

Beloved, I bring you Grace, Peace, & Blessings from our Lord & Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

For those taking notes, the title of the message is: Now, And Not Yet

We are all familiar with the example of taking a family trip & hearing when are we going to get there? Are we there yet? You said we were almost there 3 hours ago. Thankfully with everyone on their phone; not listening, not talking, or paying attention to each other... problem solved.

This is not different than the Disciples or the current people of God. When are we going to see the Kingdom of God? Now, & Not Yet. When is Jesus returning? Now, & Not Yet. When will Heaven come down? Now, & Not Yet. Are we in 'The End Times'? Now, & Not Yet. Is this Sermon almost over? Now... & Not Yet.

When our daughter was a toddler we used to watch a show featuring a song called "Are We There Yet?" with the final part of the chorus ending with "Are We There Yet? Are We There Yet? I really can't wait much longer!". Likewise, in church we sing "Soon And Very Soon We Are Going

To See The King”. We **are** looking forward to Jesus’s return... for right now we **are** to live in the trust, that it will occur, when it occurs.

The Bible deals with types & shadows, which are the ‘Now, And Not Yet’. They speak of types to come, or shadows of what is to be, **all** tied to God’s Promises today. Speaking of today, today’s readings were no different... pointing us forward to Christ & His return.

In our Acts reading the Ascended Christ is speaking to Peter from Heaven. Paraphrasing Lutheran commentator Paul Kretzmann: The ascended Son of Man has entered into the full & unlimited use of His divine omnipresence; in His human body in Heaven. His gracious presence is therefore assured to **all** of His believers. Hold onto that thought.

In fact I’ll repeat it: The ascended Son of Man has entered into the **full & unlimited** use of His **divine** omnipresence; in His human body in Heaven. His gracious presence is therefore assured to **all** of His believers.

Jesus is closer to each of us today, than He was to His disciples, even more so than in His time on earth with them. He currently is doing this

while seated at the right hand of His heavenly Father. As our Brother, Jesus, has assumed the full use of all of His divine power & majesty.

The key points being the assurance of His grace filled presence. That, while Christ is in Heaven, He is closer to us now; because of His omnipresence & The Holy Spirit. Once Christ ascended; He became universally present at all times & all places. All, in All... 'Now, And Not Yet'.

Our Psalm today speaks of praising God, who is the Lord of all - all of Heaven & all of Earth. Meaning He is Lord now & when He returns in glory. In The Gospel reading, Jesus reminds us that He is glorified, & God is glorified in Him. So, while you will seek Him, you cannot yet go where He is..., but as we find in Revelation... He shall return & bring Heaven with Him. And for added comfort He is also with us today... 'Now, And Not Yet'.

Heaven, is indescribable to human understanding. Our understanding on this side of Heaven is so marred by Sin, in a world marred by Sin, in thoughts & understanding marred by Sin. Yet since the beginning God has been promising & pointing us to look to the assured better future... And we do experience & get a foretaste of that assured better future via Baptism &

The Lord's Supper; & also via the Liturgy. Which is why I say: cling to the Liturgy as it is the protective guard rail for each Service. My 90-second-overview of the importance of the Liturgy in the 'Now, And Not Yet'.

In Confession & Absolution we all confess our Sins & receive absolution. But there is another component, we then turn to one another & wish each other God's Peace. We are now also absolving each other of all Sins & grudges after confessing them publicly to one another. We are also reminded in The Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our Sins as we forgive those who Sin against us". In the Kyrie you are also singing this same forgiveness to all & for all with a thanks to God for making it so.

Prior to Communion we sing "Holy, Holy, Holy..." joining the angels, cherubim, seraphim, & all the Heavenly hosts as they are always doing so in God's presence. That is taken from the Psalms, from the sixth chapter of Isaiah, & elsewhere in The Bible. This most certainly suggests retaining the Liturgy. This is not for the sake of tradition; but for Biblical reasons. It is what is happening in Heaven & how Worship is conducted!

Closing the loop: in the Apostles' Creed when we say: "He will come again to judge the living & the dead". That is the 'And Not Yet' of 'Now,

And Not Yet'. The 'Now' comes from the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Your kingdom come". This is from the Small Catechism.

God's kingdom comes indeed without our praying for it, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come to us.

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word & live a godly life on earth now & in heaven forever.

God's Kingdom also comes to us when we take The Lord's Supper... when we Commune with God, the Saints in our Congregation, & the Saints that have been, & which are yet to come. 'Now, And Not Yet'. Partaking of the 'all' of Jesus... Jesus, the 'all in all'. Who is Lord of all. Who is with us both 'Now, And Not Yet'.

In summary, all of the Liturgy points to Christ being the all in all. All of the Liturgy points to the 'Now, And Not Yet' of Christ's presence. Even if I fail in my sermon... you still get the Gospel message via the Liturgy.

For today, we live day by day in God's providence; in & under God's guidance, care, & provisioning. I don't think that other than when it hits us

smack dab in the face, that we realize how pervasive the effect of Sin is. Until it really hits home, we utilize selective memory to even acknowledge it's presence, & the overall consequences of Sin on the world.

Which is why my outline was 6 different pictures of an empty tomb with 3 empty crosses on a hill nearby. With it you get 4 words: 'Now, And Not Yet'. Because it is such an applicable description of our daily existence. Under God's grace, seen, yet unseen.

Through types & shadows we get a glimpse of what Heaven looks like. We are told how the world is restored when Heaven comes down... how we are restored... at Jesus's triumphant return. We are reminded of this each week in the Bible & in our Service. The eyes of the believers are turned to His coming, as He is completing restoration. We look for, & long for, God's Kingdom... with the assurance, that our salvation is always near.

In Christ, we see the fulfillment of all the prophecies relating to the glory of the end, which is really the beginning. The believers inherit the Kingdom which was prepared for us since the beginning of the world. The new heaven & the new earth as they are called, because they are altogether different from this present world, steeped as it is... in Sin.

At the center of the picture is the most glorious: the New Jerusalem, the holy city of God, the Church of Jesus Christ... with Christ as its Head. The entry of the blessed congregation of God into the eternal habitation full of grace & mercy. Around us now, are all the unspeakable beauties of eternal bliss. God Himself made the announcement of this joy & bliss: And He sits upon the throne saying, 'Behold, I make all things new. All creatures, in heaven & earth, will be new.'

Both 'Now, And Not Yet.'

Our faith & our hope are not based upon our own opinions & ideas; but upon the infallible Word of God, which remains True even when heaven & earth pass away.

In Christ, all waiting & hoping is over; He who is the Alpha & the Omega, the Beginning & the End. When Christ returns, it is completed as in 'accomplished'. 'Accomplished' as in for eternity... & eternity is ongoing... Jesus, who is from eternity & has all things in His hand, will turn over to them that are His children (us) all the full enjoyment of heavenly bliss.

An inheritance which He prepared before the foundation of the world for those that love Him. Salvation is the work of God alone, & every person in the world who thirsts after this salvation, that desires the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, may have this wonderful water of life without money & without cost. 'Now, And Not Yet' you are God's son, or God's daughter... & God will be your Father throughout eternity. Amen & Amen.