

Welcome to our first Worship at Home sheet. We have included some extra bits to listen to online if you have access to the internet.

Let's start with a Prayer

Loving Lord you are our shepherd and our guide, help us to listen for your voice today. Help us to praise you in spirit and in truth. Amen

Let's read the words from Psalm 46 out loud:

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.

⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Spend two minutes thinking about the ways that God has been your refuge and strength and thanking him for his care. Be still for two minutes and know that God is with you.

Giving is an important part of our worship so if you normally put an envelope or money in the collection bag please take a moment to set it aside now thanking God for his many blessings. (Safe collection will be arranged) However you give, please take a moment to thank God and to ask for his purposes to be fulfilled with this money.

If you have access to youtube follow this link and listen to (or sing along with) the song "Speak O Lord": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubRIJj8xkds> If not simply ask God to speak to you as you read his word below:

Luke 21:5-28

⁵ Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, ⁶ "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."

⁷ "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

⁸ He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. ⁹ When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

¹⁰ Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

¹² "But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³ And so you will bear testimony to me. ¹⁴ But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵ For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

¹⁷ Everyone will hate you because of me. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ Stand firm, and you will win life.

²⁰ "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. ²² For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written. ²³ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. ²⁴ They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵ "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Reflection

When we planned to focus on Jesus teaching in Luke in his final few days before he was crucified, we had no idea at all that we would be facing a Global emergency of a scale that no one alive today has ever experienced. The disaster that Jesus was predicting in this passage happened around 70AD when Jerusalem was crushed and the Jewish temple and the system of temple worship was destroyed forever. The failed system that Jesus had challenged and provoked throughout his ministry was finished and the Son of Man would be seated at the right hand of his Father reigning in glory. For us today the destruction of the temple seems very far away and insignificant yet in the past week or so everything we normally take for granted seems to have been stripped away. Things that seem reliable and permanent can be gone in an instant. Just a few days after Jesus spoke these words he was arrested and crucified and the disciples would have thought it was the end of all their hopes and dreams. But it was actually just the beginning. Yes things would be different, but Jesus would always be with them. For us at this difficult and challenging time when it feels like everything safe and familiar is gone, we know that Jesus is still with us and that we can stand firm and trust in him. We may not be able to gather together but we are still Church, we are still family, and God has not abandoned us. We trust the promises given in Romans 8 “we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” And “neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Questions

Some commentators think this passage is about the second coming some argue it can only be what happen in the lifetime of those present. What do you think?

What parts of the passage do you find scary or confusing?

What parts of the passage are encouraging and reassuring?

Spend a few moments thanking God for his word to us today.

If you have access to youtube follow this link and listen to (or sing along with) the song “The Lord’s my Shepherd”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN4tPkX0MG0>

Take some time to pray

Let's pray for all our sisters and brothers across the world who have been, and are continuing to be, affected by COVID-19. We pray that all will know God's overwhelming, steadfast love.

Pray for wisdom and courage for the leaders of all countries at this time. That God will help them to put the good of their people above any lust for power and prestige.

Pray for Doctors nurses and other health workers. That they would be protected from harm and have the strength and patience to face the difficult task ahead.

Pray for those in our communities who may feel vulnerable and scared. Pray that the love of God might be their peace. That they may know that even in the darkest times God's love brings hope.

Pray for those who are lonely or bored who are missing family, friends and activities. Pray that God will comfort and sustain them and ask him to show us where we can help

Pray for all those who are sick and for those who mourn. That healing and comfort would be with them.

We pray all our prayers in the precious name of Jesus our saviour and our Lord. Amen

Let's say the Lord's prayer slowly thinking about each line and what it means for us.

If you have access to youtube follow this link and listen to (or sing along with) the song "Oh Lord my God "

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc0QVWzCv9k>

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore, Amen