

The Rev. Carolyn Cranston '99
Director of Alumnae/i and Church Relations, PTS

Saturday, December 4, 2010

Morning Psalms 90; 149
First Reading Isaiah 4:2-6
Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Gospel Luke 21:5-19
Evening Psalms 80; 72

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.' 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 defense 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.

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Jesus startled the disciples when he foretold the destruction of the Temple. Was it possible? What were the signs? Jesus told them not to be deceived or follow false teachers. For his disciples, life would be difficult. They might be persecuted, perhaps put to death, in Jesus' name. But, all that truly mattered was their relationship with Christ. He said, "Stand firm, and you will win life."

The same holds true for us. We look for signs while trying to control our own destiny. Let's submit our lives to the outstretched arms of God. Don't look for signs, look for Jesus. We need to spend our time as faithful witnesses, building a relationship with Christ.

With our lives totally grounded in Jesus, we can celebrate God's gift of each day, knowing that one day we will stand in the presence of our Lord and Savior. At the coming of the Second Advent, there will be no need for fear and uncertainty. It will be a time of encouragement and hope - a hope that cannot be destroyed! By the grace of God, we will receive our hope through the life, love, and blood of Jesus the Christ. Amen!

Prayer: Holy and Loving God, Thank you for blessing us with the gift of your Son, Jesus the Christ, the only sign we will ever need. Lord, may we be ever faithful in our witness and service to you. Amen.