

Consider-ables w/Max Lucado

Loved by a Trustworthy God

by Max Lucado

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” __Matthew 24:6

Nature is a pregnant creation, third-trimester heavy. When a tornado rips through a city in Kansas or an earthquake flattens a region in Pakistan, this is more than barometric changes or shifts of ancient fault lines. The universe is passing through the final hours before delivery. Painful contractions are in the forecast.

As are conflicts: “wars and rumors of wars.” One nation invading another. One superpower defying another. Borders will always need checkpoints. War correspondents will always have employment. The population of the world will never see peace this side of heaven.

Christians will suffer the most. “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me” (Matt. 24:9 NIV).

But remember: “All these [challenging times] are the beginning of birth pains” (Matt. 24:8 NIV), and birth pangs aren’t all bad. (Easy for me to say.) Birth pains signal the onset of the final push. The obstetrician assures the mom-to-be, “It’s going to hurt for a time, but it’s going to get better.” Jesus assures us of the same. Global conflicts indicate our date on the maternity calendar. We are in the final hours, just a few pushes from delivery, a few brief ticks of eternity’s clock from the great crowning of creation. A whole new world is coming! . . .

All things, big and small, flow out of the purpose of God and serve his good will. When the world appears out of control, it isn’t. When warmongers appear to be in charge, they aren’t. When ecological catastrophes dominate the day, don’t let them dominate you. Let’s trust our heavenly Father. — Fearless

Glorious God, all things flow out of your purposes. You are in control even when catastrophes dominate the day. When global conflicts increase, may we remember that these are birth pangs preparing the way for a whole new, wonderful world. May we lay aside all anxiety and fear and see these singular events as signs for rejoicing and anticipating your peaceful kingdom, amen.

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Responsive Reading: Psalm 27:1, 7-9

North: The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

South: *The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

ALL: Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"

North: Your face, Lord, do I seek.

South: *Do not hide your face from me.*

North: Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help.

South: *Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!*

ALL: Hear me, O Lord, my light, my stronghold, and my salvation

Lesson: Isaiah 9:1-4

There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."*

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea for they were...

Gospel . . . (cont'd)

fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Upcoming Events

Sermons on the Web...

We are recording the Sunday sermons and publishing them to the church's website. It is hoped that those who are unable to get to church on Sunday for any number of reasons will at least be able to get the weekly message. Look for the link on the home page (www.salemlc-oxford.org) right column near the bottom.



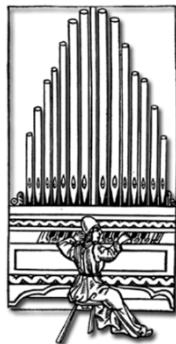
On February 9th we will have a representative of the Isanti County Sheriff's Office give a presentation on church security. The sheriff has been very responsive to our request we should fill the church in appreciation!



The **Women's Bible Study** meeting every-other Wednesday – next meeting January 29th -- until Lent starts (Ash Wednesday is February 26th)!!



Meets every third Saturday! Next one is February 8th at 8:30am!



We have purchased a new (to us) organ that will be delivered during the 1st week of February. If anyone would like to make a special donation to help defray the cost of this organ, they should speak with Pr. Rob. This new organ will replace the one given us by the Kuhnemund family.

Upcoming Events ... (Cont'd)

ANNUAL MEETING



Salem's annual meeting will be held on Feb 2nd after the service. Please plan on attending to hear the annual reports, elect board members, and suggest benevolences and/or tithing recipients. 4 new council members will be elected and council officers will be elected at the next council meeting on February 11th

We aren't too far away from Lent, which means our Wednesday night Soup/Sandwich suppers (6pm) and learning/prayer service (7pm) will start up again! These will start on Feb 26th with an Ash Wednesday service. For the remainder of Wednesdays of Lent, Pr. Rob is looking for input on the topic. Possible topics are on the development and an overview of the Bible, on the sacramental nature and acts of our Church, or on the content of the Confirmation Process. Other suggestions are also welcome. Please offer your preference to Pr. Rob.



GRIN-ABLE(S)...

- Moses had the first tablet that could connect to the cloud.
- I wrote a song about a tortilla. Well, actually, it's more of a wrap.
- If I got 50 cents for every failed math exam, I'd have \$ 6.30 now.
- I don't want to brag, but I do speak pig Latin; I mean, I'm not fluent, but I'm sure if I ever went there, I could get by.
- I bought one of those tapes to teach you Spanish in your sleep. During the night, the tape skipped. Now I can only stutter in Spanish.
- Probably the worst thing you can hear when you're wearing a bikini is "Good for you!"



Calendar...

- ✓ **Annual Meeting – February 2nd following service**
- ✓ **Isanti County Sheriff here to present safety information -- February 9th**