

...*all things new*. The fifth in a series on sermons,
 =Advent in Narnia preached on December 24, 2017
 at St. Giles' Presbyterian Church, Prince George BC.
 by Rev. Herb Hilder.

Lessons; DEUTERONOMY 6:10-12
 REVELATION 21:1-8

Aslan comes up the steps – his mane more radiant
 than ever.

A figure of majestic magnificence!

Susan and Lucy are so excited to see him

Aslan explains the deeper magic

He is told about the battle in which Peter and
 Edmund are engaged.

Aslan realizes the time to help is at a premium, so
 he asks the girls to climb on his back and with a
 roar, away they go!

In between the raging battle scenes Aslan
 reaches the castle of the White Witch.

He knows that Peter will need all the help he can
 get,

And so Aslan breathes on all the creatures the
 White Witch has frozen.

Of course the one we know the best is Mr. Tumnus
 He is defrosted by the breath of Aslan and away
 they all go to help in the battle.

The White Witch will be defeated, but not before there are casualties.

Again allusions to the Christian story are there.

I know reading from the Revelation to St. John the Divine may sound out of place for a service on Christmas Eve morning

We should be reading Luke 2 or Matthew 1, 2 about Jesus' birth.

Well, take heart, we will be reading the birth narrative s this evening as we build the manger scene.

Remember though there are actually 2 Advents and we are living in the middle of those 2

Jesus' coming as a small baby in Bethlehem once long ago AN D his promised return

"When" is unknown

The certainty of it happening – not to be doubted!

If I make it to heaven,

Do you know the one Biblical writer I eagerly look forward to meeting? St. John – pastor, poet, story teller of the Gospel.

And a teller of the story in an exciting and bold way.

Remember there is nothing in the Revelation that has not been said in the rest of scripture.

John though tells the story in an emboldened way.

John stretches our imaginations

The Gospel story is definitely in the 22 chapters of the Revelation,
 But John re-tells it in an exciting and edgy way

Beginning in chapter 21 of the Revelation, the Gospel story comes to a climax. For here John's vision takes him beyond the present, the today, the now to the "someday." It was a vision designed to give his first readers hope in the midst of the terrible persecutions for their faith.

Not hope anchored in midair!

Rather, hope anchored in the Lordship of Jesus Christ

There are no maybes or conditional statements here! It is a vision designed to give us hope – SOMEDAY these things shall come to be.

Depend upon it!

Not because I say so,

Or even St. John says so,

BUT BECAUSE THE LORD JESUS SAYS SO.

And it is heartening stuff isn't it?

I am so glad Jim read the lesson with the assurance it is made to have.

Look at the promises for a moment that Jesus through John makes

The sea was no more

As there were no natural harbours along the Israelite coastline, the Jews had never become much of a sea-faring people.

For most of them, the sea represented terror and death.

It was the place of monsters and violent storms
For St. John personally, exiled on the Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, the sea was a painful barrier and wall of isolation from fellowship with his beloved flock.

The sea then as John and his first readers see it is an image that says, *all the things that separate us from God – the chaos, the fear, the danger, will SOMEDAY end.*

The New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God

Four times in these short verses, the word 'new' is used.

The whole language of the passage is of newness, of change,

Of leaving things behind

Passed away, no more, no more, passed away, it is done.

SOMEDAY this world,

Our world filled far too often with pain, grief, heartbreak, ugliness, and war will pass away

The God who saves us by grace will dwell among us in a way that has not been seen since Creation.

We have His Holy Spirit and his presence now – certainly.

But that’s only a foretaste of future glory.

In the Narnia Chronicles all things new does not happen by the end of TLWW.

Yes, there is redemption of the land from the Witch’s curse,

But it is only for a time before things go out of whack again in Narnia

The SOMEDAY does not come until the last book of the Chronicles – aptly named The Last Battle.

I would love to see movie makers take this book and make a movie from it of the quality of TLWW!

Let me read the last few paragraphs from the Last Battle

Lucy said, “We’re so afraid of being sent away Aslan. And you have sent us back into our own world so often.”

No fear of that, “said Aslan. Have you not guessed?”

Their hearts leaped and a wild hope rose within them.

“There *was* a real railway accident,’ said Aslan softly.

“your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to call it in the Shadowlands—dead. The term is over; the holidays have begun. The dream is ended; this is the morning.

And as he spoke he no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world

and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before. P. 173 The Last Battle

Is that not comforting, exciting and reassuring?

I think so

I do not want to push the “someday” in my life or any of yours

But every time I read this morning’s reading from the Revelation,

And I do read it a lot at services celebrating a life lived – I am reminded that I live in hope and certainty of the promise – SOMEDAY ALL will be well.

God is not only going to remake the world and eradicate sin – he is also going to take away all lingering effects of sin in our hearts and lives!

Tears of regret.

Tears of guilt.

Tears of broken promises

Tears of loss and separation.

Tears over what has been taken from us

Tears of loneliness and secret anguish.

Each of us has our own stories of how our sin and the sin of other people have harmed us

How this out of joint world has caused us to stumble,

One day –SOMEDAY – Jesus is going to make it right.

He has already begun with his death and resurrection

I mean the Kingdom of God is here

And by the power of God's Holy Spirit and the assurance of the presence of the Risen Christ within us,

We are encouraged and counselled to live Kingdom values and givens every day –

In how we see God,

See others

And see ourselves – ransomed, healed, restored and forgiven to quote from Henry Lyte's Praise my Soul, the King of Heaven.

God's mercy and forgiveness are offered to all of us today – an allusion certainly to Aslan's action for Edmund

We do not have to earn our salvation.

It is a gift given from a lavish and generous God.

⁶Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. (Rev. 21:6,7)

St. John leaves nothing to chance,

He wants his readers to be clear about what God is doing and is going to do

St. John is also clear about the fate of those who by their own choice turn away from God. No accident that he begins his list with the word “cowardly”

It is not one of the historic 7 deadly sins.

However, in the context of 1st century Christian writing and faith it is.

In the midst of persecution for their faith,

Believers who are cowardly compromise their faith.

They sell out the promises and person of Jesus for worldly authority and power.

They refuse to stand up for Jesus!

TLWW ends of a note of restoration

The “someday all things new is not yet for Narnia
But the process has begun

It is not yet all things new for us today either
We continue to live between 2 Advents – the coming of God’s Son as a Baby born in Bethlehem
And his coming or return if you prefer as risen head of the Church – **the Alpha and Omega** – (first and last letter of the Greek alphabet –John wrote in New Testament Greek)

Beginning and the end and everything in between.

The reign of Christ has begun – as God’s people we need not be permanently overcome or overwhelmed in our times of suffering, trouble or confusion of what to do next or where to go

God knows that life is difficult.

And so he has provided a way through.

- The Holy Spirit is his gift to help out and stay true to the ways of Jesus – every day
- He promises that we will never be left as orphans – what a powerful image and promise that is!
- And He promises that SOMEDAY his Son shall return as Risen Lord of time and history. SOMEDAY all will be new. SOMEDAY God himself will dwell with us in a way not known since Creation. SOMEDAY there will be no more mourning, crying, pain or death. History is going somewhere.

It is for that SOMEDAY that we continue to wait with purpose and hope

Even so, come Lord Jesus