

# Epistle Texts for Life Sunday - Series B

## Advent 2

**Text:** *2 Peter 3:8-14*

**Focus:** *To the Christian, the world seems to be dominated by evil unconcerned about God's threat of judgment. But in this text we hear that the Lord is certainly serious about Judgment Day – He simply works on his own time-table. That time-table is perfect and is driven by God's universal love for every single soul.*

**Theme:** *Give thanks for the Lord's Patience*

### I. *See His patience toward you*

- Christians may wonder how long God will permit such atrocities as abortion, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and the destruction of embryos for research. In fact, evidence suggests an increasing lack of appreciation for human life.
- We forget that the Lord could well have destroyed the world while we were still unbelievers.
- The reason God doesn't judge the world in all its wickedness right now is that He is patient with a world of sinners. He does not desire that any be lost, but that everyone be saved, including you and me.
- He has been infinitely patient with us, and sent Jesus for us when we were still sinners (Romans 5:8).
- And so we are spared from the wrath of judgment day, and instead can look forward to a new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness.

### II. *Share His patience toward the world*

- God's grace motivates us to lead holy lives in the time remaining.
- Since God so earnestly desires that all be saved, can we want anything less?
- God's loving patience benefits everyone; that includes people who have made bad choices in life, people who violate God's commands concerning the gift of life. He loves ALL, and wants ALL to be saved.
- We have an opportunity to reach out *universally* with God's love, so that others may also be saved.
- We can reach out individually, as a congregation, through local pregnancy counseling centers, missions, etc.

## Easter 4

**Text:** *1 John 3:1,2*

**Focus:** *Even though for a time on this earth we face opposition and hostility from the world, we take comfort in our relationship with God. We're God's children, and will enjoy His presence for all eternity.*

**Theme:** *We're Children of God!*

### I. *We are enemies of the world now*

- What a wonderful blessing it is to be God's children! It's amazing grace that

God accepts people like us in his family!

- Being God's children means having a lot of enemies. It means being enemies with the unbelieving world around us. The world doesn't know God, love God, or believe in God – so it also doesn't love us.
- Why? Their consciences are bothered when they see evidence of God's perfect morality and holy standards. They see Christians defending God's ways to the world and standing up for biblical truths such as valuing all human life regardless of quality and defending the institution of marriage.
- These things aren't simply political issues – they're biblical issues! We stand for what God tells us in His word about these issues regardless of popular opinion.
- What if you don't experience very much hostility from the world? Are you perhaps acting too much like the world acts? Are you forgetting that God *wants* His children to be different, to look different, to think differently than the world?
- If so, there is comfort and forgiveness for us. When we fail to give a good Christian witness in the world, we remember that God is continually there calling us His children, and forgiving us as only our heavenly Father can.

## II. *We're heirs of heaven forever*

- We do experience hostility and opposition from the world during our time on earth. But whenever it threatens to get us down, we can take comfort in our relationship with God – our *eternal* relationship with God. While we experience suffering and hardship as God's children here on earth, we have nothing but perfect happiness to look forward to in heaven.
- When God promises heaven, He wants us to count on His promise. He doesn't reveal to us exactly what heaven will be like, but through faith we trust that it will be perfect.
- We do know from the Bible (this text!) that we will see God face to face, not like Moses or Elijah saw His back or some manifestation of Him. We will see God as He is! God will free us from sin, and our bodies will be made glorious and perfect (Philippians 3:21). No more suffering, no more pain, no more hostility.
- Think of that! The hope of heaven makes our suffering here on this earth more tolerable. After a short time of hostility and opposition from the world, we will have an eternal rest. Our relationship with the world will come to an end, but our relationship with our heavenly Father will never end!

## **Pentecost 5**

**Text:** *2 Cor. 5:14-21*

**Focus:** *The world's reconciliation in Christ is the best proof that God dearly loves every member of the human race, no matter what age, locale, race, etc.*

**Theme:** *Every single person is dear to God*

### I. *Christ died for every single person*

- When Christ died, He died for all, for the world. Not a single person or group is excluded. There is no "in-group" of people that He died for;

there is no “loser” group for whom Christ did not die.

- Christ’s death effected a reconciliation between God and the entire WORLD. Through Christ, God does not hold the sins of the WORLD against them. Every single person’s sins are forgiven in the cross.
- That really changes our point of view about people! God loves all people, regardless of their quality of life or their circumstances, whether in their mother’s womb or in a hospital bed. God loves ALL people, and Christ’s death proves it. How can we think any differently?

II. *Christ’s message is for every single person*

- God’s purpose was to unite people to Himself, and to grant new life to them, so that they live for Christ.
- He accomplishes this through human ambassadors. He gives His people the Gospel to share with others.
- We know that not everyone believes the message of the Gospel. But that’s because they choose not to, not because God doesn’t want them to. God intends His Gospel message for ALL people, because its promise of forgiveness and eternal life are for ALL people.
- Again, our point of view changes. Compelled by Christ’s love, we seek to share the message of Christ with ALL people. We don’t want to be selective in our efforts, or exclude some because of nationality, age, or disability. We seek to share the Gospel with our neighbors, with people overseas through our synod, with our friends at school, with our coworkers at the job, with our family, with people who are like us and people who aren’t like us, with people who are likable and people who are despicable to society. Christ’s love for ALL people, including us, compels us to seek ALL people and be ambassadors to them on Christ’s behalf.