

A vision of the future?

Gillian Cooper *reflects on*
Luke 21:5-19

It seems the disciples are a bit over-confident about the durability of the Temple. As visitors from Galilee, they marvel at the building's size and beauty. They are impressed by the dedication to the God of Israel that it represents, believing that God will honour it by being present there for ever. But Jesus warns them that the Temple is not as durable as it appears. He speaks of destruction and disaster to come, not only in Jerusalem but throughout the known world. Even more frighteningly, he speaks of persecution and betrayal aimed especially at those who maintain allegiance to him.

But there is good news. There is no use in relying on the physical

presence of the Temple, Jesus says. But that does not mean that Jesus' followers are without resources, or that they should despair. He promises them wisdom, so that they will know who to believe and what to say. They can endure, he says, because the kingdom of God is near. God's presence with the people does not depend on the existence of the Temple. God's kingdom does not require an earthly throne, but is an ever-present reality.

Jesus has a harsh but realistic message for his disciples. There are times when we might find the state of the world overwhelming. Everywhere we look there are warnings of impending doom and catastrophe – be it environmental, political, or economic. But like the disciples we have a choice – to despair of the world or to hope in the kingdom. 🍌

The creeds

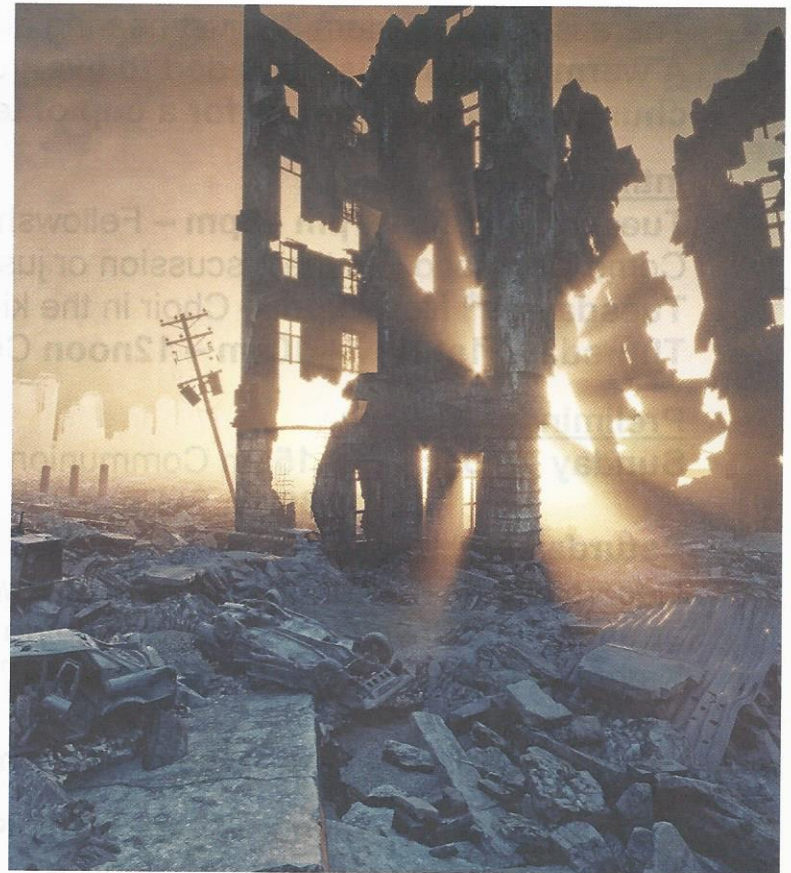
Kathryn Fleming continues her series about the Christian creeds.

If human understanding of God is at best limited, should we say the creeds at all? "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent," said Wittgenstein, and it seems a cheek to attempt to codify the attributes of God. I'd imagine most of us sometimes struggle to honestly profess each clause, and that we all have days

when it seems best to gloss over the complexities of the virgin birth or bodily resurrection. It's a relief, then, that the Nicene Creed is explicitly corporate – "we believe" allows for individual uncertainty to be carried in a majority conviction that includes not simply those present, but the wider Church too.

Even so, it might be wiser to pare down the creeds to a minimalist alternative, like this from David Jenkins: "God is. He is for us, and therefore there is hope. God is. He is as he is in Jesus, and therefore it is worth it."

I'm pretty sure I can sign up to that, even on a bad day. 🍌



Lord Jesus, in times of doubt, despair and when I feel overwhelmed, remind me that I have the choice to hope in the kingdom. Amen.

World toilet day

by Lisa Tulfer

November 19th is World Toilet Day. This may be an unpalatable subject, but it's hugely important for anyone who's concerned about social justice throughout God's creation.

The United Nations declared access to sanitation and water a human right in 2010, yet over one third of the world's population still does not have access to a safe toilet and almost a billion people have no toilet at all. Amazingly,

more people own a mobile phone than have access to a toilet. Lack of safe toilets has huge implications for human health, spreading diseases such as cholera and dysentery, and untreated sewage threatens to contaminate the environment and the food chain. One fifth of schools worldwide have no toilet facilities, which can prevent girls attending once they start menstruating. And women with no choice but to "go" in the open, especially after dark, are vulnerable to attack and rape.

So on Tuesday, why not pray about what you can do to help? You can find out more at www.worldtoiletday.info 🍌

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

John Wesley (1703-1791), preacher, theologian and evangelist

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice

Session Clerk: Nicol 811242

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.

Intimations

Tuesday 19th Nov 7pm - 8pm – Fellowship in the kirk hall. A study on Esther. Come along and join the discussion or just come along and listen.

Tuesday 19th Nov - 8pm – Choir in the kirk hall

Thursday 21st Nov – 10am – 12noon Community Café in the kirk hall

Preliminary Notices.

Sunday 1st Dec - 11.15am Communion

- 2.30pm St Peter's

Saturday 14th Dec

Decorating the kirk for Christmas. Each window will display a Christmas flower arrangement. If you would like to lead/do a window arrangement, please speak to Kathryn. The kirk will be open on the 14th December to complete the window arrangements.

Sunday 15th Dec – 7pm - Christmas Concert in the Kirk

Friday 20th Dec – School Service in the Kirk

Sunday 22nd Dec – Christmas Service

Tuesday 24th Dec – 11.15pm for 11.30pm – Watchnight Service

Pastoral Care. The pastoral care team would like to expand the work they are doing and invite anyone with an interest and bit of spare time to contact Carol or Olivia

Readings:

2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13

Luke 21: 5-19

Hymns:

61 O sing a new song to the Lord (Psalm 98)

261 Father Eternal, Ruler of Creation

248 For my sake and the gospel's, go and tell redemption's story

472 Come, thou long-expected Jesus

476 Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord

Prayer response:

L: The Lord is our strength

All: He alone is our salvation.

Doxology Hymn 786

May the God of peace go with us, as we travel from this place

May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.