

## The Final Victory.

Text: Rev 1:8, 21:3, Psa 24:7  
Suggested Hymns:

490, 487, 489, 288, 494

- 1) Is Established In The Completed Redemption Of Christ
- 2) Assures A Holy Fellowship Of God With His Believers Through Eternity

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is based on the Introit, Rev 1:8, & 21:3, & Psa 24:7, <sup>8</sup> *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”* <sup>3</sup> *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

<sup>7</sup> *Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Scripture says in Matthew 24:14, <sup>14</sup> *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

Like a candle in a room of black darkness, this is a statement of divine purpose and divine providence amid the final decay and last destruction of the universe. Our attention, as a result, is focused even more sharply on what our Lord says about the signs that point to the end of the world.

Much of what Jesus says fills us with deep concern. The false Christs, the wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, the famines, the pestilences, the earthquakes in various places, people betraying one another and hating one another, with iniquity piled upon iniquity, and the love of many growing cold. What a frightful world in which to live!

The times are terrible that point to the end! Why, if it were possible, the very elect of God, God's people called to be His own before the foundations of the world were laid, would be deceived.

And now the candle that keeps us from cursing the darkness, is this Word of Scripture, "***And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations.***" Therefore our inner soul cries out: "*O most merciful God, help me to believe the Gospel, and help me to preach it with power all the days of my life!*"

This ray of light in a world of darkness is revealed in the Propers for this last Sunday of the church year. Remember that the Propers are the Introit, Collect, Old testament Lesson, Epistle, and Gospel Readings. You can find them in your hymnbooks, starting on page 51.

As we hear the Epistle, we can sense the tension mounting to a high pitch: the church is terribly earnest in her desire to bring home the importance of the last, great opportunity. She warns her members to be wide awake, to be sober, to put on the armour of readiness, for the time of the last great testing is at hand.

And then comes this lighted candle to dispel the gathering darkness for every believer: "***For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,***"<sup>1</sup> coupled with the short admonition: "***Therefore encourage one another and build one another up.***"

In the Gospel for this last Sunday of the church year we are informed of the final opportunity — the ten virgins, five wise and therefore fully prepared, and five foolish and totally unprepared — all ten are looking forward to the coming of the bridegroom, but at midnight, when all ten are awakened by the cry: "***Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!***"<sup>2</sup> the five foolish virgins discover that their lamps have gone out, and while they seek in vain to purchase oil and return, there is a note of finality — the door is shut!

And the warning words of Jesus, "***Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming,***"<sup>3</sup> bring us up sharply, only to remind us that the Lord who relates this earnest parable is the very Bridegroom with whom the wise virgins are rejoicing at the wedding feast.

The Introit, properly setting the mood for this Last Sunday of the Church Year, is intensely earnest as the voice speaks for God and about God, and a listening church stands on tiptoe, for this is the final consummation of all of God's plans and purposes toward men.

The curtain is already descending, the end of all things is at hand, darkness and destruction are immediately impending, and then we are given the light to encourage, even the fainthearted among the believers. *“The tabernacle of God is with men.”*

We close the church year, not centring our eyes on a world in decay, on the inhumanity of man to his neighbour, but on the sure hope that brings light into this unrest, the assurance of *The Final Victory*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. This Victory Is Established In The Completed Redemption Of Christ**

A discussion of the final victory would be nothing short of fantasy if we were thinking of ourselves or depending on our own resources. Whatever determination you and I might bring to keep the faith, what sacrifices you and I might be willing to make in order to serve our Lord, what confidence you and I might engender if we relied upon ourselves, would only end in complete confusion and hopeless despair.

The odds are hopelessly stacked against us when we depend upon our consecration, our devotion, or our love. Then we would have to preach and speak only on the final defeat, if we were depending upon our own ability in things spiritual.

### **Not Victory But Defeat Through Mere Man; Victory Is Through Christ**

We do not rely upon ourselves, but upon our great God, and among the many statements that assure us that God has completed our redemption in the price that our Lord has paid for us is this glorious statement: *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.”*

God takes the initiative, God retains the initiative, and God keeps at the task of redeeming us until there is every assurance that the victory belongs to every believer, because our faith is centred upon the spotless life, the sacrificial death, and the glorious resurrection and ascension of our Lord.

What Jesus Christ did for us in keeping God's requirements in our stead, what Jesus Christ did to fulfil the will of God in keeping with the holy commandments, that God requires of us. What Jesus Christ did when He ascended the altar of the cross, and what Jesus Christ did when the grave could contain Him no longer, what Jesus Christ did when He ascended on high to obtain for us this last gift of the final victory among all other gifts, and what Jesus Christ is about to do, as He instructs the archangel to lift the trumpet to his lips and sound out the blast that shall wake all the dead, --- is only to invite us into the presence of God forevermore. This is the sure and certain hope that God offers to us on this Last Sunday of the Church Year.

### **Thanks Due God at the End of the Church Year**

This is a most appropriate Sunday, therefore, to thank God for the wonderful privilege we have had of gathering here regularly to learn of our salvation.

Like the many facets of a diamond, each Sunday has added its own special sparkle to the way God has told us about our redemption. We observed the three great festivals of the Church year. Christmas with the heavenly Father's gift of His Son to be the Saviour of men. Easter, with the witness of our risen Lord to prove that Good Friday's "*It is finished*" actually ended in victory for Christ and those who are Christ's.

And finally Pentecost, with its gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, Helper and Counsellor to guide us into the truth of our personal salvation. These and many other events have rounded out a message during this past church year that calls for only one response: "*God has done all things well.*"<sup>4</sup>

Our confidence is expressed in 2 Timothy 1:12, *for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.*

### **We Confess Our Lack of Appreciation**

Oh, surely, you and I confess today that we have not always or fully appreciated our privilege of Worship. Why, some of us may have even ignored our opportunities and acted as although there would always be another Sunday.

And then even when we were at worship, all of us must confess that there were times when we were here in body, but our thoughts and our spirit were far from the message of God. We heard the message, but we forgot so quickly.

Then the week was barely begun, when we looked forward with anticipation to next Sunday's message lest our spirit should languish in despair.

How good God has been to us to give us so many and such rich occasions to hear of His love in Christ Jesus, our Lord! We would be ungrateful indeed unless we were willing to say today: *"Oh, thank You, God, thank You for letting me hear again and again and again that Christ has won the complete and final victory for me, and that I can continue to build my confidence on full redemption through Your Son."*

## **2. This Victory Assures A Holy Fellowship Of God With His Believers Through Eternity**

The voice that St. John hears, reminds him that **"God Himself"** will be with His people. God is eager to remind His own of a holy fellowship with Him that shall exist through all eternity. Here is the final consummation of all of God's plans and purposes. God pledges that there shall be no more separations, nothing shall ever divide the Creator from His creatures. There will be no possibility of a believer being cut off when God will surround each of His followers with Himself.

### **God's Pledge Is Staggering**

This pledge of a continued contract with His believers is so staggering that the very voice of Jesus Christ is introduced to give it still more weight and personal appeal. Our Lord is pictured as the *"Alpha and Omega," "the Beginning and the End,"* the fullest and most unqualified claim to His eternal Godhead.

Jesus eliminates all concepts of time as applying to Himself and powerfully emphasises the eternity of His existence. Infinity raised to the highest power, this is our Lord, and this eternal Lord fills us with confidence in the final victory.

## **Our Worship**

God has certainly put it in words that are intended to be understood; He has sought to give us His message in language that can be comprehended, but what He tells us of Himself in Jesus Christ, this is so great and glorious a mystery, we cannot but kneel down and worship and adore Him.

It is important that we are surrounded by an atmosphere that will really help us worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and to convey the message of salvation in our Worship Service through the Liturgy, Hymns, Readings, and Sermon.

The Gospel is always the great victory of God who has loved us even unto death, and whatever we can do to provide a setting that will help us and our fellow worshipers concentrate on the joy of this great assurance must remain our objective in worship. The most receptive heart in the most attractive surroundings remains our purpose when we are listening to the account of the final victory.

### **The Final Victory Calls For The Transformation Of All Who Anticipate Its Joys.**

A theme as significant as *“The Final Victory”* on this last Sunday after Trinity must not leave us cold or unresponsive. God expects something to happen within us to alter our way of thinking, to change and to improve our attitude, and to call for a transformed life.

We cannot anticipate the joys of life with our Lord through all eternity and yet not seek His constant companionship here on earth. We cannot expect to be with the redeemed of the Lord in eternity and fail to have anything in common with Christian people in our day-to-day living.

We are pilgrims, for sure, but pilgrims who are ready to be welcomed home on the other side. By the miracle of grace you and I shall see the very face of God.

When we hear the command: *“Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in”*<sup>5</sup> that wonderful moment when heaven and earth fade away and the eternal God, in loving grace, meets His mortal creatures, cannot but stir us here and now, to the

most dedicated service, the most loyal devotion, and the most determined expression of a life lived for God.

### **Sharing the Victory**

And among our most determined and consecrated efforts must be the decision to share with others the victory that our Lord has earned for us and is anxious to have all people enjoy. We missed many chances to witness to our Lord during the past church year. Even the frightening headlines and the story of the destructive power that is now within the hands of highly unprincipled people has not stirred us to action.

But the *“love of Christ controls us,”*<sup>6</sup> and as surely as we appreciate the final victory, so we will be concerned throughout the new church year that lies ahead that we shall use every occasion we have, to let others in on the good news of Christ’s redemption and to give them occasion to see the blessings of our life with God.

### **Sharing Time Is Now**

After all, there are only two times when we are urged to preach the Gospel: *“in season and out of season.”*<sup>7</sup> There are only two areas to which we should bring the good news: at home and abroad. There are two major attitudes that God expects us to express as we bring our witness: *“long-suffering and kindness.”*<sup>8</sup>

God wants none of us to feel that the Lord’s work of witnessing is a part-time assignment. This is the sole reason why we are here on earth; the Lord has a mission for us to perform that only we can do for Him. Only as we do this work can we help others discover how bright the candle is that Jesus lit when He pointed as a sign of the final victory, as we read in Matthew 24:14, <sup>14</sup> *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.* Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:9

<sup>2</sup> Matt 25:6

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 25:13

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<sup>4</sup> Mark 7:37

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 24:7

<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14

<sup>7</sup> 2 Timothy 4:2

<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:6, Galatians 5:22