

Emmanuel Ev. Lutheran Church—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Pentecost 23  
November 13, 2022  
Sermon by Pastor  
***This too shall pass***

<sup>5</sup> As some were talking about the temple, how it was decorated with beautiful stones and offerings, Jesus said, <sup>6</sup> “These things that you see here—the days will come when there will not be one stone left on another—everyone will be thrown down.” <sup>7</sup> They asked him, “Teacher, when will these things happen? And what is the sign that these things are about to happen?” <sup>8</sup> He said, “Watch out so that you are not deceived! For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. <sup>9</sup> Whenever you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be terrified, for these things must happen first, but the end will not be right then.” <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, famines, and plagues in various places. There will be horrifying sights and great signs from heaven. <sup>12</sup> But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, handing you over to synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for my name’s sake. <sup>13</sup> It will turn out to be your opportunity to testify. <sup>14</sup> So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand how to defend yourselves, <sup>15</sup> for I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. They will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup> You will be hated by all people for my name’s sake. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup> By patient endurance you will gain your lives.

—Luke 21:5-19

**“This too shall pass.”** Have you heard this famous adage before? This saying was popularized by Abraham Lincoln. Then, it resurfaced during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. This saying recognizes the general truth that life has seasons of difficulty and different trials. Often, these difficulties end.

People have mistakenly thought this saying is a Biblical quotation. Understandably so, there are sections of Scripture that say, “And it came to pass.” There are also a lot of proverbs written by King Solomon, so couldn’t this be one of them?

The simple truth is **“this too shall pass,”** is not a promise from God in this life. During difficult times, people will share this thought that the current difficulties may come to an eventual end. Although, it is generally true in the lives of many, there is no promise from God that these problems will not remain in this life. It is possible that a person’s entire life could be hampered by the same issues. There is the possibility that negative impacts for some will not pass in this life. When it comes to the troubles in this current life **“this too shall pass”** is not a Biblical promise if we mean the problems would be resolved in this life.

**“This too shall pass”** is a Biblical promise if we mean by it that these things will come to an end on Judgment Day. When Jesus comes in judgment, all injustices will end. When Jesus comes in judgment, this current life is over. So, yes **“this too shall pass.”**

In the week leading up to his crucifixion, Jesus spent much time around the temple. He cleared out the greedy people. He pointed to true generosity. He taught in the temple courtyard. Here, Jesus was teaching his disciples from the Mount of Olives overlooking the temple.

While there, some of Jesus’ disciples remarked about the beauty of the temple. Upon this remark, Jesus took the opportunity to continue to teach them. He told them the temple would be destroyed. In 70 A.D. this did happen. Jesus also used this to teach them about the end of all things. About such things, Jesus taught them, **this too shall pass**. Jesus taught his disciples this current life would come to pass.

When he was teaching his disciples about the end of all things of this life, his disciples raised two questions, when will this happen and what will the signs be? Regarding the first question, when will this happen, Jesus does not answer their question directly. Instead, he tells them that the signs will come first. The emphasis of his answer is the end of this life is certainly coming, so be ready.

Regarding the second question, what will the signs be, Jesus shares with his disciples many signs. Let’s investigate these signs further. First, many will come in his name claiming to be the Christ. We see this sign has been fulfilled in false christs, such as Krishna Venta, Sun Myung Moon, and Jim Jones.

Then Jesus shared with them other signs: wars, earthquakes, famines, plagues, horrifying sights, and signs from the heavens. All such things have been happening since Jesus ascended into heaven.

All the signs of the end times have happened: the signs in nature, the signs in society, the signs in the church, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the gospel has been spread over all the world. Even the Apostle Paul recognized the second coming of Jesus could come in his lifetime. Paul wrote, “*As a result you do not lack any gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 1:7) According to Jesus’ teaching on the Mount of Olives, the disciples could be confident, and you can be confident as well regarding this life **this too shall pass**.

On Wednesday, I got to be the referee for Emmanuel Lutheran’s soccer game. While studying the rules of soccer and the text of this sermon throughout the week, it struck me that the time for soccer games is a fitting illustration for the end of the world. This is not because a low scoring soccer game can make people wish the world was ending. To the untrained spectator, it may seem that the upcoming end of a soccer game makes no sense. All of a sudden, two minutes will be added to the half. This is done to make up for time lost for penalties, injuries, and delays.

Although a soccer player may not know when exactly the end of the game is coming, the player knows for certain the end will come. So, she simply needs to play until the whistle is blown.

A soccer player can have a better clue as to when exactly the end of the half or game will come. Yet, this is like our life on earth. Jesus doesn’t tell us exactly at what time and when the end of this life will come. Yet, we know for certain it is coming. We know that **this too shall pass**.

Do you live your life with an understanding of the certainty of the coming end? Often, people can approach life, especially their spiritual welfare and that of others, with an “I’ve got time” mentality. The young man figures that he has time to kick his sinful habit of watching pornography in the future. The college student figures that she has time to kick her sinful habit of binge drinking in the future. The middle-aged man figures that he has time to ‘get right with God’ later in life. The aging parent figures that she has time to witness to her strayed, unbelieving children.

Is this your approach to the end of this life? Do you figure that “you’ve got time.” Such a mindset can be fueled by a distrust and disbelief in God’s Word. God tells us that the end could come at any moment. God’s Word is true. When Jesus says the end is coming, he means it. Don’t believe the devil’s lies. Don’t fall into such spiritual apathy. Such a mindset is rooted in sin.

You can be confident that the end will come. This life, yes, **this too shall pass**. Although, this is not a fearful day for us who are in Christ Jesus. For us, this is a day to look forward to with joy. As Jesus said to his disciples at another time in the week before his crucifixion, “*Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am. You know where I am going, and you know the way.*” (John 14:1-4) When Jesus comes on the Last Day, he will raise the dead and take you, and all of God’s children, to live with him forever. Be confident knowing this includes you. Jesus lived a perfect life for you. Jesus took your punishment on the cross. The Holy Spirit created faith in your heart to receive God’s grace. This current life shall come to pass, but you will live forever with God.

The things of this life will come to pass. This is something we can be certain of because Jesus has told us. This certainty is something that brings us joy. We will be with God forever in heaven. Part of this joy is also in knowing that when we say **this too shall pass**, this means the injustices of this life will end.

After telling his disciples about the signs of the certain end, Jesus tells them about the different injustices that they would face because they bore his name. People would seize them. People would persecute them. People would hand them over to prisons. Parents would betray them. Siblings would betray them. Friends would betray them. They would be hated for being Christians.

In the face of these injustices, the disciples would not need to fear. Jesus would be with them. Jesus would give them the words to say. Jesus would protect them. Ultimately, though, they would not need to fear because those who stood firm to the end would receive the gift of eternal life.

The other end of the comfort is that these injustices would end. In the new heavens and the new earth, they would no longer face such difficulties. In the new heavens and the new earth, they would no longer experience such pain. Also, those who imposed such injustice upon them would receive justice. The enemies of God would be punished for eternity. Jesus taught his disciples that **this too shall pass** regarding these injustices.

Many times, in the Bible, God’s believers decry the injustices of this world. They often focused on the injustices that God’s people faced in this life. Recently, the teens of Emmanuel went through a study of Habakkuk called, “Is

there justice?" In this Bible study, the teens discussed the topic of justice. The ultimate answer Habakkuk received from God and that the teens heard is that which we consider today. Yes, there is justice. God would punish those who brought injustice upon his people. God's people, the people clothed in the righteousness of Christ, would live by faith. The same comfort upon which we focus. Primarily, we will live forever in heaven with Jesus because of the justice established on the cross. Secondly, the injustices of this world will end and those who oppose our God will be punished.

When Christians see the injustices of this world, it can drive them in one of two directions. The first is that they are led to despair. They look at people suffering, sinners flourishing, and Christians being persecuted, despairing that God can't or won't do something. The other way is that they desire to right the wrongs on their own. They desire to bring vengeance into their own hands. They do this because they do not believe that God's timetable is right or that God desires to take care of it. Either way such approaches are sinful. This is a lack of trust in God and his Word. This, then, moves into sinful actions and demeanors.

Take heart and have confidence. God does not let injustice stand. On the last day, **these too shall pass**. Those who oppose and reject God will be punished for eternity. God established justice on the cross of Christ Jesus. On the cross, sin was punished, and Jesus' perfect life was accredited to you. You were declared not guilty. You will live forever with your God. Amen.