

## Reflection November 16<sup>th</sup> 2025: Luke 21:5-19

### ‘What do we hope for?’

We all hope for many things, individually the hopes we have differ from each other most of the time -not always. Throughout the development of human history, it's been fundamental to have a hierarchy for society to maintain some form of structure. Often that hierarchy is connected to a name, or a place within that society. So, it's been really important as small groups of people developed into larger groups forming villages, cities and nations. It took an immense amount of hope, resilience, encouragement and faith over time for the bigger picture to emerge.

For many people hope has evolved around developing new ideas, inventions, food sustainability, water sustainability, just living really. One constant that we see throughout history, and even in our present lives, is the abundant sense of hope that emerges within communities. Beyond the simple act of gathering together, what truly unites us is our shared aspiration for a better future centered on our belief in Jesus the risen Christ. Communities, both past and present, are built on the foundation that through God's activity in the world we have a collective hope where each of us contributes through our dreams, desires, and faith in the path that Christ has already trodden on our behalf. This shared hope not only strengthens the relationships between us it also gives the wider community a sense of direction and purpose. When we continue to gather together, we encourage and support each other and affirm the knowledge that we aren't alone – the Holy Spirit is with us on our journey. The hope found within our communities becomes the driving force, when we face our challenges with a trusting resilience as we look forward to a future shaped by our ability to gather in our shared vision full of hope.

In the conversation Jesus was having with his disciples each word he spoke to them evoked a resilience within them. They were to be Christ's disciples were messages of hope, who understood they needed to be steadfast and strong in times of difficulty, who would always be guided by the wisdom of the

Holy Spirit. Together, they envisioned a future not bound by bricks and mortar but alive in their unwavering relationship with Christ.

The disciples were on the cusp of significant change and adversity. Luke takes us on their journey of spiritual growth entwined with adversity. As we move through Luke's reading, I hope we can discern what it is **we** hope for.

As usual, we start with the beginning where the disciples are sharing with us just how grand the temple was – symbolic of their faith, community, and God's presence. I think Jesus' response may have shocked them when he says that all that was before them would be destroyed. The destruction of the temple probably left them wondering if we don't have a temple to worship in, then where and how is worship going to happen?

Jesus on the other hand wants to reassure them that the shift from a location-based worship to a more personal, relational understanding of faith is something to continually be engaged with so you can withstand the many contradictions from those who oppose you. The movement from a location-based faith to a deep and meaningful personal relationship offers us the important insight that our hope isn't found in physical structures despite how beautifully and richly decorated they may be, or the many rituals and traditions we create, but in our personal spiritual living relationships we have with Jesus Christ. We gather here each Sunday morning to share worship, praise, prayer, hear the Word and it's interpretation as well as to joyfully encourage fellowship together especially around Christ's Table each month.

In the hustle and bustle of our lives in this moment in time we often place our hope in tangible aspects such as success, stability, relationships, or approval from our peers in society. However, these foundations are susceptible to crumbling under pressure, say the wrong word here, do the wrong thing there, mix with the wrong crowd and suddenly you're toast or ghosted. Jesus forewarns about the coming chaos, conflicts, and natural disasters. The realisation that these elements can be transient compels us to reassess our sources of hope. We are reminded that true security lies in our connection

and relationship with Christ, who is the one constant amid the upheavals life often throws our way.

Thankfully Jesus tells us of a future which although lined with difficulties, chaos, and conflict it won't be the end. Instead, Jesus reassures us that it's part of living our part of a bigger picture which is full of hope. We constantly pray for hope for God's intervention and purpose will be revealed believing that each trial we face as individuals can cultivate resilience, strengthening and a deepening in our faith and hope for a more peaceful and harmonious world. The final verse 'By your endurance, you will gain your souls,' calls us to maintain our hope, reminding us that enduring faith leads to spiritual growth and the promise of everlasting life.

We don't get a free pass in the reading from Luke today, because we also hear about our responsibilities concerning the nature of the relationships we nurture. Jesus warns us about being betrayed by family and friends, highlighting the reality that following him and his teachings may lead to conflicts. I can only speak for myself and I'm sure you have your own story. When I first told some of my friends and family that I was going to follow the path of ministry I was being called into, there are some old friends and family members who no longer speak to me. It is costly, but it's a cost John and I have born together with the hope of the Holy Spirit. In times of disagreement or adversity, our hope becomes the act of holding steadfast to our faith. We are called to be reflections of Christ's love, generosity, humility and grace, even when faced with opposition. It's through our responses to conflict that we embody the hope we profess to have. Instead of giving in to anger or bitterness, we can choose to engage with compassion and understanding whilst standing as beacons of Christ's light of hope to others.

The message Jesus wants to share with us is nuanced by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promises that the Spirit will be our guide empowering us during our moments of trial and uncertainty. Trusting in the way the apostle Peter did when he healed Aeneas in Lydda, (Acts 9:32-35) the Holy Spirit provides us with the wisdom of truthful and honest discernment as we

navigate our way around the many complexities of living in the present time with grace. In our devotions we pray for hopeful guidance in the knowledge that we aren't alone in our struggles but rather God is equipping us with the strength we need to get through the minute, the hour, the day, the week, the month and the years especially when we don't really understand what's happening around us.

Ultimately our hope goes beyond our horizon of what we can see, feel, and experience in our everyday life – our hope looks toward eternity. Jesus' conversation with the disciples serves as a reminder of the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises. While life on earth may be fraught with challenges, we have Christ's assurance of a future that's secured in him. Our hope is anchored in the resurrection and the eternal life that awaits us – a hope that transforms our perspective, encouraging us to rise above the things that we see as difficulties.

The Luke reading today is yet another invitation to explore what hope means to us individually and collectively. We are called not to place our hope on things which are transient, but in the everlasting relationship we have with Christ. Our hope in Christ gives us the resilience we need when facing difficulties or perhaps the occasions when we're experiencing a form of hostility. Our hope helps us to form loving binding relationships through our differences providing us with strength emanating from the Holy Spirit as we navigate the challenges life throws at us – perhaps more than we like. Ultimately, we hope for a future filled with God's promises – an assurance that our struggles aren't in vain and that we're being reformed, reshaped into the image of Christ. This hope sustains us in every season of life, anchoring our hearts in love and faithfulness.

And as we read in the book of Hebrews, 6:19

*'We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.'*

*'Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.'* Amen