

Title: **“Salvation will be Forever”**

Text: Is. 51: 4 – 6

Date: November 25, 2018

Occasion: Last Sunday of the Church Year

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, Co.

Grace and Peace to you on this Last Sunday of the Church Year, from God our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now I have some good news and some bad news to give to each of you this morning. The bad news is that this is the last Sunday that I have with you in this church year. Now I know that this may have come as a shock to some of you, even though in the past few weeks I have talked about the last day coming. Why there have been times in the past month that I have talked about the last day coming like thief in the night. Now that the Last Sunday has come I can only hope that some of what I have taught you in this past year through God’s Word has gotten into you and become a part of your life. For I know as you allow God’s Word to be a part of your life it will do its work and enable you to grow in your faith in God. This is the last Sunday in this Church year that I have to prepare you for the forever that will come and take you from this world, and that’s bad news because we all have a lot to learn about God so that we can grow in our faith and trust in Him, but the Last Day will come and this is the Last Sunday of this Church Year.

The good news is that next Sunday is the first Sunday I will be with you in the new Church Year, unless the last day comes to this world, so I will have the opportunity to teach you God’s Word, and with the work Holy Spirit see you grow in your faith and trust in God. The Good News is that though I may have failed to prepare each of you for the last day in some way, God has not failed and has provide you with a Salvation that will last forever.

The Bad news is that this is the last Sunday you have an opportunity to worship in God’s word and grow in your love, faith and fellowship with all of God’s people and to invite a friend to join you in worship this Church year. The Good News is that with God’s blessings you will all be right back here on Wednesday and next Sunday as we begin a new Church year so that we all can be guided to the green pastures and still waters of God’s Word so that we all can grow and mature in our faith and trust in God. The Good News is that even though we all will come to a last day here on this earth we have been given Salvation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that will last forever.

So, what would you be doing if this was the last day that you had on this earth? That's the question I asked you in your bulletin this morning. Would you be trying to make up for all the things that you hadn't gotten done but you knew that you should have done and would have done if you had known that this was the last day?

Some years ago, a tourist was traveling along the shores of Lake Como in Northern Italy. He wanted to visit especially one Villa called Villa Arconati. When the tourist reached the Villa, a friendly old gardener opened the gate and showed the tourist the grounds, which this old man kept in perfect order. 'How long have you been here?' the tourist asked. "Twenty-four years," replied the gardener. "And how often has the owner of the villa been here during that time?" "Four times." "When was he here the last time?" "Twelve years ago." "Never since then?" "Never." "Does he write to you?" "No." "From whom then do you get your instructions?" "From his agent at Milan." "Does this agent come out here quite often?" "Never." "Who, then, comes here?" "I am almost always alone," said the old Gardner, "But once in a great while a tourist comes here, like you." "But you keep this grounds in such fine condition and take such excellent care of all the plants and everything just as though you expected your master to come tomorrow." "Today, sir, today," the old gardener promptly replied. This answer made a deep impression on the tourist. How faithful that old man was to his trust! Day after day his thought was not "Tomorrow my master may come," but "Today, sir, today."

Today on this Last Sunday of this Church Year, our Lord comes to us and says: **“Give attention to me, my people and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.”** (Is. 51: 4)

When Isaiah wrote these words, God was talking to the people of Israel, they already had the Law of Moses, the Ten Commandments, but here God is talking about a new law and new justice that would bring all the nations back to the light of the world. That new law and new justice has come into this world of ours. It is a law and justice that is not enforced by human hands, weapons or resources, like the one we have here in the United State or those that other countries. This Law and Justice is implanted in our hearts and minds by God's Word and Sacraments, so it is important for us to listen and to hear what God is saying to us now, especially on this Last Sunday before our last day comes and God's justice is pronounced. Through the life, death and resurrection of God's Only Son, Jesus Christ we have receive this new Law and Justice.

It is by faith in Him that we have this salvation, which starts now, and will last forever. It is by His righteousness that we now have righteousness in the sight of God and it will last forever.

God says to us, **“My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the people; the coastland hope for me, and for my arm they wait.”** (Is. 51: 5)

When my children were much younger we use to play a game. They would crawl up onto something like the top of the doghouse, a rock wall, a chair or just about anything they could that made them stand higher, sometimes as height as me or higher. They would stand there with their arms out saying, “Daddy” as I walked by. I would then turn to them and put my arms out and they would jump. I would catch them and spin them around and around and put them down softly onto the ground. It was a game that could be started at all most any time and in any place, but it usually happened on those days when I was doing something around the house and not giving them enough attention. The day came though when they got too big and it wasn’t safe for me or for them to play the game anymore. That last day was a sad day but it came even though they still wanted to jump into my arms and trust that I could spin them around and around and carefully place them on the ground again.

It’s not a game for God. He is standing there with His arms stretched out ready to catch us to put His arms around each and every one of us. His arms were stretched out on the cross of Calvary for us as Jesus, God’s own Son died for all our sins. His arms were stretched out to show the disciples that He had truly risen from the grave, three days after his death. It is the arms of Jesus Christ that have brought God’s righteousness, salvation and justice to all of us. It is Jesus’ arms that we look to have wrapped around us as we take our leap of faith in this world and He never fails to catch us. It is Jesus’ arms that we hope to see as we wait to be with Him for all eternity. For in Jesus’ arms of righteousness and salvations we will always be safe, because they will last forever no matter how big we get or whatever we do in this world.

God says to us **“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.”** (Is. 51: 6)

God has some Good news and some Bad news for us this morning. The bad news is that there will be a last day for all of creation. That means that all that we see here at Shepherd of

the Rockies will one day no longer be here. That means that each of us will one day have our last Sunday and our last day here on this earth. The Bad news is that all that we hold, smell, taste and see will be gone and today could be our last day.

The Good news thought is that the salvation given to us by Jesus Christ is ours today and will last forever. It is not tied to this world. It is secured by the Life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God has prepared this salvation for us now and it will last forever. The Good news is that the righteousness given to us by Jesus Christ is ours today and will last forever. Jesus said, **“It is finished.”** as He hung on the cross to secure our salvation and give us His righteousness. Jesus rose from the grave three days after His death on the Cross of Calvary to guarantee us the righteousness of God now and forever. God’s righteousness is ours now and it will not fail to finish the work that it has begun in us by the Holy Spirit’s power through God’s Word and Sacraments because God will last forever.

A man walked into an Architectural Engineer firm and sat down with one of the Architects. “I want to know where the best rock in this county is so that I can build a house that will last forever,” the man said. The Architect asked, “You’re looking to build something that will last forever?” “That’s right,” the man said, “I’m looking for the best rock in the county to lay the foundations for my house on so that it will last forever. Can you help me?” The Architect opened a drawer in his desk and pulled out a Bible and handed it to the man. “Sir, that’s the only rock in the world that you can lay a foundation on that will last forever.”

On this Last Sunday of this church year I hope that I have led you to know and come to the salvation and righteousness given to you by God through His Word that will last forever. I hope that you have listened and heard God’s Word for then you have received the salvation and righteousness that will last forever. It is God’s Salvation and righteousness that I have wanted to share with you each and every day of this past year and it is God’s Salvation and righteousness that I will want to share with you each and every day of the coming year. Now as we come to that last day, I want to encourage each of you to share God’s words and love with all people so that they too may know of the salvation that will last forever. Amen