



First Sunday in Advent

Sunday Service 10:15 am – December 2, 2012 –
[Living Hope Lutheran Church](#)

Pastor Todd Goldschmidt

Sermon Theme: The Source of Certain Security . . .

Jeremiah 33:14-16 New International Version 1984 (NIV1984)

¹⁴ “‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

¹⁵ “‘In those days and at that time
I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line;
he will do what is just and right in the land.

¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.
This is the name by which it^[a] will be called:
The LORD Our Righteousness.’

Footnotes:

- a. [Jeremiah 33:16](#) Or *he*



What shakes up your world? What gets you uneasy or anxious? An unstable stock market? A call from your doctor who says, “I’d like you come back in this week for a follow-up appointment. The tests results show an abnormality we need to discuss”? Maybe it’s a frustrating family issue that remains unresolved after years of prayer, hair-pulling and impassioned pleading. It could be our nation’s burgeoning debt, the imminent threat of the collapse of the Social Security safety-net you thought would be there for you when you finally retired or a personal financial crisis that you wonder whether you’ll ever recover from. Perhaps you get extremely upset about the growing environmental impact of carbon emissions.

Each of us is no doubt shaken in different ways by ever-changing developments in our personal lives or in our world. In the 20+ years that I’ve been the Pastor here at Living Hope, I’ve ministered to many of you in ways that only you, I and God know. As I look around at mostly familiar faces, I’m confident that there’s not one of us who hasn’t experienced some sort of tumultuous life changing event. I’d suspect that’s true for those of you I don’t know so well. No one is immune to troubling situations or events in this sin-filled, corrupt world. But neither was the prophet Jeremiah. He was shaken by a number of things during the course of his lifetime.

To start with, Jehovah called Jeremiah to His spokesman at a time when the children of Israel were particularly unwilling to heed what God had to say through His prophets. They resented being told how to live their lives. At least twice they attempted to take Jeremiah’s life. The peoples’ refusal to repent and their violent reaction to God’s Word caused Jeremiah a great deal of anguish. He shares that angst with us when he prays earlier in his book:

O LORD, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long. But if I say, “I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot (20:7-9).

At the center of Jeremiah’s life—*his very vocation*—there was tension and rejection. And as if that wasn’t enough, the world in which he lived was also about to collapse. The Babylonians—led by their extremely egotistical king, Nebuchadnezzar—were poised to conquer Jerusalem and enslave its population. A year later, in 586 B.C., the pride and glory of Israel—Solomon’s magnificent temple—would be leveled. Jeremiah was at a tumultuous crossroads both internally and externally. To top it all off, God commissioned him to proclaim the judgmental message that Judah’s fall and Jerusalem’s impending destruction were a direct result of the peoples’ sins.



The Israelites had completely rejected the God of the covenant, Who'd given them Canaan's fertile farmland, protection from their enemies, the magnificent temple and the Holy City. What a situation! However unsettled we might be and whatever shakes us up in life, we'd be hard pressed to say that these things surpass the internal and external pressures Jeremiah faced.

Into such a mixed up mess, God sends a remarkable word for Jeremiah and for us: “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. “In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.” What a calming, healing, hopeful word! How restoring and refreshing! Like everything the LORD says, it’s an absolutely sure and certain word. God describes the arrival of One who will reverse the curse of apostasy and idolatry on the part of His people. Those who were about to experience violence, bloodshed, anguish and enslavement would once more dwell in safety and enjoy wonderful prosperity. God would lavish His blessings on them!

This tremendous reversal of fortunes would come about through the advent of the LORD’s Anointed One: when “the time came for the baby to be born, [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:6-7). Mary’s son was Israel’s long-awaited Messiah and mankind’s Savior from sin’s grip, Satan’s stranglehold and death’s cold, grasping hand! The angel Gabriel announced to a Jewish virgin: “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end” (Luke 1:30-33). Jesus, David’s seed, fulfilled this wonderful word of God precisely as Jeremiah prophesied!

Security: profound and permanent peace is ours in Jesus! We’re in Him, not by our own desire or effort, not by our own achievements, nor because of anything we did or didn’t do. We’re in Him solely because of God’s amazing grace—His undeserved love for sinners like us who deserve nothing but His righteous wrath with its final retribution in hell. We’re in Jesus—in that “righteous Branch . . . from David’s line”—because we were joined to His death and to His resurrection at our baptisms. His death on the cross did away with Israel’s sin, Judah’s sin, your sin and mine! His resurrection has given “us new birth into a living hope [and] into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time” as the Apostle Peter puts it in his first epistle (1:3-5). No matter what shakes your world, Jesus provides you with a solid foundation upon which to confidently build your house of faith!



Since we're subjects of the "ruler over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5), we are also "receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken" (Heb. 12:28), one that "endures forever" (Ps. 125:1). Not even death can have its way with us now that the Holy Spirit has kindled the flame of faith in our hearts! Jesus' word is certain. He assures us, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25). And we answer, with Jeremiah and Martha, "Yes, Lord, I believe" (11:27).

Many of those who seek to make us feel safe and secure can't deliver on their promises. Stock brokers, bankers, politicians and insurance salesmen—*try as they might*—don't always come thru. Neither do infomercials that tout products that'll make you slimmer, trimmer and sexier. Even the world's wealthiest individuals and most prominent people will eventually lose their fortunes and powerful positions. Someone else will come along once they pass from this life to the next, climb the corporate ladder and take their place at the top of humanity's heap. We need this reminder, too, as our sinful nature still strives just like the next person to get ahead in this life at all costs. To that end, the Apostle Paul wrote in his 1st letter to the young pastor Timothy: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (6:17-19).

Jeremiah spoke that very same message to his contemporaries. He faithfully proclaimed God's Word. The vast majority in Judah and Jerusalem ignored his proclamations and disregarded his warnings. But a significant minority listened, repented and longed, in faith, for that Branch to sprout from David's line—that one who would be called, "The LORD *Our* Righteousness." They saw their situation for what it was: hopeless apart from Him. They realized their predicament. And they saw, through believing eyes, the beauty and wonder of the God of Moses and Jeremiah. They confessed their sins and rejoiced in God's forgiveness for the sake of David's coming Seed.

So rejoice with them on this first Sunday in Advent—the first Sunday in this brand new Church year! Beyond the challenges and disappointments of this world that beset us from within and without, we discover **THE SOURCE OF CERTAIN SECURITY**—our Lord and Savior, Jesus! Great David's greater Son provides us with a peace that this world can never deliver; a peace that passes all human understanding; a peace that guards our hearts and our minds in Him. Amen!