

December 16, 2017

Matthew 24:1-14

¹As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ²Then he asked them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

³When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴Jesus answered them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁵For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah!’ and they will lead many astray. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: ⁸all this is but the beginning of the birthpangs.

⁹“Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. ¹⁰Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.”

LaNita D. Butler, Minister, Ivy Baptist Church / Newport News, Va. / Urban Change Focus

At first glance, this pericope previews an end-times, apocalyptic world ripe for judgment. Similarly, our world today appears to be plagued with moral degradation, injustice, and waning reverence for God and neighbor. Yet there is “hope.” Hope happens when believers stand amid chaos and insert God’s possibility. Here in Matthew, Jesus makes the remedy to desolation available to us:

1. Beware, don’t fear, don’t waver ...
2. “And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a ‘testimony’ to all the nations; and then the end will come” (v. 14).

A testimony is a firsthand authentication of a fact—the evidence, the outward sign, the witness of what the “power of God” can do and has done to transform our lives and circumstances.

It is God who heals, delivers, transforms, restores, and makes free. He is The Way, The Truth and The Life! He gives wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and direction. “*Anyone* who calls upon the name of the Lord – *will be saved*” (Acts 2:21). “So, if *anyone* is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Hope in chaos – The Good News!

Prayer

God of all nations, you overflow with love, mercy, and grace. You are the source of life, light, and all that is good and true. You have already told us what is good in your sight: To do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). Lord, recapture our hearts, indulge yourself in our lives, and by your Holy Spirit help us put into action all that you have instructed. Amen.