 1 says: *“The fact that the Bible is God’s Word assures us that the Bible has no errors but is true in everything it says.”* By the way, that’s where our passage for today fits in. **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”** Here is Jesus giving us his version of the Catechism answer. Mind you, if you say that Jesus is wrong is he still your perfect Savior and God? Either Jesus is right and you believe Him or he is wrong and well, we are back to you have nothing!

I will trust in Jesus. I will put my faith in Him and in the entire word of God. John 1:1 says, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** That verse is speaking of Jesus and his pure and true revelation of God which is the Bible. God’s Word is true. Absolutely true! I will absolutely trust Jesus above and beyond anyone or anything else. That is what the Christian faith is about.

So, I believe that God created the world exactly as the Bible says. Doesn’t matter that most of science today tells us this is wrong. I would prefer that science get back to telling us what they truly and absolutely know rather than science directing us in what we should believe. I like science but I don’t like scientism. Scientism is what science believes about things, because that’s how science wants to interpret what it thinks it sees. I don’t blame them. When a scientist sees a galaxy 100 million light years away, they must conclude that in order for them to see the light of that galaxy, 100 million light years has passed. I simply believe that on day 4, God put that galaxy there and on day four we could have seen it because that’s the way God created it. I prefer to trust God.

When the Bible says God appeared to people like Moses, it is true. The ten plagues, the event of crossing the sea, or the events around Mt. Horeb, all true! The people and nations that God says existed, all true. The flood! True. It goes on and on. God sent his Son Jesus to redeem the world? Absolutely true. Jesus is the Son of God who was born of a virgin, lived a perfect and holy life, ran a ministry as an adult to show us without doubt who He is and then went to the cross to pay for our sins. Yep, Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only for ours but for the sins of the whole world. I am forgiven and gifted the salvation of heaven simply because that is exactly what God has revealed in his Word.

It is all proved by the resurrection. Yep, the Bible says that Jesus rose from the dead. He came back to life and after clearly demonstrating to the world he was truly alive, Jesus ascended into heaven where he lives and rules over all things for our eternal good. Not a doubt in my mind. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus lives. Jesus is my Savior from sin. Here’s the cool thing. I can say Jesus is my Savior from sin because I absolutely trust what Jesus has done and accomplished for me! That’s what it means to have faith in Jesus. I absolutely trust that the sacrificial death of Jesus was done for me and that when I believe in that fact of Jesus the blessings of Jesus’ redemption become mine. I am clothed with His righteousness. I am spiritually alive because he has sent the Holy Spirit to quicken me. I was blind but now I see. I was lost but now am found. That is what our faith, the Christian faith is about.

Oh, and I absolutely believe that when we apply water to a baby in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God, of his promise and because of his Word, declares that baby forgiven and redeemed from sin. If you really understood it all you would grasp that that baby and every one of us are all saved in the same way!!!! We are gifted faith. That faith leads us to have trust, reliance on, have confidence in what God’s Word declares. God has saved us.

Yes, that bread and wine we will partake of later on is exactly what God says, His body, His blood, given into death for our sins! I don’t have to debate it or anything like that. I simply trust what Jesus and his holy Word has revealed.

Answer 2 of question 11 says; *“The fact that the Bible is God’s Word assures us that we can trust all the promises of the Bible because we know God will keep them.”* Again, what simple and what absolutely profound words. God, the powerful, all-knowing, present everywhere God is completely and truly reliable in everything he says.

God says, **“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”** Absolutely not a shred of doubt on the truth, veracity and factuality of that sentence. God has done it and that settles it.

God says, **“But when these things begin to happen, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near.”** Absolute truth. Now understand, I think we should take care of our planet and all, in the best and most Godly way possible, but has it ever dawned on you that much of what is going on has more to do with the nearness of Jesus returning rather than ozone holes? Be good stewards, but don’t panic, God truly is in control. If He is the one causing some of the things we are experiencing, really, what do you think you are going to do about it? Trust in God, please.

God says, **“They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Because of this they are in front of the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them…God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”** Absolutely true. In Jesus heaven is our home. Heaven is a real place and everything said is true and factual for those who have believed. And without a single doubt I tell you that God has the power and authority to do this.

What shall it be, dear souls? I say, “Trust in Jesus and his redemption! Trust in Jesus and His Word! Trust in eternal life and salvation because God has given this gift to us!”

I trust what Jesus says, **“But when these things begin to happen, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near.”** Amen.