

JESUS SPEAKS OF HARD THINGS AHEAD (LUKE 21:6-36)

A RESOURCE FOR SMALL GROUPS

Christian faith – like a high-end Goretex jacket – is made to perform in extreme conditions. It doesn't work nearly so well when life is easy. Unhelpfully, our cultural script favours a life of increasing ease.

1. How many of your decisions are based on a desire for comfort and ease?

In a long and complex passage (Luke 21:6-36 – read it as a group, taking turns), Jesus lays out the coming disaster for his hearers: the temple will be torn down, and Jerusalem destroyed. It will be like the end of the world: a great tumult and unravelling of life across the globe before the arrival of the Son of Man. Speaking openly of the imminent Fall of Jerusalem (AD 70), Jesus also speaks of cataclysms of later times. There will be persecution and betrayal for His disciples, exile or worse for ordinary people. Fear and dread will be the norm as all that has seemed secure crumbles. For many across our troubled world, that describes present experience.

The question is, how are we to live in such times? Firstly, by creating a home – a refuge, safe and welcoming – for the displaced and exiled.

2. How does your way of life offer home to others?

Secondly, by offering witness, precisely when things are hard for us (read Luke 21:12-15). We do not need anxiously to prepare, anticipating that we will fail when the moment comes; we can be confident. This does not mean that we do not think carefully – and ahead – about what form our witness might take; just that we do not worry.

3. What might a verbal witness look like in the midst of hard things? What sorts of things might we say that would demonstrate the gospel of Jesus?
4. Can you tell a story of how the Lord enabled you to offer such a witness?

Thirdly, by becoming insightful and prayerful, reading the signs accurately (read Luke 21:28-36). We are to lift up our heads, anticipating the intervention of the Lord; we are to pray for one another to be strong to endure hardship so that we may stand before the Son of Man.

5. What signs of grace can you discern in a hard situation you face, that might tell of the Lord's coming intervention?
6. What do you need strength to endure? Pray for one another!