## Jeremiah 33:14-16 (New International Version)

 **14** " 'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

 **15** " 'In those days and at that time
       I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line;
       he will do what is just and right in the land.

 **16** In those days Judah will be saved
       and Jerusalem will live in safety.
       This is the name by which it [[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+33:14-16#fen-NIV-19792a)] will be called:
       The LORD Our Righteousness.'

## Luke 21:25-36 (New International Version)

 **25**"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. **26**Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. **27**At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28**When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

 **29**He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. **30**When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. **31**Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

 **32**"I tell you the truth, this generation[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+21:25-36#fen-NIV-25850a)] will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. **33**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

 **34**"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. **35**For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. **36**Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

 “Second Helpings”

Lisa J. Durkee Abbott

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Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.

I want to weave something together for you this morning. If you want to think of it as a tapestry or a rug that’s fine. Basically, there are three images that I hope you will hold closely as we begin the new year together in anticipation of our Lord’s arrival.

**Taizé – the gathering of people; the movement toward worship . . . Sing “Come and Fill Our Hearts.”**

**Thanksgiving! Second helpings . . .**

**Stand up and lift up your heads! Our salvation is coming near.**

**People who read the Bible in various ways . . . searching for certainty as to the time and place of Christ’s second coming. What about Christ’s first coming into our hearts and into our lives? What limitations are we putting on the Kingdom coming now by our own doubts and by our own failings? In what ways can we invite God into our lives *to change them*? God is capable of much more than we can know. God is also capable of giving us a second chance.**

**Durk’s second helpings . . . ones we all anticipate. Our own second helpings.**

**“In those days, and at that time . . .” There is a familiar feeling to these words, isn’t there? When Jeremiah prophesied, around 2600 years ago, I’m sure that many people were skeptical; I’m sure that many people who were suffering at the hands of the Babylonians wondered whether God would ever make good on his promises. Well, the Jews to whom Jeremiah first spoke were set free, and indeed have been returned to Israel. And Christ, the righteous branch from David’s line, has come, and has done what is good and right in the land, teaching us to do the same. So, when I read prophecies from Jesus, while I may wonder at how and when they might be fulfilled, I think we need to remind ourselves of something pretty basic. God is not like us. God is able to do far more than we can imagine for ourselves. God has made us promises that offer us a hope that far exceeds our own limitations, even to the point of eternal life.**

**For God so loved the world . . . And we are promised that Jesus will come again. We get to have second helpings of the kind that tastes even better the second time around. God so loved the world . . . We need fear nothing.**