

Sunday, November 19, 2017 – 24th Sunday after Pentecost
“Just Like That”

Psalm 90: 1-12

Rev. Derek S. Klemm, Mountain View Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV
Frame and Refrain

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Just like that, God created the earth. He has always been, everlasting to everlasting – that’s what eternal means, after all – no beginning and no end. It boggles the mind to consider it. The start of our consideration, of creation, of matter and energy and time comes about by His Word and His command. Let there be light! And there was light. Let there be, let there be, day after day – just like that.

Just like that, God turns men back to dust. To call it unfortunate is an understatement of epic proportions. On the last day that God made things He completed His masterpiece with the top of His achievement. This time He did not speak things into being with His Word. He handcrafted dust and clay, molded and formed and designed a body, yet without life and then by His breath that gives life does what no one else is able to do – He breathes life into it. And we have Adam and we have Eve, originating with the dust of the very ground on which we walk. It went that way for some time and then just like that, a perfect world is undone by a willing act of disobedience by the crown of God’s creation. The consequence we know well – “Dust you are, to dust you shall return.” Just like that, generations pass, from God’s perspective. A thousand years are like a single day in God’s sight, it passes as quickly as a watch in the night – it passes like the nightshift at someone’s job on the Strip. Just like that.

We know this truth – all who long for someone near and dear now departed – they’re near and dear one day and another swept away. You find yourself asking, “Did that even really happen? Was it just a dream? What seemed like it would last forever was gone in a moment – like new grass in the morning – the hot sun beats down and the dry wind blows and its burnt to a crisp, dry and withered by night. Our time is short – it goes just like that.

It leaves us vulnerable, exposed, humiliated. We say it regularly, “God, you know every secret, every foible, every insecurity, every errant, evil thought and word and mean-spirited act.” We often succeed at putting on a brave face in front of others, slathering make-up and wearing masks to shield these truths from everyone around us but you see right through it. We stand

exposed and open with the list of all of it on display to your eyes. It's horrible, it's reprehensible, It's worse than just having someone tell a secret about us we hope no one ever knows, it's more than a little red-cheeked shame. It's everything open and known to the only one whose opinion really matters. Just like that, generation after generation our days pass away under God's wrath. The length varies – at best we can hope for 70, or maybe 80 or a little beyond that if we have the strength, and those years are filled with trouble and sorrow and they go oh so quickly, don't they? And then they're done – just like that.

And we cry out, "Oh God, teach us to number our days well so that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Wisdom starts by not making excuses for ourselves but instead taking responsibility. Wisdom doesn't ask reality to adjust to it, wisdom adjusts to reality. We freely and openly admit that we don't good use of the days you give us. Our thoughts, our words, our actions are filled with secret sins that you see plain as day. There's no sense denying it."

Wisdom sees that trying a little harder isn't going to do any good. We can scrape together a few soiled garments, a few dried up leaves, a pile of garbage, perhaps, and not much more.

Yes, God, wisdom comes only from you – and it starts with remembering that you, Lord, have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. You who spoke creation into being through your Word, who designed and formed our bodies and breathed life into them designed a plan to overcome the ugly truth of our sin and the consequences that lead us back to a return to dust.

One day, just like that, God sent angels to announce – to Mary, to shepherds in fields watching over their flocks, that the same Word spoken that brought things into being out of nothing became the Word made flesh. Not just any flesh but our flesh, formed out of dust – and made His dwelling among us – just like that.

Oh God, if a thousand years in your sight are like a day just gone by, how much less so thirty something years? In one fell swoop the Word made flesh, named Jesus lived a perfect life with no sins to leave Him consumed by Your anger or terrified by your indignation. Impossibly, He took our sins on. He collected every secret, every foible, every insecurity, every errant, evil thought and word and mean-spirited act that leaves us vulnerable, exposed, humiliated, worthy

of the consequence of returning to dust from generation to generation the whole world over. In your wisdom you preserved both the reality of how bad our sins are and found a way not to sweep us away like so much withered grass – by sweeping away Your Son instead. Then, just like that, a mere three days later He rose, only the first of many – from dust to man, back to dust and then to new life that will never die again.

We wait, captivated with that promise, praying for wisdom to number our days aright and remember – Jesus is coming again. At a day and hour no one knows, He will come again. Grant us wisdom to watch and wait – to Your way of thinking, it will happen any moment – just like that.

In Jesus' name, Amen.