

March 26, 2023
The Fifth Sunday of Lent
Pastor Matt Duerr

All This Took Place-To Make IT Clear

Grace, Mercy and Peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, Amen. As you know our sermon theme this season is, All This Took Place. All this took place, the ministry of Jesus, to number one, fulfill prophecy. Number two, it was done by faith and our salvation is still by faith. It all took place for them, the Gentiles, so that the Gentiles might be grafted in. Then last week we saw that it was for the untouchables. We sinners were unclean, we're untouchable and yet the real untouchable is Jesus Christ, Himself, God's son. How could a sinful person ever touch Him? And yet, that's exactly what He let us do so that He might save us through His death on the cross.

This week, All this took place-to make IT clear. Which of course, begs the question, what is it? Oh let me count the ways. There's so many "its." But where should we start? Well, we always start in God's word. With our epistle this morning, 2 Timothy 3, where Paul writes to Timothy and says; "Understand this, and that right there is a powerful beginning. Our ears should perk up, we need to understand this. What do we need to understand? "In the last days, there will come times of difficulty."

Just say the word last days, and you know here we go, this is a wide-open discussion/debate. But it really shouldn't be because in the Bible the last days are also called "this age." We read there is this age (the age we're living in) and the age to come. And Jesus Himself tells us that age to come is eternal life. So, we are living in this age. We are living in the last days and those days began when Christ rose from the dead. Now in the last days Satan has been defeated. What's going to happen in those last days? There will be difficulties. What kind of difficulties?

Well, Paul lays it out for Timothy. People will become, number one, lovers of self. And that right there is basically the meaning of the 666 that we find in the Book of Revelation. It's when man puts himself before

God. Man loves himself more than God. But it's worse than that. People will become lovers of money, no kidding, surprise, surprise. It's the source of so much today. These people have too much money. These people don't have enough money. These people have the right amount of money but we're going to tax them anyway. It's money, money, money! And a lot of that money leads to; people will become proud. I, I, I, I, I, and no I'm not being a pirate. 'Aye maties,' no. How many times do we hear people start a sentence with I? Oh, we are so focused on self and that naturally leads to what Paul says next. People will become arrogant. I, I, I, look at me, look at me, look at me! I am the best. I am the authority. And the minute you start talking that way people will become abusive. Whether it be slavery, racism, cancel culture. In all of those situations, people are abusing power and hurting others in the process.

How could that be? Well because people will become heartless. They don't care about others anymore. Honestly, for me, the epitome of that is when we look at our society today and people will spend enormous amounts of money to save animals; and at the same time (especially here in the state of California) we are spending enormous amount of money in paying for people to come here so they can abort a human baby. Something's wrong with that picture. People will become lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. I don't think I even have to talk about that one. We should probably do 10 or 20 sermons just on that.

But the last one scary. Listen to what he says about these people; 'having the appearance of godliness but denying its power.' How can this be? Well, second Timothy chapter four tells us, 'for the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching.' Why? He continues, 'having itchy ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passion.' Teachers, it's written in the plural, multiple experts, multiple numbers of people saying what the majority want to hear. And what do they want to hear? Well, that which suits their own passions. The Greek word there is "epithumia." It means, and I quote, "the lust, craving, longing, or desire for what is forbidden; and an irrational longing for pleasure." These people, Saint Paul says, will turn away from listening to the truth and to wander off into myths.

The first thing we have to identify is what is the truth? In John 14 verse 6, Jesus makes it really easy for us. "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." He said that on the night that he was betrayed. About an hour later, He's praying for His disciples and for you and for me; and He says, "sanctify them in the truth, Your Word is truth."

So, all this took place to make IT clear. What is IT? People will not want the truth. They will turn from the truth to follow experts who will tell them what their itchy ears want to hear and they will then accept it as true. But if you look at the sermon title, it's all this took place to make IT clear; and IT is capitalized. Both the I and the T. The "it" I just described would be both lowercase; lowercase I, lowercase T, because it's not godly. It's focused on people and they're irrational, longing for pleasure, and having it their way.

What's the capital I, capital T? That comes in our gospel. Jesus got in the boat with His disciples of whom four of them were professional fishermen. It was probably one of their boats. They were going to the east side of the sea of Galilee. As they set out, Jesus we read, fell asleep. Then a windstorm came down on the lake. It's very important that we read that just the way it's written, "it came down." Where did it come down from? From the mountains on the east side of the lake. We call this a wind shear event. And if you'd like to really scare a pilot nowadays, you know the guys that fly planes, tell them they're going to need to fly their plane through a wind shear event. And they will say no, they won't do it. We use all our radars and everything so that we can see where these kind of events take place and we purposefully avoid them by hundreds of miles.

What is a wind shear event? It's when you have wind shearing and moving in a particular direction at a very high violent rate of speed. You can have a vertical wind shear event, or a horizontal wind shear event. The event on the sea of Galilee is a well-known phenomenon. It starts as a vertical wind shear event, where the jet stream drops hits the mountains on the east side of the lake and is sheared off and shoots straight down. But when it hits the ground, it becomes a horizontal wind

shear and it blows right across the sea of Galilee with phenomenal strength. We are talking about sustained winds above 120 miles an hour; many times, over 150 with gusts going over 200. These wind shear events rival tornadoes in their strength and their power. This is scary. It's worse if you're in a 1st century fishing boat.

And so, we read; they were filling with water and we're in danger. These were professional fishermen; they knew exactly what they were dealing with. And Jesus was sleeping, so they woke Him. How could He sleep through that? He's God, He has the peace that passes all human understanding, something He promises to give us. But they wake Him and the terminology here is just so beautiful. It's classic, they say to Him, Master, Master, we are perishing. They knew what was happening, and we read, "He awoke, rebuked the wind, and raging waves and they ceased, and they were calm." Then Jesus speaks, "Where is your faith?"

A little later on in His ministry, in the Gospel of Matthew, we read about 'if you have faith of mustard seed, you can move a mountain. Mountains are a lot bigger than wind, where's your faith? But the key here is their response to that. They don't argue with Jesus about faith. In fact, they don't argue at all. Here's what happens. They were afraid; wait a second, the storm's over. They were afraid and they marveled saying to one another, 'who then is this that He commands even winds and water and they obey Him. A more modern translation, put into the typical language of an American person reads like this. Who is this who even Mother Nature obeys? What is IT? Well in John one; we begin to see who IT is. "In Him all things were made, and without Him was nothing made that was made. It's Jesus, He's the Creator. Through Him all things were made that were made. And as a result, all this took place to make IT very clear-Jesus is the son of God. Jesus is God.

And think now of all those things that took place to make that so abundantly clear. Changing water into wine, you can't do that. Oh, if you can speak and make creation, you can certainly take your own creation and change water to wine. Walk on water, Archimedes principal, buoyancy, it doesn't work! If You are Creator, it does. You have power over what you made. Feeding 5000 with just a little bit of

fish and some bread. One of the laws of science says that you can neither get rid of, nor can you create matter. Jesus did, why? He's creator God. In fact, we could say every single one of His miracles took place so that it was made abundantly clear-He is God. And that's what the disciples understood, and they were scared, they know what scripture says. It's a fearful thing to be found in the hands of the living God.

And that is a huge challenge for us today. I was very upset this past week I was listening to a podcast and a very well-known conservative, Christian, lawyer and expert in the law was talking and he was talking about the Scopes trial, which took place in the 1920s. It's that very famous trial where Tennessee was trying to outlaw the teaching of evolution in the classroom and they lost. And the court said no you have to let evolution be taught. He referred to that trial as being so significant because 'established science won.' And he went on to say, this modern day, conservative, Christian, lawyer, that science and creation that can exist hand in hand. They complement each other, evolution is not a threat. And I am here to say; that is a lie! The reality is this, evolution is not established science. It is a myth.

It is just what Saint Paul has described here; "a great number of teachers or experts saying what the itching ears of people want to hear." There is no God, you are the product of random chance. And I'd like you to consider the impacts of that one teaching, that one myth. It says the very first chapter of Genesis is wrong. God did not speak and create a world. Well, if that isn't right, how about the flood? Well, your modern day "Christian Science" scholars, say it was a localized flood it wasn't worldwide. Which again, the whole fossil record depends on a worldwide flood. What about all the languages we speak, The tower of Babel? Oh no, no, no, that's just mythology. An explanation of how the evolution continued to work throughout the world and bringing about different races through the evolutionary process and each one of these groups formed their own languages. Well, what about God in the 10 plagues in Egypt? They all are natural phenomenon events. He really didn't turn the Nile didn't turn to blood it was kind of like a Red Sea event. What

about the crossing of the Red Sea? Oh no, no, no, don't you know it was the reed sea.

And then we come to Jesus. Jesus was a good man, and you know people they fabricated the miracles. He didn't really... You see, if Genesis one is wrong, everything else falls by the wayside. And it's in all of those things that God displays Himself as Creator in total control over His creation and then saving His creation. Man, the experts, they say no.

In fact, just in the last two weeks the final work of Stephen Hawking, who is celebrated as the greatest mathematician of all time, and the greatest physicist of all time. He died about five years ago. His final book is being published. The title: On the Origin of Time. The title is literally a play of Darwin's, On the Origin of Life. What does he say? Well, I have this to say about Stephen Hawkins, he did know his limitations. In this book he reveals he was wrong. He had, his whole life, taught that it was the laws of science, laws of physics especially, that governed the evolutionary process to give us everything we have. And in his book he reveals he was wrong because the laws of science actually negate the possibility of evolution happening. So, what does he say? Where's the origin of time come from? Evolution. Evolution is the only law of science. And through evolution, all of the laws of science that we have today were created and they're transitory. Evolution could be going on in other places and creating completely different laws of science. Evolution, it's the power that drives the universe.

There you have the teachers that Saint Paul talks about. The people that Saint Paul talks about defining the power of God and the power of his word. They say they've got it going on. We say Jesus has always been going on. The question is, which "it" are you going to believe? The it of the mythology of man? Or what it's all about? God, who made Himself abundantly clear through His actions throughout the entire history of this universe, both in His creative power, His delivering power, and in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. He's known there. He's the real thing.

In our Savior's Name, Amen.