

Luke 21: 5-19

November 13/22

Jesus in the gospel predicts the temple will fall.

Things are changing! And as some spoke of the Temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, “As for these things which you see, the days will come when there shall not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Today as we gather on this Remembrance Sunday, we remember those who fought and those who died in wars past.

We do so with solemnity
as we honour their memory,
their sacrifice and courage.

Very few who were involved survive today,
but others like the Ukrainians,
fight for the defence of their country
and freedoms.

So much has changed in our lives this year.
There are days when
our life is forever changed,
the world is different,
and nothing is like it used to be.

You and I know those days.
We could each tell stories
about those days.

These stories are not just ancient stories,
they are the stories of our lives.

They are stories about
the death of a loved one,
the diagnosis, a divorce,
the business that failed,
the job that was lost.

They are the stories about the day
you realized the life you were living
was not the life you wanted.

These are the days when
the temples of our life and world fall.
Things have changed.
Covid has happened.

In many ways temples are metaphors.
We all have temples.
Some have been given to us,
others we have built for ourselves.

Sometimes our temples are people,
places, values and beliefs,
institutions, dreams.

They are the things that we think
structure and order our lives,
give meaning and identity,
provide security and stability.

Today is the closest Sunday
to Remembrance Day,
and we remember those
who fought in World Wars, many died.
Many returned wounded
and scared with PTSD and shattered lives.

In today's gospel some were speaking
about the temple,
its beautiful stones
and gifts dedicated to God.

It is what structured their community.
It gave identity and meaning.
It was the centre of Jewish life.

Jesus looks at it and says,
**The days will come when not one stone
will be left upon another; all will be
thrown down.**

Jesus is speaking about more
than just the physical temple in Jerusalem.
The Jerusalem temple includes
every temple you and I have.

It speaks to our lives, our temples.
So what do we do
on the day our temple falls?
Change has a way of pushing us
into the future.

Many people will begin
looking for signs about the future.

What will happen now?
What do I do?
How do I get through this?
If we are not careful
we will be living in a future
created in our heads.

That is not Jesus' response.
When Jesus describes
things that will happen.

He is not asking us
to speculate about the future.
He is offering signs that call us
to be faithful in the present.

Jesus' response is startling!
He says,
'Do not allow your life
to be controlled or determined by fear.'

‘Endure’, he says.
‘Be faithful, steadfast,
persevere here and now.’

Jesus is calling us
to be present and faithful in whatever
circumstances we find ourselves.

If we cannot find God here,
in our present circumstances,
(even in the midst of our temple ruins),
we will find God nowhere.

The place of our fallen temples

is the place in which God,
speaking through the prophet
Isaiah, declares:

**I am about to create new heavens
and new earth; the former things
shall not be remembered
or come to mind.**

**But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I am creating;
for I am about to create Jerusalem
as a joy, and its people as a delight.**

**I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping
be heard in it or the cry of distress.
(Isaiah 65:17-19)**

Those promises are fulfilled
through our endurance.

We are to remain fully present, faithful,
no matter how uncomfortable life may be.

In so doing we discover
that God has always been with us
*in the changes, chances, and chaos of life;
*in the pain, loss, and disappointment;
*in the destruction of our temples.

Endurance, perseverance, stability
are the ways in which we offer God
the fallen stones of our temples.

Stone by stone God rebuilds our life.
Stone by stone God restores the original
beauty of our life and world.

Stone by stone a new temple
arises from the rubble.
Stone by stone we become
the temple of God.

We no longer have temples.
We no longer need them.
For we are the temple.

So as we think of our lives,
our lived experiences of war and peace,
is the story that needs to be told.

That is our opportunity to testify.
We can all tell the story of the day
our temple was destroyed.

Too often, however,
we believe and live
as if that is the end of the story.

It will be if we run away,
try to scapegoat,
respond with anger,
or try to put it back together
like it used to be.

But it does not have to be
the end of the story.

The greater story is
how we discovered God
next to us in the temple ruins
and how, stone by stone,
God rebuilt what we could not.

So on this Remembrance Sunday,
let us reflect upon
its meaning and memory.

The tragedy of the cost
of wars that still persist,
in so many parts of our world.

We are reminded
of the ongoing story of
God recreating life out of loss and ruin,
and the story of God rejoicing
and delighting in his people.

Remember you are the Temple-

It is real, sacred and true.

Trust that story,

that we are born anew

and given grace,

to remain faithful to our call,

to grow in faith and trust

in our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen