Pentecost 24A **November 7 & 8, 2026**

The Day of the Lord

"Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord?" Amos 5:18.

As we move forward from the Reformation and All Saints' Day celebrations of the past two weeks, the Church year takes a noticeable shift. For the next several weeks, our ears will hear a heightened highlight on the end times. The readings, the hymns, the prayers will all serve to funnel our focus upon Christ's second coming. In some ways, our general calendar also reinforces reminders of this focus of the Church year. As we approach the end of the calendar year and as the days grow shorter with less daylight hours, these changes serve as a fitting backdrop to this end time theme.

Over the next six weeks, one of the ways that this end time message will be heard is with the phrase, the day of the Lord. This week and next week, this phrase is clearly heard in our first readings from the Old Testament. However, several of the other upcoming readings are also closely connect to this day of the Lord phrase even though it won't be directly mentioned. Some of our second readings will emphasize how believers ought to be living as the day of the Lord approaches. And many of the upcoming Gospel readings will have parables and teachings of Jesus that speak to important details about how this day of the Lord will come.

Since Scripture speaks to this phrase, the day of the Lord, in several ways it's helpful for us to unpack some of the layers wrapped around this concept. This weekend we'll look to clarify, provide context, and find comfort as we consider the importance of the day of the Lord for us. As we work our way through this phrase, we'll clarify what this phrase means. Then we'll consider some examples that give context to this phrase. Finally, we'll locate where our comfort is as the day of the Lord approaches.

To clarify the meaning of the day of the Lord, it's helpful to remember two things. First, the day of the Lord describes a moment in time when God acts decisively and clearly to bring about judgement and deliverance. Sometimes, this phrase makes us think only of judgement, but there is a tension here that shouldn't be lost. The day of the Lord has both God's wrath and His salvation. This day is a day of wrath for unbelievers and a day of salvation for believers.

Second, the day of the Lord comes with great anticipation. Throughout the Bible when the day of the Lord is coming, the Lord alerts His people. While the exact moment might not be given, the reality of its coming shouldn't be unexpected. The reason for this anticipation is that when the day of the Lord arrives there is no time to escape or make changes. The Lord wakes His people up to the nearness of this day so that they don't wait until the last second when it's too late to repent and cling to the safety of His work. So, the day of the Lord is a greatly anticipated time when God acts decisively and clearly to bring about judgement and deliverance.

There are some major examples in the Bible that provide helpful context to this understanding of the day of the Lord. In the Old Testament three big ones are the Exodus and the two exiles, one by the Assyrians, and another by the Babylonians. The Exodus was a greatly anticipated moment of deliverance for God's people from Egyptian slavery and harrowing judgement upon Pharaoh and the false gods of Egypt. After over 400 years of bondage and ten plagues, the Lord, by His servant Moses led His people out of Egypt.

The two exiles were also highly anticipated moments of judgement and salvation upon Israel. The Assyrian exile happened first in history around 722/21 BC and the Babylonian exile occurred many years later around 586 BC. Our reading from Amos precedes that first exile by the Assyrians as Amos addresses the ten northern tribes of the split kingdom of Israel. Amos is waking up these tribes to the reality that the prosperity, power, and property they were enjoying shouldn't lead them to the understanding that the coming day of the Lord would be a day of blessing for them. In their good times, they had grown complacent and were further from the Lord than they realized.

So, Amos pronounced woe upon them to call them to repentance. And sadly, his message wasn't heeded, as would be the case for other prophets who came after Amos. However, in hope of later repentance and reform, Amos and other prophets would leave God's people with a message of restoration that would come much later, ultimately looking toward the end of time.

In the New Testament, three major day-of-the-Lord moments also show up: Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, and the promised return of Jesus. Like the Exodus of the

Old Testament, Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension are the highly anticipated judgement and deliverance of God's people from their slavery to sin, death, and the devil. Taking on His people's judgement, Jesus worked salvation for His people delivering a definitive victory over sin, death and the devil.

In a similar way, the destruction of the temple and Christ's second coming, mirror the two exiles of the Old Testament. Instead of the Assyrians, the Romans were the nation to execute judgement on God's people in 70 AD. Instead of the Babylonians, Jesus, the judge of the living and the dead, will be the One to carry out judgement upon the entire world at the time that God the Father has chosen. This is what the parable in our Gospel reading highlights – preparation for the coming Bridegroom, preparation for the coming of the fullness of God's kingdom. Like Amos, Jesus' message calls out complacency and the fruitless thinking that someone can just lean on another person's faith, trust, and preparation to be bailed out when the day of the Lord comes.

This context from both the Old and New Testaments serves as a sobering wake up call for us this weekend. We are in this time of anticipation awaiting the second coming of Jesus. And this time of expectation shouldn't lead us to misunderstand what is coming. Christ's return isn't to bring another period of grace and second chances. The time of grace is right now! The time for repentance and reform is this moment we've been given. And this isn't simply a time for us to remind others that they need to repent, this time is your time, my time, the time for each of us personally to repent.

We are being alerted to the constant struggle we individually face of going through the motions with our relationship with God. Especially, as so many distractions fill our lives and hearts, we can't lean upon several good deeds here, some fairly regular church attendance there, and whole lot of God and I have some special understanding that we've made up in order to ignore how great our need truly is. No! Now isn't the time for us to ignore and overlook the seriousness of what is coming! Now is the time for us to reflect, recognize, and repent as we realize how easily detached our hearts get from God and His will for us.

Now is the time for us to confess our shortcomings in attempting to fix our broken relationship with God our Maker by simply going through the motions; our self-serving thoughts, our insincere words, our misplaced trust in our own actions; and instead, receive and cling to the perfect thoughts, words, and actions of our Savior Jesus. The very Savior who has endured and answered the judgement of the day of the Lord in our place. The very Savior whose life, death, resurrection, and ascension prepare us for what this day of the Lord truly will be. The very Savior who covers our sinful intentions to wait to repent as long as possible, who covers our sin-poisoned good works that we take so much pride in, who covers our very inconsistent motivation to love and serve our neighbor.

Yes, the comfort we have as the day of the Lord approaches is always located in the work that Jesus did in our place. The Bible's reassuring words to each of us about Jesus' completed work on the cross and His breaking out of the tomb for us. The simple but profound words of Jesus attached to the waters of Baptism and to the wafer and wine of Communion that personally deliver to us the spoils of Jesus' victory for us, forgiveness, life, and salvation. The encouraging witness of fellow believers that continually remind us of the hope we have because of Jesus' death and resurrection for us. Here is our comfort as our anticipation of the day of the Lord grows.

So as these next several weeks play out, as we look forward to big school events, major work moments, holidays and so on, may the anticipation of those things remind us all the more of our anticipation of the day of the Lord. As the Church year with its readings, hymns, and prayers funnel our focus toward the nearness of the day of the Lord, may these words imprint on our hearts and minds the clarity, context, and comfort of the day of the Lord. And as we move into our renewed vision here at Emmanuel, both individually and as a church community, may the recognition that God gives; we grow; we go; guard us from going through the motions of faith and encourage us to make the most of this time God has given us before the day of the Lord comes by continually receiving His good gifts and responding with love and care for our neighbor. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

In Christ,

Pastor Dan