

**Sermon Notes – December 1, 2024**  
**First Sunday of Advent**  
**The Holy Gospel of St. Luke 21: 25-36**  
**Peace Lutheran Church**  
**“Living in Great Expectation”**

Advent assures us that the Lord will strengthen us, not because we are worthy, but because we need faith and righteousness. “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah” (Jer. 33: 14). The Lord will cause a “righteous Branch” to bring justice, because justice does not reside in the land. Righteousness also is not a natural attribute of God's people, it is an infused gift. Luke's gospel offers the same promise in a starker portrait: tumult will bring “distress” when the Son of Man comes “with power and great glory” (Luke 21: 25-27) because, again, redemption is from the Lord.

We are instructed to stay awake and alert, to wait, to watch, and above all to expect God to fulfill His promises. This is not an easy call - to live life waiting and yearning for the culmination of an apocalyptic vision. It may seem that we have no sure footing, but “Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety” (Jer. 33: 16).

Advent calls on us to recognize what we yearn for - for ourselves and for others. It provides time for us to ponder what we truly desire for an abundant life. While we can never divest ourselves of hunger for what we do not have (although we may delude ourselves that we do not have such hunger), this day gives us permission to dream.

The opposite of longing is not naive optimism or ignorance of suffering, but rather the giving up on hope. If we do not yearn, we have nothing for which to hope. Instead of trying to ascertain whether this coming drama is Jesus' second coming or the final end times, consider that Advent forces us to take the Lord's gifts and promises seriously. The specter of a coming time of doom helps us to

see that life lived in God's Holy Word is precious beyond measure,  
because it really is salvation from sin and meaninglessness.