

Pentecost 26 (B)

1. We have been journeying with Jesus on his way to Jerusalem.

- a. It all started with Jesus declaring that his ministry and life would be viewed as such a threat to the religious and political establishment, that they would find a way to silence him.
- b. In today's lesson, we are in Jerusalem on the eve of the events that we commemorate during Holy Week and Easter.
- c. And rather than wait quietly for his destiny to arrive, Jesus turns up the volume in his preaching and teaching.

2. The Temple was a symbol of both religious and political might

- a. Like the prophets of old, Jesus addresses the religious and political corruption of those who use the Temple for their own advancement
- b. Even in Jesus' day, there were certain leaders who used religion and politics to divide people, to create "us" vs "them" categories.
- c. They are to be rejected, Jesus says. God's judgement will burn hot against such people
- d. "Beware no one leads you astray", Jesus warns. Place your trust in God not the false religious and political leaders.

3. Jesus tells his disciples that signs, even of such dramatic force as the Temple's end, are general indications of the state of a world waiting for God's definitive intervention, rather than points on a timeline we can track.

- a. Our response is not to keep silent about abuses of power both in the church and in society
- b. We are called, as Jesus says, to speak up. Even someone like the Archbishop of Canterbury acknowledged his failure in speaking up over heinous abuses in the church – and he resigned as a measure of accountability.
- c. If the church can't speak words of truth, hope, and mercy – then the voices of greed, division, and fear will be left to dominate our world

4. Conclusion: "Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful"

- a. God does not give us the whole plan for the world, only signs – glimpses – of what direction to take.

- b. The clearest sign of God's intent for the world is Jesus – his birth, life, death, and resurrection show us how God operates.
- c. So, amidst wars and rumours of wars, amidst corrupt political leaders, amidst climate catastrophe, we look to Jesus to show us the way.
- d. And the way of Jesus is love, justice, mercy, and generosity. As we practice the way of Jesus, we say with our lives that God is with us, forever.