

# Coffee to Go | Proper 28 | Year B

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

temple, disciples, Jesus, apocalyptic language, anxiety, climate crisis, hope

## SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

### **Karin Peter** 00:00

Karin, welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So where are we this week with Jesus? And the answer is, we are still at the temple. We were there last week, across from the treasury, and we are still at the temple this week. And the disciples are with Jesus, and they are kind of touring the temple complex, if you will. So those of you who've gone to Independence to tour the Temple Complex there, similar deal, and the disciples are just awed by the sheer size and grandeur of the temple itself. And if you read descriptions of what the temple looked like, it makes sense. Giant stones put into place, you know, by human power, which is amazing and they're touring the temple area and just really trying to take it all in.

### **Blake Smith** 01:32

I like that connection with the Temple Complex in Independence, because, I mean, how many times have we sat and been in awe of the structure, or people who have not seen anything like it before. It's an amazing architecture. So, you kind of get in that, that feeling, that place where the disciples might have been as they're engaging with Jesus here.

Our scripture today comes from the Gospel of Mark. It is the 13th Chapter, the first through the eighth verse.

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings." Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another. All will be thrown down." When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will this be and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" Then Jesus began to say to them, "beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, I am he, and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumor of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is still to come, for nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places. There will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs."

Well, first of all, let's clear out all of the apocalyptic thought that you're, you know, all these things that you, actually you might hold on to those, because as we, as we talk about this, those kinds of things are around us. Every day. There's somebody making some kind of prophecy about, you know, these are

the End Times. This is what's happening. But we need to take a couple of things into account and set up kind of the context of this passage, because this doesn't sound fun. I mean, when we talk about if we were sitting outside, for instance, the Independence complex and Jesus were to say, "well, enjoy it today, because tomorrow it's all coming down," there would probably be among us a pretty negative reaction.

**Karin Peter** 03:57

Oh yeah, we'd be terrified. We'd be out there going, "tell us how to know when this has happened, so we can get the heck out of here."

**Blake Smith** 04:02

Yeah, right, exactly. So here are the disciples. They're kind of tourists, they're they're out to they're touring the temple, and they're just kind of the, I guess I would use, that might be the country bumpkins who come to the big city. You know that's a term we would use where I'm from. Country bumpkins that have come to the big city, and they're kind of in awe of these buildings. They've never seen anything like it. And here they are in Jerusalem. They're touring the temple, and they get hit with this Jesus' apocalyptic language. [Owww] We need to... Yeah, yeah. Like, whoa. What we need to remember, though, is that the temple was by the time this was written in the Gospel. The temple was probably already destroyed around the year 70, and for sure, the writer was aware of the Jewish revolt that had been taking place between 66 and 70. So this idea of what was to come really was already happening [KP: or had already happened recently.] So, as the readers are, are reading this, this is a, this is a done deal. The bit of, that bit of context changes things for us, because it's no longer a passage about foretelling what is to come. It's more of a rabbinical teaching. And we kind of get that feeling when there's this abrupt change, if you will. We go from verse two, where they're, they just come out of the temple and look at these buildings. And then verse three, well, when he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple. So they're sitting together in a teaching, learning format, and Jesus is relating to them what is to take place, or what has taken place, and what they might learn from it. So the people are reeling. They're asking how this could happen. And it is not unlike what we might feel on any given day, reeling from the stories that we're hearing, the things that are going on around the world, the fact that wars are taking place daily. We were just reminded with, not too long ago, a couple months ago, with September 11 and for the, for our US listeners, we might be ones that remember, have that remembrance every year, and every time I see the ceremonies and the things that we do on September 11, I am reminded of the fact that there aren't enough days in the year for many in our world to give specific memory to a single event of horror, because they are daily in the lives of so many people. And so we might ask, When will oppression and war and imperialism and economic crises end? Well, not likely anytime soon. [Yeah] would be my answer. It's going to take a while. People suffer every day, and stuff happens.

**Karin Peter** 07:29

That's not what I wrote in the outline Blake.

**Blake Smith** 07:32

I know, and I'm like, Well, okay, the proverbial quote, unquote, stuff happens. How about that? There you go. It hits the fan. Everybody will know now what's in the notes. Yes, that. And that's how the world

is. It's how it has been and it's how it will be. And Jesus is here sitting with these disciples saying, Alright, so don't get sidetracked by the weird predictions and the false leaders and the smooth talkers and the charismatic folks, all of those people who were calling for your attention. What's important is that we remain faithful, that we work for change, and note the small changes for good, the birth pangs that are mentioned in this passage that foretell of God's reign coming near. I was just, yeah, go ahead.

**Karin Peter** 08:21

So, I'm wondering too, and, and I didn't think about this before, until I was listening to you read through the Scripture. But the response of the people and of Peter, James and John and Andrew, it's also, it's also this sense of elevated anxiety that I didn't pick up at first, until I heard you read it now. So, it's not just the Oh my God, what's going to happen? Tell me. Tell me. It's this whole idea of Jesus saying, you know, turn down the anxiety people. Don't get, don't get caught up in where that takes you. That's not healthy. This stuff always happens. Earthquakes always happen. You know, the conflict happens. You need to, you need to focus.

**Blake Smith** 09:14

Yeah. So, some questions we might ask ourselves regarding this or when am I afraid or in despair? When is my anxiety level heightened, and how do I find hope? How do I find hope? What are the birth pangs that I see today, (the climate crisis, human rights issues, economic disparity) And, it's you know, different for everyone. So where are those things in your daily life, and who are the false voices in the midst of those crises? Many of which don't really bring hope? But yeah, encourage and kind of fan the flames of that fear and anxiety.

**Karin Peter** 10:07

So, how do we kind of experience this scripture this week? And I think one of the ways is to discern a little bit and pick out the hope from all the different voices that we hear around us. If, if I'm concerned about climate crisis, I can get sucked into the political debate about it, or I can say, Where do I find hope in the responsible response to climate crisis that that Community of Christ is working on? So I can find hope in those where do I find hope in the human rights issues? I find it in our worth of all persons and other enduring principles. So, look for those little pieces of hope this week. So, every day, look for one. You only have to find one little piece of hope every day. So, a good way to do it is to ask yourself in the morning today, I find hope in and then by the end of the day, be able to complete that sentence with your little piece of hope for this week.

**Blake Smith** 11:14

Alright, our blessing today is called "The Border of Paradise," and it's by Anna Kamianiska, who lived from 1920 to 1986 and she was a Polish poet who lived through foreign occupation during World War Two.

It's strange that green valleys are still here, as if happiness slept in them and shady streams we once knew for sure existed, and that there still are roofs under which small children sleep, filling the house with a different silence. It's strange that clouds here still follow the sun like gliding birds, and that there's still a simple human goodness besides what aspires upwards, that pure music stands at the door, which suddenly seems like a palace portico. It's strange that we still want so much to laugh and cry.

I love that, and especially when you think about that in the context of someone who has been through what she had been through, to have that hope, it's an inspiration for us.

So that's going to wrap it up for us here today at Coffee to Go, and we ask you, invite you to join us at Coffee to Go next time, for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.