



‘Worship at home’

Sunday November 17th 2024

We come to worship God, who is faithful throughout the ups and downs of our lives.



Opening: Psalm 16

You are our security, O Lord, we find refuge in You.

Everything that is good comes from You Lord!

You give me guidance and make my heart glad,

You lead me on the path of life.

In Your presence there is fullness of joy,

In Your kingdom there is fulfillment forever! Amen!

<http://www.lectionarysermons.com/ARCH-W.html>



Reflect on different contexts in which you have worshipped over the years.

Which aspects of worship are important for you?

Has this changed over time or in different contexts?

For some of us, it might be that we have worshipped in a particular church building for much of our lives. For some, it might be the style of worship, or the music or prayers that seem most important. For some, it might be the relationships with those with whom we worship. For some, the important aspect might simply be that you have faithfully put aside time to be with God.

Mark 13:1-8

As Jesus was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples said, "Look, Teacher! What wonderful stones and buildings!" Jesus answered, "You see these great buildings? Not a single stone here will be left in its place;

every one of them will be thrown down." Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, across from the Temple, 1 when Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him in private. "Tell us when this will be," they said, "and tell us

what will happen to show that the time has come for all these things to take place." Jesus said to them, "Watch out, and don't let anyone fool you. Many men, claiming to speak for me, will come and say, "I am he!" and they will fool many people. And don't be troubled when you hear the noise of battles close by and news of

battles far away. Such things must happen, but they do not mean that the end has come. Countries will fight each other; kingdoms will attack one another. There will be earthquakes everywhere, and there will be famines. These things are like the first pains of childbirth.

Good News Bible

In Jesus' time, the temple was central to Jewish worship. The presence of God was believed to dwell in the Ark of the Covenant located in the 'Holy of Holies' in the temple in Jerusalem. It was a magnificent building, built with enormous stone boulders that had been cut, carved and manoeuvred into place by hand. As the disciples were admiring it, Jesus reminded them that buildings don't last forever. Someday those huge stones would be scattered and everything destroyed.

Scholars are uncertain whether the gospel of Mark was written before, during or after the destruction of this temple by the Romans around 70 CE. The fall of the temple changed the whole structure of the Jewish faith, and the authority and power located in the temple fell apart.

What do we hold on to when our temples, our structures, and our processes seem to be falling in around us? How do we survive in times of upheaval and turmoil?

"And don't be troubled when you hear the noise of battles close by and news of battles far away."



While our context is quite different from first-century Palestine, we find ourselves in times of uncertainty and rapid change.

LIFESTYLE COSTS AND CHANGES CLIMATE CHANGE
POLITICAL UNREST GLOBALISATION TECHNOLOGY
CORRUPTION INCREASING WEALTH DISPARITY

Behold
I am making
all things
new.
Revelation 21:5

Buildings may fall, church properties do not last forever, outreach programs come and go, religious systems change and evolve. We are constantly asked to adapt to challenging situations. But these struggles and troubles and turmoil are like the first pains of childbirth, and from the work and pain of labour comes new life. In all this, the truth of the gospel, in Christ Jesus as source of our lives, giver of love, redeemer and saviour, remains constant. In times of uncertainty and turmoil, Christ is our rock, and it is in Him we trust.

*Great is your faithfulness, O God my Father,
in you no shadow of turning we see;
You never fail and your love is unchanging:
as you have been you for ever will be.*



*Great is your faithfulness, great is your faithfulness,
morning by morning new mercies we see;
all we have needed your hand has provided:
great is your faithfulness, Lord God, to me.*

Together in Song 154

Hebrews 10:23-25

Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up

the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

Good News Bible

Prayer

We thank you God, that you are truth; you are eternal; you are source of love and life. We can trust and know that you keep your promises, and each morning brings new mercies. In times of struggle, and times of celebration; in times of uncertainty and fear, and in times of joy and hope, you are with us. You provide for us, you strengthen us, you sustain us. Help us to experience and hold fast to your presence in the midst of every changing circumstance, that we may live with hope and love and with courage at all times. Amen.



Closing

This I truly believe:

I believe in Jesus the Christ.

I believe in the ever-present Spirit

*I believe in God whose love transforms
all things.*

*Though false teachers come and delude the gullible,
God's truth remains sure.*

*Though temples crumble and churches wither,
God's gospel remains sure.*

*Though earthquakes strike and diseases ravage,
God's purpose remains sure.*

*Though good people suffer injustice and persecution,
God's love remains sure.*

*Though saints go to prison or face execution,
God's life remains sure.*

*I believe in God who treasures and nurtures us,
who yearns over the fate of each one as if they were all,
and who turns loss to gain and defeat to victory.*

This I truly believe.

Amen!

~ Bruce Prewer <http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocC/C63sun33.htm>

