

23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – Proper 28, Year A  
A Sermon Preached by The Rev Eric Zubler  
on November 16, 2025

Malachi 4:1-2a / Psalm 98 / 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 / Luke 21:5-19

Connie and I have been here on the Central Coast of California now for about eight days. Ever since we picked up our rental car at the airport a certain song has been playing in my mind – You guessed it: **California Dreamin'**! That old song from The Mamas and The Papas was released in 1965 and by the end of 1966 was the top single on the Billboard end-of-year survey.

Seeing the vast expanse of the Pacific with the hills falling into the churning sea for the first time...I was taken! Stopping for a late Saturday lunch on the beach last week I saw America with a new light, as folks of all ages frolicked in the sand, surfers caught waves, and dogs barked and delighted in the freedom of the beach! My goodness I thought: "Why at age 62 am I only finally seeing all this beauty?" I guess it goes back to my grandmothers.

My mom's mother was a solid Midwestern Sunday School superintendent and teacher at her local Lutheran Church. She subscribed to Better Homes and Gardens until the day she died at 95, she visited Cape Cod many summers. My dad's mother, also a solid Midwesterner, was a dedicated Roman Catholic convert from Lutheranism, she had a wider vision of the world. Her son, my uncle John, lived in San Mateo, and she spent many a winter month at his house, avoiding snow and cold...she subscribed to Sunset Magazine.

That California influence pervaded her gardens, even in South Bend, Indiana. She went to Hawaii with Uncle John and his close friend and came back with black sand! How exotic I thought: "I want to travel to Hawaii and California!" However, as usually happens the mother's family wins, I was raised Lutheran, and we visited beaches on Cape Cod and the Carolina and Georgia coasts. We also visited what seemed like every Civil War battle site in the eastern third of the United States.

My brother and I started to complain we just wanted to go to a motel and spend more than one night, and maybe even a week, on the beach. Gulf Shores, Alabama, 45 minutes from where Connie and I now live, became the spring break destination for our family, for well over a decade. You can see I had other plans in mind for how I wanted to spend my holidays...I remained patient, thinking about warm beaches, and the Western half of this great country. I wondered if I would ever make it past the Rocky Mountains....

Finally, at age 38 I made it to San Diego and ten years later to Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg, both times for conferences with only minimal time to sight-see. I remained patient, wanting to see the "real California," the California I had seen pictured in Grandma's Sunset Magazine...Eight days ago I saw that West Coast expanse, I reflexively started singing *California Dreamin'...!!!* My patience paid off as Connie and I tour up and down your scenic Greater San Luis section of the Central Coast!

Jesus is sharing a primary virtue we can all use each and every day of our lives – that virtue is patience. He says: "The way to keep your lives is to be patient." In other words, to endure, come what may. I would have to say patience, having a patient spirit, is often much, much easier said, than done. As human beings we become impatient as we wait at a long traffic light, impatient as await results from a medical test, or even impatient as we await the end of worship, so we can have breakfast or brunch with friends!

How many times a day are we impatient...it's a part of being human, I suppose...? Or is it, maybe I should ask, *does it* have to be that way at all for us human beings? After all, Christians are a people called to be God's adopted children, through Baptism. Remember Jesus says to us: "The way to keep your lives is to be patient." That is a tall order, but one that means we can't hurry life, we sometimes just have to take things a bit slower...

There is new song about California and the West Coast. My daughter's flag core used the song for their yearly dance and flag throwing routine. The song is called **West Coast** and has an updated feel from **California Dreamin'**. The band OneRepublic received critical acclaim when it was released in 2022 with lyrics which seem relevant to our lesson today, the third verse says:

*I've been dreaming 'bout the West Coast.  
Found some faces that I don't know.  
Seeing signs for California, where people take it real slow...  
I need sun for just a year, I'll kiss the sky and disappear...*

Those words should perhaps remind all of us of what makes California so special: meeting new people, lots of sunshine, and a slower pace...I've seen it: friendly people with more patience as you wait at traffic lights, more patience as you wait at Trader Joe's, and hopefully more patience as you await the coming of God's heavenly kingdom. A kingdom that began in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

That's right, in this present time, the present day and age, all of us live in God's kingdom – which will be fully realized when we at last make it to our heavenly homes. Having patience for the coming of that heavenly home requires a lot of patience, typically it takes a good long while to get there. But enjoying time near the water, whether in California or Alabama, we are all called to live into the example shared with us in the stories of the Gospels.

Remember what our Psalm says:

*Let the sea make a noise, and all that is in it, the lands and those who dwell therein.  
Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord,  
when he comes to judge the earth, in righteousness shall he judge the world,  
and the peoples with equity...*  
*Ah...sounds like California Dreamin'...*

**AMEN.**