



“Prophets”, fresco painted in 1447 by Fra Angelico (1400-1455) in one of the triangular ceiling vanes in the Chapel of San Brizio, Dumo, in the Orvieto Cathedral. © Web Gallery of Art. In the Collect Sunday we will pray, “Merciful God, who send your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins . . .” In the Gospel lesson we’ll hear John the Baptist say, “Turn from your sins and turn to God, because the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”

The Scriptures Tells Us That Time Is Moving Toward an End, Not to Make Us Tremble in Fear, But So We Will Love Like There is No Tomorrow

“When I was a kid growing up, part of my mother’s daily routine involved stopping at the same time each day to watch her favorite soap opera, ‘Days of Our Lives.’ ” the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said as he began his sermon Sunday. “It’s amazing to me, but this show is still on the air all these years later.

“One of the intriguing features of this soap opera to me is the way the program is introduced each day,” he continued. “The show begins with a huge hourglass with sand flowing through it, and the baritone voice of MacDonald Carey saying, ‘Like sand through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives.’

“The image of an hourglass, with the sand of our days and years running through it, is a potent reminder to us of the nature of time. As we all know, time marches on. Like an ever-flowing stream, the hymn writer says, it bears all our years away—and if you’re like me, it seems that the current of that stream grows stronger and more swift with each passing year. . .

“Time not only marches on, but eventually it runs out on us—on those we know and love, on history as we know it, on the world as we know it. In verse 11 of the Epistle, Paul says, ‘Time is running out.’ And in the Gospel lesson, Jesus proclaims that life as we know it, history as we know it, time as we know it, are all moving somewhere. The sand moving through the hourglass of time is moving toward a *goal* or an *end*. That goal or end is Jesus Christ, and the fulfillment of God’s purpose for the Creation, and for you and me.

“Now there was cosmic upheaval that signaled Jesus’ first advent, and there will be cosmic upheaval that signals his second advent: the kind of stuff that might make people quake in their boots. But the purpose of the upheaval is not to make us tremble in fear. The purpose of the upheaval is to encourage us to wake up, to look up, and to love like there is no tomorrow.

“. . . Our days are numbered. The obvious question is, what do we do with them? . . . The Apostle Paul answers for us in one simple word: love. Love for God and love for others. Love so intense that it no longer has time for self-indulgence. Love so deep that it hinders to honor the commandments rather than violate them. Love so pervasive that our old ways of living—ways of self-destruction—are tossed away like old, dirty clothes.”

“You are here today because someone you know needs love that only you can give. (p.2→)

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Sundays
 10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service
 11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation
 11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion
 6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Evensong, tea & refreshments

Tuesdays and Thursdays during Advent, 6:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers

For the poor: Christmas needs: Hams, ready-to-serve rolls, butter or margarine, frozen pies, cake mixes, breakfast/brunch foods, eggs, muffins, pancake mix, sausage.

Readings, 12/9: Is. 11:1-10; Ps. 72:1-2, 10-17; Rom. 15:4-13; Mt. 3:1-12.
12/16, 10 a.m.: Is. 35:1-10; Ps. 146; James 5:7-10; Mt. 11:2-11.

Prayer Emphases: Liberia; Greek Orthodox Churches; Sharpe Memorial Church of the Nazarene (Parkhead), Glasgow, Scotland, and the Rev. Colin Wood; Samaritan’s Purse; parishioners on Winstead Court.

(Sermon, cont’d.) You can give away your love and your life in tiny installments, but you’ll never be able to pay off your love-debt, so you might as well throw the doors of your heart wide open and just unleash it in full force. Love has a lousy shelf life. It needs to be taken down, used, expended—for that is what has happened to us. Love came down from heaven, was used, was poured out for us. Love died for us while we were yet sinners. Love led us back to the Father’s house. Love looked beyond our fault and saw our need. . . (L)et us honor that love by going from this place and loving others like there is no tomorrow. . . . One day—perhaps today—that *will* be the case.”