

Sermon: November 16, 2025

Today scripture is about change,

A clock, watch, iPhone (Cellphone)...

The Take Away: Things change, but God's love is always secure. We hear the promise that stays the same before time changed, and after time changed.

Luke 21:5-19

When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, Jesus said, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down."

They asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?"

And he said, "Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am the One!' and, 'The time is near!' Do not go after them. When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately."

Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven. But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.

You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls.

Grace and Rollercoasters

About 10 years ago, my friend Debra and I decided to face our fears... to do things we normally would avoid. We felt invincible. We spent a weekend at the ocean and Debra faced her fears to wade into the waters and play in the waves. Doesn't sound like a big deal but it took away a lifetime of fears. So, when we took Meg and her friends to Hershey Park we decided to face a fear we both shared. Rollercoasters. We felt so hopeful as we planned the fun we would have... not consigned to watching everyone else's stuff while they went sky high. What neither one of us counted on was the girls choosing the biggest, baddest rollercoaster in the park. As we waited in line, and got closer to our destination, I could feel the anxiety growing. But I didn't say anything... I didn't want to be the one to chicken out. And, I found out later, Debra felt the same way. So, when we go on the ride, a teen aged girl on each side, I felt panic that I never thought I would. Clinging for dear life, as we sent upside down over streams and... I don't remember the rest. When we finally got off, my legs barely held me up. Debra looked at me and said "I guess we aren't really invincible."

The temple, which had finally been rebuilt, seemed invincible too. As the disciples entered into Jerusalem, they were blinded by the bright sun reflected off of the white stones of the Temple. The giant limestone blocks were chiseled by hand and measured eight feet on each side. Each stone standing so tall... towering high over people's heads. They were strong and sturdy... immovable... and when put together, one on top of the other, they created a beautiful Temple... the holiest place in all of Israel.

The disciples looked around in awe... this was a place they had always dreamed of going to. "Look at how large the stones are... this place is tremendous!" someone said. This was a place that would stand tall for generations... where their children and grandchildren could go to worship God.

So, imagine their surprise when Jesus declares, "Look at these great buildings? Not one of these stones will be left – all of this will be thrown down!"

God's holy temple pulled down to the ground... a time of turmoil, war and suffering. Whatever happened to "Come to me, you who are weak and heavy laden, and I will give your rest."? Today, what Jesus describes is anything but restful!

The disciples must have stopped in shock. This wasn't what they wanted to hear. They still held tight to the vision that Jesus would be embraced by the leadership and welcomed by the people. They did not want to hear all this talk of death and destruction and the end of the world as we know it.

We don't want to hear it either. We live in uncertain times when it feels like we are losing ground. Losing power and our moral authority. We look at the future and wonder what is in store for us. We don't want to hear that it will all come tumbling down around us like the walls of the East Wing.

We feel like we are on an out-of-control rollercoaster and can't find our footing.

Jesus tells us today that we should not be ruled by our fears. No matter what happens, he says, God is still in charge. And everything we need to know and do to live in God's Kingdom is found in Jesus' teachings.

It's true that we don't know what will happen tomorrow... but we do know that God calls us to love our neighbors and to work together towards a just society and a loving community.

We don't know what will happen next year... but we do know what we need to do right now. Today we can partner with God to bring about God's beloved community.

God has so much work for us to do, and today is just the beginning.

Jesus started a new movement where the last are first, the proud get scattered, the lowly are lifted up, and the hungry are filled.

In Jesus' movement, the sick are healed, the poor are blessed and we are all claimed as the beloved children of God.

Jesus started this movement but it is up to us to do the daily work of the Kingdom... to stand strong for justice and reach out in mercy. Jesus needs us to be ready to pass the movement forward.

Today, Jesus tells the disciples that the Temple will be "thrown down," and it seemed impossible to them. And yet, just a generation later, the Roman army plundered Jerusalem. Soldiers tramped through the streets, murdered women and children, destroyed the Temple. Once again, foreign armies came and destroyed Israel's hopes and dreams.

But, as Jesus reminds us... even in these worst of times, God is still in charge

In Jesus, we discover that death never has the last word. The Temple will be destroyed, but Jerusalem will rise from the Roman ashes. Jesus will die at the hands of that same Roman government, but just three days later, the stone will be rolled away and new life will stroll out of the empty tomb.

No matter what happens, God is still in charge.

And Jesus is still with us, giving us words to bear witness to healing and reconciliation. We believe that the work of the Kingdom will be completed, and God's will accomplished on earth as it is in heaven. Or as Isaiah proclaimed, God will create new heavens and a new earth. "Be glad," he cries out, "and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight!"

Jesus tells us to endure the troubles, which will pass in the light of a new heaven and earth. Hold on to Jesus' vision for us and for the world, and we'll hold on to our souls, our integrity and our faith.

Amen.