



## Parish of Finchampstead and California

# THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

20 - 25 JULY 2020

## INTRODUCTION

The NT readings for Morning Prayer continue their progress through Luke's Gospel; each day's thought is based mainly on the parts of the readings in bold type. This week's readings take us as far as the Last Supper.

## MONDAY - Luke 20:41-21:4

<sup>20.41</sup> Then Jesus said to the crowd, 'How can they say that the Messiah is David's son? <sup>42</sup> For David himself says in the book of Psalms, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, <sup>43</sup> until I make your enemies your footstool.'" <sup>44</sup> David thus calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?'

<sup>45</sup> In the hearing of all the people he said to the disciples, <sup>46</sup> 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets. <sup>47</sup> They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'

**<sup>21.1</sup> He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; <sup>2</sup> he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. <sup>3</sup> He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; <sup>4</sup> for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'**

## ***Thought for the day***

*Even when he is under intense scrutiny, Jesus continues to provoke his opponents by his strong criticisms of their behaviour (v45-47). Then he calls attention to the kind of behaviour that merits praise - the poor woman whose utterly trivial offering is esteemed more highly than the riches of the wealthy because of the sacrifice it represents to her. It seems to be human nature to be in thrall to money, but what would it take for someone well off to demonstrate the same commitment to their faith as this poor widow?*

## TUESDAY - Luke 21:5-19

<sup>5</sup> When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, Jesus said, <sup>6</sup> 'As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.'

<sup>7</sup> They asked him, 'Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?' <sup>8</sup> And he said, 'Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and, "The time is near!" Do not go after them.'

<sup>9</sup> 'When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.' <sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; <sup>11</sup> there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

<sup>12</sup> 'But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. <sup>13</sup> This will give you an opportunity to testify. <sup>14</sup> So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; <sup>15</sup> **for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.** <sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup> **You will be hated by all because of my name.** <sup>18</sup> **But not a hair of your head will perish.** <sup>19</sup> **By your endurance you will gain your souls.**

### ***Thought for the day***

*For the next three days we read Jesus' sombre prophecy for the future. When he spoke these words his listeners would have assumed that he was talking about imminent events; and to the extent that they prefigured the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army in AD70 perhaps he was. But, two thousand years later, we perhaps need to interpret what he said differently. Certainly during that time, and now, there has been no let-up in the persecution of his followers (v12, 16-17), which he regards as a chance to proclaim the Gospel (v13). In the midst of this bleakness he offers encouragement in word (v15), deed (v18), and vindication (v19).*

### **WEDNESDAY - Luke 21:20-28**

<sup>20</sup> 'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. <sup>21</sup> Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; <sup>22</sup> for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfilment of all that is written. <sup>23</sup> Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days. **For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; <sup>24</sup> they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**

<sup>25</sup> 'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup> People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

### ***Thought for the day***

*Jesus continues, sounding very like one of the OT prophets addressing 'this people' (v23), foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews (v24). All this and the accompanying natural phenomena point to his return as the Son of Man in glory (v27). Christians are to see in these signs a token of the certainty that Jesus will redeem us (literally, buy us back) from sin and evil (v28). Today would be a good day to reflect on what this means for us, especially in the threatening and disorienting times we are living through.*

### **THURSDAY - Luke 21:29-38**

<sup>29</sup> Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup> as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also,

when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup> 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup> like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> **Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'**

<sup>37</sup> Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. <sup>38</sup> And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.

## ***Thought for the day***

*When the Government told us all to 'Be alert' as part of the strategy for defeating Covid 19, I doubt whether they were consciously referencing these words of Jesus in verse 36. He couples this instruction with the need for prayer, which I've not heard put forward as part of the anti-coronavirus strategy. As we do our best to comply with regulations and guidelines, we shouldn't forget that God cares about us, and that we should share our hopes and prayers with him in prayer.*

## **FRIDAY - Luke 22:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> Now the festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was near. <sup>2</sup> The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people. <sup>3</sup> **Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve;** <sup>4</sup> **he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them.** <sup>5</sup> They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. <sup>6</sup> So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.

<sup>7</sup> Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.' <sup>9</sup> They asked him, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for it?' <sup>10</sup> 'Listen,' he said to them, 'when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters <sup>11</sup> and say to the owner of the house, "The teacher asks you, 'Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" <sup>12</sup> He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.' <sup>13</sup> So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

## ***Thought for the day***

*After the last three days' readings, we may find it a relief to be back to the historical account, even as the clouds continue to darken. At the end of Luke's account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness after his baptism by John, he tells us that 'the Devil left him until an opportune time' (4:13). Now the Devil reappears and, by suborning Judas (v3-4), initiates the events that will lead to Jesus' ultimate temptation at Gethsemane (22:39-46). Why did Judas do what he did? What weaknesses in him did the Devil take advantage of? What are our own weaknesses?*

## **SATURDAY - Luke 22:14-23**

<sup>14</sup> When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup> He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup> for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' <sup>17</sup> Then he took a cup, and

after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup> for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' <sup>19</sup> Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. **Do this in remembrance of me.**' <sup>20</sup> And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup> But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. <sup>22</sup> For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed.' <sup>23</sup> Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

### ***Thought for the day***

*These words and actions of Jesus are some of the best known of all, repeated as they are at every service of Holy Communion (though usually from one of the other NT accounts - Luke's account with its two cups of wine is slightly more elaborate). The warrant for this is Jesus' instruction in verse 19 to 'do this in remembrance of me'. The disciples clearly treasured this memory and passed it on to the Gospel writers and to Paul (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Seeing these words in the context of the practical preparations (yesterday's reading v7-13) and the reminder of what is to follow (v21-23) reminds us that when we celebrate communion it is not separate from our lives outside church, but part of them.*

JRE / 4.7.20