

St Marc, Grenoble
Sunday 14th November, 2021
Hebrews 10: 11 - 25
Mark 13: 1- 8
'Remember'

Pray

Let's start with Good News! - Our New Testament reading from Hebrews, makes it clear that we have been made acceptable to live for eternity with God, because our hearts have been sprinkled clean by the blood of Jesus; and our bodies have been washed with pure water.'

We are reminded to hold fast to the confession of our hope 'without wavering'; despite whatever is going on around us - because the one who has promised - Jesus - is always faithful.

It clearly explains Jesus has offered a single sacrifice for our sins, 'for all time' (which means the temple, where sacrifices were offered every day, was no longer necessary) - because the ultimate sacrifice has been made - once and for all, for everyone!

But it can be a serious challenge to cling to our faith when chaos is raging around us - in times of war, catastrophe, disaster, killings or other mayhem.

However there is no doubt, if we trust and depend on our faithful Saviour, in such situations, our trials and torments are easier to bear.

The reading explains "He has made perfect **forever** those who are sanctified"; and we're told the Holy Spirit bears witness to this too.

We're assured, because of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice, for us, we have been made perfect; and told the Lord says 'I shan't ever remember their sins and all their lawlessness'

I don't know about you, but for me that is a most encouraging promise, one, which has brought a sense of redemption and peace to my life - and it can do the same for your life too, if you're ready to accept it.

Which leads us on towards our Gospel reading ...

One of the reasons I was happy to come to St Marc's is because we don't own an expensive church building, which we have to maintain.

I confess to being something of a heretic, regarding church buildings!

On one occasion in a previous parish, when fundraising for church buildings became the focus of attention, I generously offered to fund a stick of gelignite. But, for some reason, my offer was not very popular!

Please don't misunderstand me; it's not that I don't appreciate beautiful architecture; although I'm definitely not a fan of Victorian buildings. But I can be delighted by some of our beautiful cathedrals as anyone else.

But, for my money, what should happen to many of our church buildings – is they should be blown away! Because, too often they take our attention away from the real work at hand. The need to fund care for buildings too often takes precedence over preaching the Gospel – the wonderful message of hope – which Jesus offers and commands us to proclaim.

However, I must admit to being quite emotional, when I visited the Western Wall in Jerusalem – The Wailing Wall, as it's called.

It is the place where every Jew, visiting Jerusalem, goes to pray. I went to pray there too ... and found it extremely moving.

I found it moving, because I was conscious that God's people had been praying there for well over two thousand years.

It has a very special feeling. I felt that I was adding my prayers to millions and millions of others, which have been offered in that place.

We need to understand the significance of the wall. It's called the 'Western Wall' because it's the remains of the Western foundations of Herod's Temple. In fact, it's all that remains of that Temple!

It's a small section of those 'massive stones', which the disciples were referring to, is all that's left of the most imposing place of worship ever built. It's still a most holy place for Jewish people who live in, or visit, Jerusalem.

But, as there's only a tiny remnant left, the people who visit concentrate on praying to God, rather than admiring a building. (It must also mean that they don't spend much time worrying about fundraising to repair leaks in the roof!)

Another fascinating experience, in Jerusalem, was seeing the Kidron Valley, just outside the city walls. It is choc-a-bloc full of ancient gravestones, put

there, because people were determined to be buried as close as possible to the Temple – God's house – when they were raised from the dead, at the last day!

But, they may be disappointed, because the Temple was destroyed – just as Jesus predicted! When Jesus returns, there'll be no need for a Temple, in which to worship God.

He's paid the price with His life, and redeemed everyone who repents and believes in Him. So when He returns, bringing the New Heaven and the New Earth, we're told God will live among us, we will be His people and He will be our God.

There'll be no need for a Temple – we'll be free to worship Him in all His Glory – Face to face! What an amazing prospect – we'll be blown away by the beauty and wonder of God.

There will be no more pain, no more crying, no more war and, of course, no more need to worry about church repairs or renovations. We'll be able to concentrate simply on worshipping God in all His splendour!

Reading between the lines of Mark's report, I think the disciples got the idea; they were very excited about the prospect. But, Peter, James, John and Andrew couldn't resist asking the same question, which I, and so many others, would love to ask: "Lord, tell us, when will these things happen?"

But, Jesus was simply not going there! He didn't answer the '64 million dollar question'! Instead, He warned them to 'Be on their guard'; watch out and be prepared. He warned them not to be misled by false prophets.

He told them not to be alarmed by wars, and rumours of wars or by earthquakes or other natural disasters - they are just early signs, birth pangs.

But, He told them two most important things:

First, before the end of this world comes: 'The Gospel must be preached to all nations.' That should keep us all busy for many years yet!

Second, Jesus gave a wonderful message of encouragement and hope; **The** message, which makes it all worthwhile, and keeps me going even on the worst possible days in ministry – He said: "**The one who is patient, (NIV translation - who stands firm) to the end will be saved.**"

Brothers and sisters in Christ, 'when' becomes irrelevant; I can offer no clearer message; I can give no greater encouragement.

If you take nothing else at all away from this service, this morning ... simply take those words away with you; and you should be dancing down the street as you leave.

Let me repeat them, in case you missed them:

“The one who stands firm (who trusts Jesus) to the end will be saved.”

Amen. So be it Lord Jesus.

Let's pray ...