

Sermon 11/16/25

INTRO - There are sometimes news reports, or videos, which carry a warning. The content may be violent, or bloody, or troubling. Therefore, you are warned that you may not want to watch. You may not want your children to watch. Sometimes reality is troubling.

I. There are ways in which today's gospel can seem troubling.

A. First, however, Jesus' words aren't only troubling, they can be confusing.

1. You see, when Jesus talks of the temple and says, **“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.”** He is referencing the coming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus.

2. But Jesus also talks about something else, about the end times and the final judgement. In part this is because of the confusion of the disciples, who in Matthew 24:3 asked, **"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"** So Jesus speaks of both events, which are separate. Sometimes when we read these lessons we can wonder which event Jesus is teaching about, destruction or judgement. It can be confusing!

3. In addition, while the destruction of Jerusalem happened, the end of the world has not happened. No one can testify as a witness. There are questions. It's confusing.

B. Nevertheless, what Jesus does share is troubling, one of those things we might not want to see in a movie, or think about.

1. Jesus shares about natural disasters, and wars, and persecutions. Does anyone look forward to those events?

2. He teaches about trouble for nursing mothers, about changes in the environment, and His final coming as Judge.

3. There is a way in which this is seemingly bad news. It is something we might not like to see, or experience, or might not like to think about.

C. So, are there things happening in our world today that are confusing, that are bad news? Are there things happening in your lives which make your life as a child of God difficult, and which you really do not want to dwell on?

1. Why, if Christians are seeking to be faithful, are there more problems with **families** than there were 50, or 60, or 70 years ago? The first 12 years of my life I did not know of a divorce in my acquaintances. Why, in a country which was founded on the principle which Abraham **Lincoln** described as “**of the people, by the people, and for the people**” is there so much division, and so much corruption? Why have **drugs and substances** overtaken our culture, and hurt so many lives? Why in a country whose founding documents say, “These truths are self-evident that all men are **created** equal” do people now deny the creator and is there opposition to and even attacks on Christians for their faith.

2.. There is a way in which our lives are full of seemingly bad news. It is something we might not like to see, or might not like to even think about.

II. How many times when there is an act of violence are people surprised? That person seemed like a nice person. They were a good citizen. That can't happen in our community.

A. But, we shouldn't be surprised by what Jesus says. Look at today's Gospel.

1. Jesus tells us there will be conflict and war. He teaches there will be turning away from the faith, and persecution of believers. Jesus tells us of coming natural disasters and environmental difficulties.

2. When these things happen, they make life difficult, But **Jesus told us** they would come.

B. The same is also true for the challenges in our lives.

1. We don't like **broken families**, but they happened in Scripture. And, Jesus came to save us from our failures and sins.

2. We don't like **corrupt rulers**, but that happened in Scripture, And Jesus came to save us. AND, that makes a difference in how we live today.

3. We don't like difficulties with our **faith**, or our **church**, or **persecution**, but that happened in Scripture, And Jesus came to save us. AND, that makes a difference in how we live today.

C. Unfortunately, sometimes we forget the reality of sin in our world.

1. Sometimes people think that, because I am a Christian God will take away all my troubles.

2. God does help us in this life, and He does take away our troubles eternally, but we live in a world of sin, where Satan is called the Prince of this world. People can become disappointed, disillusioned, and even lose faith.

3. We are Christians, not only because of the call of God, but partly because this world is a place of pain and suffering, and **we need a savior**.

III. I performed a wedding two weeks ago and, at the request of the couple, I used Ecclesiastes 4 which says, **Two are better than one - a cord of three strands is not easily broken**. The truth is, we will not overcome this world on our own, but Jesus walks with us. And Jesus overcomes the sin of this world. And Jesus is that third strand, who helps us when facing the troubles we don't even want to think about.

A. Jesus comes as savior and God comforts us in our failure and sin.

1. We may personally fail in sin, but, according to Romans 5:8 **God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. Jesus is there!

2. Life may have suffering and pain, but, according to Romans 8, **I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord**. Jesus loves and saves us through life's troubles.

B. God also works to keep us in faith, In 1 Timothy 1:6 we are taught, ⁶ **And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ**. Jesus saves us. Jesus keeps us in faith by word and sacrament.

C. Finally, Jesus teaches us how to deal with the challenges of life.

1. In our Gospel today, Jesus teaches 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. ³⁵For it WILL come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶But 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.”**

2. We watch and pray, and trust that Jesus saves us in spite of ourselves.

3. We watch and pray because, in a world of trouble, Jesus has overcome the sin and evil and our troubles.

CONCLUSION I wrote my devotion this week about a phone call I received from a former member. She shared that young man who has faced trials and losses perhaps more than I have, was going through another trial. As she talked with him he told her, "I'm no longer a Christian." I am praying for this man. Today's lesson teaches us not to be surprised at the evils of this world. Today's lesson teaches us that Jesus has overcome the evil in life, and we watch and pray and trust Him.