

Lessons for Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 14, 2016

Psalm 119:81–88 (*Antiphon: Psalm 119:87*) ~ *Trust clings to God's promise behind the turmoil of trouble and pain.*

Jeremiah 23:16–29 ~ *False prophets preached a false hope that encouraged rebellion against God.*

Hebrews 11:17–31 (32–40) 12:1–3 ~ *The cloud of witnesses who lived by faith direct us to trust in Jesus.*

Luke 12:49–53 (54–56) ~ *We anticipate the weather better than we recognize God's kingdom in Christ Jesus.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Peace for All Time

British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain bargained to win "peace for our time" before the outbreak of World War II. He was prepared to give up rights and compromise principles to preserve the peace. God's ultimate goal is not peace for our time, but for all time. Prophets who encouraged unholy alliances were expendable. God's people of faith were sustained in difficult times as they stood firm in God's covenant. Jesus warned that division, confrontation, and finally judgment and sacrifice would be necessary to bring about his mission, which was not peace on earth, but salvation for God's fallen creatures.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Holy God, You know I don't like conflict; my heart longs for peace. Too often I try to make peace when Your truth is at stake. Never let anything I do or say stand in the way of Your redemption for all people. Help me share Your gift of peace for all time with others. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: When we use our material blessings to accomplish our hopes and dreams, we should make sure that they are in line with God's plans for His kingdom and for our eternal well-being, and not ours alone, but also the eternal salvation of our neighbors.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, give us dreams consistent with Your will
And hopes based firmly on Your Kingdom's grace.
Then bless these offerings; give us purpose still
To share Your love and show the world Your face. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We anticipate the weather better than we recognize God's kingdom in Jesus, and we don't predict the weather very well! We let our hopes for short term goals cloud our vision of God's long term promises, so that we are ready to sell out eternity for present pleasures. The cloud we should pay attention to is the host of faithful people who have lived by trusting God's Word. Then we would be able to endure short term suffering, rejoicing in the redemption Christ has won for us, as we share this vision with others.