

Jeremiah 33:14-16  
Psalm 25:1-10  
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13  
Luke 21:25-36

## Sermon November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### *God's Redemption Is Near*

In Jesus' prophecy, we see that the whole world will fall apart. The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas. Even the heavens will be shaken.

Jesus is talking about a future event that will take place on the last day when Jesus comes again. Jesus shares details about this event with his disciples to give them hope that God's redemption is near. Their persecution will not last forever.

In the season of Advent, we draw our attention to this event to give us hope in Jesus' promise that Jesus will return to make everything right. The creation's suffering will not last forever (**Image**). God's redemption is near.

While we wait for this event to take place, this enriching story can speak to us in the present as well. Jesus' prophecy can act as a metaphor for our lives when we deal with trauma.

Trauma, whether acute or long-term, is often a life changing event where we feel like our whole world is falling apart.

In the season of Advent, we also reflect on our current sufferings, and how they impact our relationship with God, and with one another.

For the Judeans who are listening to Jesus' prophecy, they see their whole world fall apart when the Romans conquer Jerusalem. Tearing down the Temple that is central to their community and life (**Image**). They spend years trying to reidentify themselves in relation to God and one another.

For some of us, we are dealing with a mental illness that debilitates us from living out our lives. During the darker winter months our mental illness often intensifies making it harder for us to function. We can feel like our whole world is falling apart as we are unable to find the energy to complete even the most basic tasks. Like getting dressed or making a meal or getting out of bed (**Image**).

For some of us, we are grieving the death of a loved one. Our lives are not the same. This person who had such a big impact in our lives leaves behind a big void for us to fill. We need to redefine ourselves as our identity was wrapped around this person. We shed many tears as we deal with the loneliness and pain that comes from grief (**Image**). We may get angry, because we don't understand why they died. We may

become debilitated from our grief. Unable to function. Our whole world can feel like it has fallen apart.

For some of us, we are dealing with a new diagnosis of cancer. Just yesterday we were healthy. Full of life. And now we are dealing with anxiety and fear as we face an unknown future. Our lives will be consumed with tests, treatments, and appointments. Our minds will be overwhelmed as we try and understand why this is happening to us. We feel like our whole world as we knew it has fallen apart.

For some of us, we are dealing with a divorce or the breakdown of a relationship. Our plans suddenly change as we need to adjust to life without this person. Our anger and resentment consume us. Our loneliness causes us pain. Our insecurities make it hard for us to move forward. We feel like our whole world has fallen apart.

There are experiences that we go through where our world as we know it falls apart. Our lives change so dramatically. Sometimes it is hard for us to remain faithful when the stable ground beneath us transforms into quick sand as trauma sinks in (**Image**).

Well, in our gospel, Jesus sees how hard it is for us to stay faithful when our world is falling apart. This is why Jesus reassures us that when our world is falling apart, God's redemption is near. In the end times, but also, in the here and now.

In the season of Advent, we also, look for where Jesus is acting to heal and redeem us in the here and now. Not just on that last day.

And what we see when we draw our attention to where God is at work in our lives in the here and now, is that in our darkest moments, God is motivated by our pain to shine God's light in our lives. We heard this a few weeks ago when Jesus was moved by Mary and Martha's grief to raise Lazarus from the dead.

We see this in the community of Israel who is suffering from exile. Jeremiah is sent by God to reassure the Israelites that God's redemption is near. God has not abandoned Israel. God is walking with Israel through Jeremiah and other prophets. Helping Israel stay faithful until God rescues them from Babylonian rule, which happens when the Persians come into Babylon.

We see this in the church in Thessalonica, where leaders like Paul reassure the people that God's redemption is near as they face persecution. Paul, Peter, James, John help the early believers stay faithful so that they can continue to do Christ's work in the world. Healing people. Helping people. Welcoming people. Being the kingdom Christ calls them to be.

We see this in the community of Judea, when the people find new and exciting ways to connect with God and with one another. They adjust to life without the Temple. Rome

doesn't destroy their faith. Instead, their faith transforms to adjust to these changing times.

We see this in our own lives when God sends people into our lives to comfort us (**Image**). To walk with us as we suffer from the trauma that changes our lives. We see this when we pick up a bible and read words of comfort. We see this when we worship (**Image**). Feeling uplifted by the message of the gospel and the taste of the sacrament. We see this when we pray and come away feeling listened to. We see this when we take on the identity of being the church in the world (**Image**). Revealing Christ's healing and redeeming love to others.

God's redemption is near. This is the promise Jesus makes with us today. God's redemption is near.

Let us pray, loving God, give us faith to believe in your promise of redemption for us and for our world when facing trauma in our lives. Send people to walk with us. To care for us. To reveal your healing and redeeming love to us. Encourage us to walk with others in their trauma. To care for them. To reveal your healing and redeeming love to them. **Amen.**

© copyright, 2021, Wallace Bornhuse. All rights reserved.