

A Call To Endure
Mark 13:1-13
August 9, 2026
Pastor Francis Bezzam

¹ And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” ² And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

³ And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?” ⁵ And Jesus began to say to them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁶ Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. ⁷ And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹ “But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹ And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

One of the impressive structures that has survived since 300 A.D. was a church building called the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul Turkey. When the building was first constructed, it was called *Megale Ekklesia* translated ‘Mega Church’.

This whole structure is so impressive building that it made to the top list of impressive buildings in the world. It is said that in 2019, 3.7 million people visited this place. Many of its walls are covered with mosaics made of gold, silver, glass, and colored stones.

The Hagia Sophia, however, pales in comparison to the second Temple in Jerusalem for its massive size and grandeur.

The Temple built by Herod had 162 columns, each forty feet high. The columns were so massive that it needed three men joining their hands with extended arms to wrap around the base of each column. One source says the stones were 67 feet long. Each stone was about 50 tons in weight. A massive building like this sounds indestructible.

Yet Jesus says nothing will be left of this magnificent building.

Last week, we saw Jesus warning his disciples in the Temple premises. In this passage, Jesus and his disciples are outside of the Temple complex. And Jesus tells his disciples what would happen to the Temple and Jerusalem. It is rather a grim picture but not without hope and encouragement.

God is working out his redemptive purposes in history even it means destruction of the Temple.

Verses 1 through 2.

¹ And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” ² And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

The importance of the Jewish temple in the first century cannot be overstated. The Jewish Temple was central to Jewish religious life. It was also a symbol of national pride. This Jewish temple took more than forty years to build. The building size was equivalent to nine football fields in size. Without the temple there was no religion, no economy. It is said that seven thousand priests and ninety-six hundred Levites were employed in the Temple service. The Temple was a source of major revenue. The Temple was known for three major festivals – Passover, Pentecost and the festival of Booths.

As a boy, Jesus went to the Temple with his parents for Passover. Thousands would visit every year. The temple council called the Sanhedrin consisted of Pharisees and Sadducees who made decisions. The high priest stood at the top of the food chain by leading the council.

Up to this point, Jesus’ disciples had observed all the actions of Jesus - how the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians and the priests had clashed with their Master. When we looked at the parable of the tenants in the previous chapter, Jesus told the chief priests, the scribes and the elders that the “owner of the vineyard” would come and destroy the tenants and give it to others. Jesus was a threat to their establishment.

The authorities saw Jesus as a poor outsider. But they could not ignore Jesus because of his popularity, his *superior* wisdom, his *matchless* compassion, his *divine* authority and his *passionate* zeal for God’s Temple.

John’s Gospel tells us that Jesus was consumed with zeal for what the temple stood for. The Temple stood for God’s glory and holiness.

However, over time the Temple had become a place of selling merchandize and even stealing from poor widows to satisfy the greed of its stewards. Jesus cleansed the Temple. And as the disciples exit this massive temple complex, they are so impressed by it.

But Jesus, rather shockingly, tells them nothing will remain. The columns, the building, the stones, the walls and everything will be destroyed and gone. This would have been very unsettling to hear.

Why does Jesus predict such a disastrous event to such a magnificent temple?

At least three reasons:

1. Because God's glory was at stake. The Temple became a business rather than a place of piety and holiness. Jesus has the authority to deem whatever is necessary to preserve God's holy name.
2. Jesus came to inaugurate something greater and better than the Temple. Jesus himself said, "*I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.*" Matthew 12:6. What was greater than the temple? Jesus! He is the Temple!
3. The destruction of the Temple points to a supernatural temple that can never be destroyed. When Jesus was questioned of his authority when he cleansed the temple and the leaders asked for a sign, he said "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*". John 2:19

What follows is a private instruction from Jesus to his disciples about the destruction of the Temple. This chapter is called the Olivet Discourse.

Chapter 13 can be divided into two major parts. One – the prediction of destruction of the Temple and two – the future return of Jesus Christ.

Verses 3 through 4.

³ And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?”

The disciples ask two questions – They ask Jesus “when” and “what” questions. When will the destruction happen and what are the signs they to look for?

Jesus give a four-part answer. The big sign leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem is the “abomination of the desolation” in verse 14. We’ll look verse 14 next Sunday Lord willing. Today we’ll cover three warnings Jesus gives.

I have labeled these warnings of Jesus as exhortations for us.

Exhortation#1: Stay the course with Jesus.

Verse 5:

⁵ And Jesus began to say to them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁶Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray.

I’m afraid that many Christians are so easily deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and some latest fad. Jesus tells his disciples to not be deceived. Don’t fall for traps. Many

people will come, claiming I am 'Jesus'. I meet JW's on a regular basis and they try to present to me a Christ that is not the Christ of Scriptures. The Christ they have is a distortion of Scriptures.

According to Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, here are a few accounts of false Messiahs that showed up during the time of the apostles.

- In A.D. 36, a Samaritan promised to reveal the sacred vessels which Moses had hidden on Mount Gerizim.
- In A.D. 44-48 someone named Theudas, mentioned in Acts 5, told his followers to follow him to the Jordan with their possessions.
- In A.D. 52-60 there was a prophet who called crowds to the desert and promised to do miracles.
- In the A.D 50's, there was an Egyptian prophet who led his followers from the desert to the Mount of Olives. As he did so they all expected that Jerusalem's walls would fall at his command.
- In A.D 60-62 there was another prophet, who was even referred to as a god by some followers, who called his followers to the desert to receive salvation and rest from their troubles.
- In A.D. 62 there was someone named Jesus ben Ananias who prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem some seven years and five months before it actually happened. He was punished and he was stoned to death.

So, warning number one – Be self-aware. Be vigilant. Don't let anyone deceive you from the Christ that you have believed. Soak in the Scriptures. Keep believing in the Christ of the Gospels. Let the Gospels be your regular diet. Don't let social media or any other media influence you to lead you astray from Christ and the knowledge of who He is. Peter confessed to Jesus "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:16. Do not also forsake the fellowship of believers in the local church.

Exhortation#2: Continue in faith not fear.

Verse 7-8

⁷ And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Notice, the first thing Jesus says here. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not fear. Do not be alarmed. Do not give into anxiety. Why? Because these things are not the end but are beginning of birth pains. 'Birth pains' is an interesting word used here. It is

analogous to labor pains of a woman having a child. This world is a world of conflict, war, fighting and natural disasters. Some people make too much of the conflicts in the world and interpret those conflicts or cataclysmic events to say this is the end. But Jesus says these are only signs but are not the end. And there are some who may look at current disasters and give into fear and anxiety and their whole world may be consumed by these things. You can lose your peace very quickly by either of those interpretations. Jesus wants his disciples to live by faith not fear.

When fears come in your life, and when you don't know the answers, it can be very unnerving and disturbing.

Consider how the Psalmist prays when he is afraid:

- *I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.* Psalm 34:4
- *God is our refuge and strength, therefore we will not fear.* Psalm 46:1
- *For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.* Psalm 112:6-7

Exhortation#3: Seek the Holy Spirit.

Verse 9-13

⁹“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹ And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

Why does Jesus tell his disciples to be on guard or to be alert? Because he had been training them for his mission. What was the mission? To witness for his name. To proclaim the gospel to all nations. Jesus tells them it is not going to be easy when they go around and preach the gospel and witness about repentance and forgiveness of sins. They will be betrayed. They will be beaten. They will be taken to trial. They will face hostility from their own families, and they will be hated. But their salvation is secure.

Luke's Gospel says, “*You will be hated by all for my name's sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish*”. (Luke 21:17-18). You see a disciple of Jesus is safe with God until eternity. Jesus tells his disciples that even if they die, their life is secure. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:17 that “*this momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.*” Therefore, the need for endurance.

How are they to endure? How are you to endure? By the Holy Spirit.

Illustration: I visit the seaport on a regularly basis to encourage seafarers and witness for Christ. Two weeks ago, my partner Phil and I were getting ready to dis-embark a ship and we were met with two sailors who requested Bibles. So, we gave Bibles but I was somehow urged in my mind to ask them – “Is there one thing I can pray for you about?” No sooner than I had asked the question they immediately responded each with one request. It’s as if the Holy Spirit was directing me to seek the wisdom of the word of God. And what I did was ask them to open the Bibles, which we just gave and read it and meditate upon it. They were so joyful.

You may meet someone today or tomorrow as you live your daily life. And you may not be prepared how to witness for Christ. Will you seek and depend on the Holy Spirit? God desires to use to you as a witness for him.

We looked at three exhortations – Stay the course with Jesus. Continue in faith not fear. Seek the Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, let’s look at what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:4-5.

Peter writes, *“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*

Peter perhaps was amazed at the stones that erected the Temple. That Temple was destroyed in 70 AD.

God had plans for a greater Temple. Jesus is greater than the Temple.
Jesus is the “living stone”.

Jesus was destroyed by being shamed, crucified, pierced and left alone.

Jesus died. His disciples thought all hope was lost.

On the third day, however, Jesus rose again triumphant and victorious over sin and death.
The body of his temple can never be destroyed.

And because of Jesus Christ you have become a “living stone” when you turn and trust in Him as Lord and Savior.

Will you trust in Christ alone?

And those who endure till the end will be saved.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: A Call To Endure. Mark 13:1-13

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What prompted the disciples to ask Jesus about the Temple? What does Jesus warn his disciples about?
2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.
 - Do you believe there are 'deceivers' today preaching another Christ? How will you guard yourself? How has the Holy Spirit empowered you to witness for the Gospel?
 - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

3. HANDS For personal reflection: What will you do guard yourself and stay alert when wars and cataclysmic events appear to unsettle you?