



WEEKLY STUDY

The Last Days of Jesus - Week One

As the environment around Jesus became more intense, his words began to reflect the seriousness of what lay ahead. This week's passage is difficult to hear...unless we keep it in the context of the hope we have in all that Jesus has told us about the resurrection. May this week give you confidence in the work of Christ that prepares a way for you to have eternal life in him.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 21.5-9 (ESV)

And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, ⁶“As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” ⁷ And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?” ⁸ And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. ⁹ And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”

- By all accounts, the temple was one of the greatest structures ever built. It took over 80 years to complete and was destroyed just 7 years after its completion. For Jesus to predict its destruction was difficult for the disciples to fathom. So they asked for clues as to the timing of its demise. Jesus warned that there would be false teachers who try to distract them with teachings about the end times. We have seen this throughout history. Many books and sermons have piqued people's imagination and stoked fear in the hearts of men and women. But Jesus instructed his followers not to be terrified when there is talk of war and famine...for the end will not come all at

once. It was a word of promise for his followers, even in the middle of a really difficult teaching. What signs of hope help you to stay focused on Jesus in the middle of hard times?

- **Prayer Prompt: And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. (Hebrews 12.2)**
- *God, I look to your Son Jesus Christ in all times. Keep my eyes fixed on him no matter what happens in the world around me today and every day. Amen.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 21.10-19 (ESV)

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 pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. ¹³ This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by all for my name's sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives.

- Jesus spoke of a persecution that was to come for his followers. But the persecution will also hold an opportunity to bear witness to the work of God in Christ. When we anticipate a time of account like this, we naturally want to study and prepare. Jesus said that we will be given “a mouth and wisdom” for such a time. Even if we find ourselves in the minority, we will ultimately have life in Jesus. By persevering, followers of Jesus will find their lives! We would hardly blame the disciples for reconsidering this path that they were on. Have you ever wondered if the Way of Jesus is just too hard? What helps you to remain close (abide) to him?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. (Colossians 3.1-2)**
- *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, in baptism, many of us have been raised with you. Remind me that I was created for higher things. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 21.20-28 (ESV)

²⁰“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, ²² for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. ²³ Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. ²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

- This passage describes troubling times on the earth before the return of Christ. For generations, people have become fixated on the troubles of their times. But every time has had its trouble. What makes followers of Jesus unique is that they continue to look for the return of the Son of Man, which causes us to straighten up and believe that our redemption is near. Whether the time of redemption is today or 1000 years from now, we interact in the same way with the world around us. How do the words in this passage make you feel? How do you picture the redemption that comes with Jesus' return?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9.28)**
- *Lord God, I long for the salvation that you will bring to this broken world. I wait for you! Amen.*

THURSDAY: LUKE 21.29-33 (ESV)

²⁹ And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰ As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

- Jesus compares the difficult signs that he has mentioned to signs of life on a fig tree in the Spring. You know that good things are about to come when you see these signs of life. When Jesus said, “this generation” we are left wondering exactly what he meant. Was he referring to the lifetime of the disciples? (the term could actually refer to multiple generations) Was he referring to those who are alive on earth when Jesus does return? This has been a question for the ages, but what

we can know for sure is that God is doing a new thing in Jesus and the Word of God is greater and more trustworthy than the ground we stand on. Have you ever (perhaps in retrospect) noticed that difficulties have become signs of good things to come?

- **Prayer Prompt: For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4.16-17)**
- *God, I thank you for being with me even through the hard times of my life. May even my suffering point to you! Amen.*

FRIDAY: LUKE 21.34-36 (ESV)

³⁴ “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

- The instruction from Jesus to his disciples (and therefore to us) is to stay awake at all times. Be alert to the redemptive work of God today, even now. Pay attention not only to signs of destruction which can lead to destructive behavior, but to the coming of Christ which will lead to life. In what ways has your heart been weighed down recently? Write a prayer of surrender and give up those heavy cares that can feel like a trap. Give them to God.
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- **Prayer Prompt: Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Thessalonians 5.6-7)**
- *God, I give up the cares that can cause me to stumble. Wake me up to your movement in the world around me today. Amen.*

SATURDAY: LUKE 21.37-38 (ESV)

³⁷ And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. ³⁸ And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.

- Jesus seemed to retreat each night to the Mount of Olives. It was likely the place where he and the disciples slept and reset in between teaching sessions at the temple. Luke wants to make sure that we know just how big this movement was becoming. People would gather to hear from Jesus, even when the teachings contained images of destruction. Why would the people keep coming to listen to Jesus? What were they hoping to hear? What are you hoping to hear from Jesus today?
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- **Prayer Prompt: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11.28)**
- *Jesus, speak to me today. I am open to what you have to teach me. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

In his message Jacob shared four actions we can take in response to the predictions and promises of Luke 21.

1. Do not be terrified. (Don't live in fear)
How can you move out of a place of fear today?
2. Settle in your mind to let God give you words and wisdom.
What opportunities do you have to bear witness to Jesus this week?
3. Watch yourself. (Cares of this life)
What “cares of this life” are you facing today? How are you responding to them?
4. Stay Awake. Pray for strength (Always pray and never give up)
What or who helps you to stay awake (spiritually)?