

Week 5

Sunday

This is the sixth week of our series, "Good News." This week, we are looking at some Good News about our problems and when the world around us appears to be falling apart. There are times when problems can overwhelm us and seem all encompassing. There are times when it seems like we are losing everything that has been supporting us. In the Gospel this week, Jesus gives us good advice about those times.

The Good News is not that nothing bad will happen. The Good News is that when bad things happen to you, God can do something good in you. God uses those problems to build your character and give you more of himself. St. Theresa of Avila said, "Let nothing disturb thee, let nothing affright thee. All things are changing, only God remains." This world is full of changes and things that are falling apart. God and his infinite kingdom remain.

Pray today for the grace to let nothing disturb you or make you fearful. Pray for the grace to know that God and his kingdom remain.

Monday

While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here – the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

Luke 21:5-6

Some people were speaking about the jewels that adorned the temple. Then Jesus makes a shocking statement that the temple would be destroyed. The Temple had originally been built in 500 BC, but began a massive reconstruction and addition a few years before Jesus' birth. It was decorated with fine and costly jewels and had been expanded to such a massive size that it was said to resemble a snowclad mountain. The reconstruction seemed to be a sign of growth and that things were going in the right direction.

It's difficult for us to understand the shocking nature of Jesus' statement and prediction. Jesus is standing in front of the building that was the most important one in the city of Jerusalem. For the people of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple was unthinkable. The Temple was proof of God's blessing and presence in their midst. Its destruction would signal the end of the world as they knew it. And it seemed a crazy thing for Jesus to say that about the Temple when it was being expanded and enlarged. (However, we know that in 70 AD the Romans came in and completely destroyed it because of Israel's rebellion.)

The Temple was temporary and yet many people based their faith on it. Our faith is not to be in any temporary structures but in God who is eternal. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any ways

you are basing your faith on something temporary. Pray for the grace to put your faith in God alone.

Tuesday

They asked him, "Teacher when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end."

Luke 21:7-9

Before the destruction of the Temple, there were many false Messiahs. They said that they were going to throw off the Roman army that occupied Israel and create a free nation. They said that the time had come to defeat Rome and there would be wars and insurrections against the Roman empire. We know from history that there were rebellions against Rome and that the city of Jerusalem was decimated and the Temple destroyed.

Jesus tells his followers a couple of key lessons. Don't follow the people who say that what God is trying to do is build a political kingdom. That was the mistake people in that time made and is still made today. The people of that day thought the Messiah would defeat the Romans and set up an independent nation. We also can get too caught up in politics.

Jesus, the true Messiah, came not to rule over a nation but to rule over our hearts. When we base our lives on his love, we do not have to worry about the shifting sands of politics.

Ask Jesus to be King of your heart and to give you the grace to follow his ways.

Wednesday

Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky. Before all this happens, however, they will seize you and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name."

Luke 21:10-14

Jesus tells his disciples they will go through trials and that will be an opportunity for them to give their testimony, to share the reason for their hope. When we go through trials and tribulations, they are opportunities for us to share the reason for our hope. When the systems

and the structures of this world fall apart, people who place their trust in them fall apart. But for people who place their trust in Jesus and his infinite kingdom, they do not break down when temporary, finite structures collapse.

When you place your trust in Jesus and his infinite kingdom, you see the problems of this world as temporary. The loss of a job or of money or of a peer group or a school or any of the other temporary things of this world do not shake you. And that makes people wonder what you have that they don't. The Good News about problems is they often give you an opportunity to lean more into an unshakable God and then share with others the Good News of his love.

Pray for the grace to place your trust in God who is your Rock and your Redeemer.

Thursday

Before all this happens, however, they will seize you and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. By your perseverance you will secure your lives.

Luke 21:19

Jesus tells his followers to persevere through the challenges and suffering that come their way. Perseverance through those problems prepares us for the good things God wants to give us. It transforms us into people who can receive God's infinite kingdom.

The Good News is not that nothing bad will happen. The Good News is that while bad things can happen to you, God can do something good in you. The Good News is not that things of this world will not fall apart. The Good News is that God is solid and will never fail. The Good News is not that you will never face problems. The Good News is that, by persevering in faith, God will bring good out of those problems. God makes all things work together for our good. Our job is to persevere in faith.

Ask for the grace to persevere through problems and to see them as opportunities to place your trust and faith in Jesus.

Friday

We know that in all things God works for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Paul states that God makes all things work for our good. This does not mean that everything that happens to us is good. It means that God can bring good out of every bad situation. God has a purpose for everything that happens. Our job is to cooperate with God. Our job is to seek

God and how he wants to use the problems and the pain in our life for good. Our job is to seek how God is building our character through our problems. This is simple — but it is not easy.

What problem or pain are you facing right now? Name it. Ask for the grace to see how God wants to use it for your good.

Saturday

I will rejoice in your salvation, O Lord.

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart;
I will declare all your wondrous deeds.
I will be glad and exult in you;
I will sing praise to your name, Most High.

I will rejoice in your salvation, O Lord.

Because my enemies are turned back,
overthrown and destroyed before you.
You rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
their name you blotted out forever and ever.

I will rejoice in your salvation, O Lord.

The nations are sunk in the pit they have made;
in the snare they set, their foot is caught.
For the needy shall not always be forgotten,
nor shall the hope of the afflicted forever perish.

I will rejoice in your salvation, O Lord.

Psalm 9