

## Thirtieth-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

[Reading I: Malachi 3:19-20a](#)  
[Responsorial Psalm 98:5-6, 7-8, 9](#)  
[Reading II: 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12](#)  
[Gospel: Luke 21:5-19](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:  
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/111322.cfm>



Western Wall of the Temple in Jerusalem

As the end of the liturgical year approaches, the focus of the Sunday scriptures turns to the end of the world. Jesus is teaching in the temple and as people admire the adornments of the temple, Jesus warns them that it will all pass. The temple will be destroyed. For many of the people, the temple was among the largest structures that they had seen. Jesus seeks to reorient their attention. The temple is not the focus. They should instead focus on what God is doing.

The temple was destroyed by the Romans following the Jewish revolt in 66 AD. The Romans attacked and sacked the city and the temple in August of 70 AD. The temple buildings were destroyed and all that remained was the foundational wall which still exists and is known as the Western Wall. (Pictured above)

The prediction of the destruction of the temple was an authentic message of Jesus as it was brought up in his trial before the Sanhedrin. When the people heard Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the temple, they assumed that it would be the end of the world. In reality, these are two different events. The temple was destroyed and this led to the persecution of the Christian community. By the time Luke is writing (during the 80s), the church is being persecuted and Jesus has not returned. Jesus warns them about false teachers who will claim that they are the Christ. He also calls them to not be guided by fear. Their attention should be on remaining faithful as hardship and persecution come into their lives. These will be the great test and they should persevere in being disciples.

Fear keeps one focused on themselves and exterior events. Jesus calls disciples to be on a mission and focused on God's invitation and ways to serve. Jesus reassures all disciples that he is with them always and promises to give them the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide them. Jesus assures disciples that even though some will die, not a hair will be disturbed. Jesus holds disciples in life. Whether it is human life or eternal life, Jesus is with each person.

The first reading is also about the end times when God will intervene in history. He warns that God's day is coming. For those who are faithful to God, it will bring salvation and healing. For those who do not fear God, it will be a day of judgment and punishment. Throughout Christian history, judgment and punishment have been emphasized far more than saving deliverance. Malachi's message was given as a message of hope for those who endured hardship in being faithful to God.

The second reading is the conclusion of Paul's message to the Thessalonians. He is addressing a problem that has developed in the community. Some have assumed that Jesus said he would be returning, so there is no need to work. They could just wait expectantly for his return. In the meantime, they did not need to work because Christ was coming. They could just depend on the charity of others and unfortunately spent their time being nosy and gossiping.

Paul calls them to work and not burden anyone just as he worked while he was there. Some may have held that work was a curse that came from the original sin. Now that salvation had come in Jesus, there was no longer a need to work. Paul challenges that and calls them to be focused on others rather than themselves.

### **Reflection Questions:**

What did the temple mean to the Jewish people in biblical times?

What influences your understanding of the end of the world?

How do you see the virtue of justice expressed in the world?

How do Christians approach the end of the world?

### **Themes:**

End of the World

Kingdom of or Reign of God

Day of the Lord

Persecution

Virtue of Justice

### **Prayer Suggestions:**

For the grace of perseverance: that God will strengthen and sustain us in remaining faithful in our discipleship in times of trial and distress

For a spirit of hope: that God will drive disabling fear from our hearts and help us face the future with confidence and trust that God is always with us and will never abandon us

For all who are experiencing an “end of their world”: that those who have become ill, lost employment, been divorced, or are grieving the death of a loved one may know God’s comforting presence this day and be strengthened by God’s Spirit

For all who are persecuted, deprived of their rights, and used as pawns by the powers of this world: that the Sun of Justice may rise for them, heal their wounds, and raise the lowly to high places