

Do not be alarmed

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost) is Mark 13:1-13. These verses contain two closely related narratives: Jesus foretells the Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the Close of the Age.

In verse 1 one of Jesus' disciples points to the grandeur of the "*massive stones*" of the temple. They were impressive. Huge stone blocks, some measuring 37 ft long, 18 ft wide, and 12 ft high, and decorated with gold, were used to build Herod's temple, one of the most impressive man-made structures of the ancient world. (TLSB)

The problem with this was that the Jews trusted in the Temple for security rather than in Christ. Jesus' prediction was fulfilled literally in A.D. 70, when the Romans under Titus completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple buildings. Stones were even pried apart to collect the gold leaf that melted from the roof when the temple was set on fire.

What Jesus had said got the attention of the disciples and a few of them ask what this meant. Jesus warns his disciples about the coming troubles they will face as they bring the Gospel into the world. he encourages them to trust God and rely on the Holy Spirit, especially when they face opposition and persecution. Nobody likes to be shown his or her sin. As Christians proclaim Law and Gospel, they need to be ready to endure the loss of everything, including their lives. Because God wants all people to hear the Gospel, He prolongs the NT age so that the Church may witness to all the earth. To Him alone we owe the survival of our personal faith as well.

No doubt when the disciples heard these discourses, they were probably very confused and maybe even quite frightened. That was so because they had a wrong world view of why Jesus had come. They had in mind that the Messiah would come and be a world conqueror and so this was quite unsettling.

End-time news can be disturbing and worrisome even for us as Christians. But, these communications are meant to bring comfort to us. Jesus means to assure us that the end-times will bring about an eternal life with him in heaven. Therefore he does not want us to be alarmed because he is there with us to the very end.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, help us not be led astray by false teachings as new threats come along. Thank you for your assurance that you will be with us to the end. Amen