

Poole Bay Methodist Circuit worship
Sunday 16th November 2025

Endurance and Hope – Reverend Karen James

Hello and welcome to this time of worship. The lectionary presents us with an interesting passage with which to wrestle this week. Almost apocalyptic in its outlook and yet within the endings there is hope. We are fast approaching Advent, a season of preparation and reflection, on the coming of God as a baby, into the messy world and all that that brings; to the people over two thousand years ago through to us today.

God of grace, as we come before you now,
draw us closer,
lead us deeper,
challenge us more
and equip us to live for you now,
wherever you send us. Amen

Psalm 98 (NIV)

¹ Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvellous things;
his right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.
² The LORD has made his salvation known
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.
³ He has remembered his love
and his faithfulness to Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
⁴ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
⁵ make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,
⁶ with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn –
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.
⁷ Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.
⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;
⁹ let them sing before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

Hymn: STF 330 - [Joy to the world](#)

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

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Prayers

Infinite God, we give thanks and praise that we can glimpse you
in the beauty of the Temple or church,
in the glitz, sparkle and beauty of fine things.
Thank you that we can be transported in our minds
by your Holy Spirit to see beyond this moment and this place,
to see your purpose and meaning, to know your desires for us.
Thank you that we can see you in the midst of confusion and
anguish, when your Spirit lights the way and calms our fears.
Thank you that we can know you in rest and in busyness,
in work and play, in solitude and community.
Thank you for helping us to know how we should live now,
to the glory of your great name.
Amen.

Take a moment to pause, to reflect on how we live out our discipleship and where we have
missed the mark in our relationship with God, others and ourselves.

(pause)

The Almighty God, who never fails us, hears our prayers,
our confession and our sorrow and gives us now
the assurance that our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Luke 21:5-19 The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

⁵ When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, ⁶ ‘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.’

Signs and Persecutions

⁷ They asked him, ‘Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?’ ⁸ And he said, ‘Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, “I am he!” and, “The time is near!” Do not go after them.

⁹ ‘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.’ ¹⁰ Then he said to them, ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹ there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

¹² ‘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. ¹³ This will give you an opportunity to testify. ¹⁴ So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; ¹⁵ for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by all because of my name. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your souls.

Reflection

This is an unsettling passage.

I imagine it was as unsettling for the disciples to hear as it is for us. Walking by the still-under-construction Temple yet still, an impressive and dominant building- to hear Jesus say, “that no one stone would be left upon another” (v6), interrupted the expected response. In a world that must have felt as uncertain and changeable as ours does, Jesus seemingly swept away their tangible model of security, of permanence.

Of course they wanted to know the details- when will this be? What are the signs? Hindsight is a wonderful thing, being able to track the decisions and events that lead to a particular outcome is much easier to do afterwards- when you know what to look for. Jesus reeled off a whole host of things that would occur but no specific timeline.

But context for this passage is important too. We are at this point in Luke’s narrative very close to the events that would lead to Jesus’ arrest, sentencing and death on the cross. Jesus knows how devastating this will be for the disciples and as ever he is offering ways for them to cope, to endure in the circumstances. This apocalyptic genre would also have been a familiar one for worshipping Jews- a way of expressing hope under the radar of the occupying or dominant forces.

We tend to focus on the apocalyptic images in this passage, the wars, earthquakes etc, we worry about whether these signs are coming to pass in our day and age. I have no doubt that the disciples did the same, and since it is likely that Luke's gospel was written after the destruction of the Temple by the Roman army in AD70, the gospel's audience would have known and recognised the truth of what Jesus was saying and, would have their own concerns about their present times.

When we only see or recognise evidence of power and permanence in the grand gestures and material things constructed by humans, it is more difficult to find a way or hope beyond this when they are gone. Just before Jesus remarks on the Temple, he had highlighted to the disciples the two small coins given by the widow when they were in the Temple. By comparison to the wealthy, it was a trifling amount, but Jesus saw and acknowledged the abundance of her gift- she gave **all** that she had. God's understanding of value, of power and permanence is so very different to and so much more robust than our human one.

But within the talk of destruction and signs and persecution- Jesus was highlighting what our actions and response to these things need to be.

First of all to not be led astray. There will be many strident voices claiming to know the time and the place, we have seen this throughout the centuries. That would suggest that we need to continue our journey to understand and know God, through our learning and interaction with others. So that we can have confidence in our faith in God.

Then "do not be terrified", especially when hearing of wars and upheaval around the world. I think this resonates with me- I listen to and read the news headlines, and it is very easy to lose perspective and be drawn into the devastation and shadow it seems to permanently convey. Note that Jesus did not say that these things will not happen- sadly they will take place and have taken place over the years but they and we are part of a bigger story. We need to keep our perspective.

Finally in this passage- it is to be faithful. Here we can pick up some hints of what the disciples and followers of Jesus would have to endure as they witnessed to his life and resurrection, they would be arrested and betrayed, speak and witness to kings and governors (such as Paul in Acts). We may also recall the story of other Christians through the ages and today, persecuted because of their belief in Jesus. On hearing this it is a miracle that there is a church here today at all- Jesus is not presenting an attractive sales pitch at this point. So why endure all this.

Because there is a story to share with all, even in the midst or perhaps especially so, we are called to bring the message of the gospel, of God's saving love. But we will not have to find the words to say- we can trust that God will give the words to us. That is very much my prayer today, that in the polarising mix of opinions and responses within our changing world, we will be gifted the appropriate words to say, the appropriate way to be, that reflects God's very real and very present love for all.

"...not a hair on your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls." v 19

To hold onto and be upheld by faith in God, despite all circumstances, is to be secure, to have permanence and to know power beyond human constructs. It is to know God's provision and presence.

This is still an unsettling passage and will continue to be so through the rest of the chapter. But there is hope present too. That we may be called to endure in fearful times, but we do not do this alone. That we are better prepared to live through tumult and change than we may think. Amen

Hymn: STF 624 - [Calm me, Lord](#)

Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm ;
still me, Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease ;
enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm ;
still me, Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease ;
enfold me, Lord, enfold me in your peace.

David Adam (b. 1936)

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Songwriters: David Adam, Margaret Rizza (prs).

Prayers of intercession

On this Safeguarding Sunday we lift before you all those people in need of protection and support. We pray for all ages who are neglected, trafficked, abused, exploited, wrongly accused and marginalised, here and around the world.

We pray for all people and organisations seeking to protect and support the vulnerable. Be with those organisations who walk our streets seeking to help the lost and the homeless escape a life of loneliness, danger, and emptiness.

Lord God in our now, we pray for all your suffering people; for all offering a helping hand and renewed hope. Turn drab monochrome lives into ones of colour.

Lord God, we pray for your church. Break down barriers. Where there are divisions bring unity, that we may be effective witnesses drawing others to your truth and salvation.

Lord God in our now, dispel darkness. Help us to discern fake and distorted truths within all areas of life in order that we may live in truth and be your guiding light in today's world.

Lord God, as Cop30 takes place in Brazil we lift before you all global climate issues. As our planet warms up, reducing polar ice caps, we see more winds, wild fires, droughts, and floods. We pray for the Philippines and Vietnam hit by typhoons. And for Jamaica and Haiti still reeling from Hurricane Melissa.

As well as climate issues affecting our world, we also pray for an end to the destruction wrought by war. Bring peace to areas of war and conflict, those at the forefront of our news and those that remain unreported on.

Lord God in our now, we pray for peace in the world, that we may live in harmony, knowing your comfort and compassion. We ask your hand and guidance on all who attempt to bring peace. Help us all be better peacemakers and stewards of our planet, our country, our nation, and our own communities.

Lord God, we pray for our own environments. May those in authority look to you and govern diligently and with true transparency.

We ask for your hand on our local hospitals and the crises in A&E departments where people line corridors and ambulances queue to discharge patients before returning to respond to further calls. We lift before you all living in constant pain, be it physical or emotional.

We pray for all in our communities exhausted from working two and three jobs just to make ends meet in today's financial turmoil. We pray for all who desire to work but for whatever reason, are unable to do so.

Lord God in our now, have mercy and meet all needs. Help us all to live proactively for you, helping where we can as we await your return.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Hymn: STF 706 - [Longing for light, we wait in darkness](#)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Chorus

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice. **Chorus**

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed. **Chorus**

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone. **Chorus**

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come. **Chorus**

Blessing

In seemingly endless change, help us to hold on in faith and hope and to be part of bringing a new song to the world.

The blessing of God: Creator, Saviour and Sustainer remain with us always. Amen

Every blessing, Rev Karen

Prayers taken from Roots on the Web 16 11 25

[Prayers](#)