

Script Worship Resources - *Rock Solid*

Pentecost 25, Year B,

14th November, 2021

Hebrews 10:11-14, 19-25 NIV / Mark 13:1-8 NIV

Prelude

[Piano/Cello Duo](#)

with Erika Pierson, Cello Nadia Boulander,
Moderato for Cello and Piano

Welcoming Announcements

Pass the Peace

[J.S. Bach C Major Cello Suite, Bourree I, II](#)

Annie Center

Call to Worship

We gather together to worship, knowing that God is already here among us; knowing that there is nothing that separates us from the presence of our Lord. Wherever we are, wherever we go, God is near. So let us enter into this service of worship with confidence and hope, knowing that God is already with us, and that He stands eager to meet us and bless us with His love.

Invocation

In you, O God, we find refuge from our turbulent world. We work each day to bear witness to your justice through our ministries.

While the journey towards true peace that lies ahead is long, our incremental steps continue to take us closer to that promised day.

Renew in us the strength, faith, and courage we need to persevere so that the promised day will come when your will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Amen.

Opening Music (Lyric Video)

[Here In This Place](#)

written by Marty Haugen,
performed by the Virtual Choir of the
Ferryhill Parish Church, Aberdeen, Scotland

Epistle Reading **Hebrews 10:11-14, 19-25 NIV**

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,

and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.

For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,

and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,

not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hymn (Lyric Video)

[Christ Be My Leader](#)

text by Timothy Dudley-Smith,

performed and posted to YouTube by St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Downer's Grove, IL, used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

We are glad and rejoice forever in you, O God. With joy we draw deeply from your well of salvation and pray that even as we have sung, you may fulfill our story—the story of your love.

Though the world has been gripped by trouble since early days, and life has often been short and tormented, you have given us a vision of a day beyond the terrors: a

day when the heavens and earth will be new again, a day when the sound of weeping will give way to delight, a time when all creation will live in peace and people will long enjoy the fruits of their labours.

Help us to hold to that vision when the temples about us are falling, and our world is shaken. Strengthen us for the telling of your truth and for keeping to your path, that we might not weary in doing what is right, but through endurance may gain our souls, even as you desire for us to do.

As we pray for a new heaven and a new earth this day, we especially are aware of those among us and those beyond these doors who are in deep need of your peace, of your healing touch, of your just and bounteous kingdom.

We pray those who dwell in places of strife, need, and want....

We pray for those who struggle with grief and despair..

We pray for those who are unemployed and those fear layoff or termination and all those struggling with a burden in the workplace and the marketplace....

And finally, we pray for today for those of our brothers and sisters who face persecution

For those who are deprived of their basic human rights, and those who are deprived of their lives because of the sin of others...

Let us give thanks to the one to whom we pray, the one who brings both the snow and the sun; the one who heals this troubled world; the sick; and those who turn to Him in faith; the one who grants new life not only to us, but to the creation itself...

Gracious God,

we pray to you in the name of the one who came to show us the way, he who is our Lord and our Redeemer, our brother and our friend. We pray to you as one family, even as he taught us, saying...

Our Father who art in heaven Hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done On earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation But deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory

Forever and ever, Amen.

Gospel Reading Mark 13:1-18 NIV

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”

“Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately,

“Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”

Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you.

Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.

When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

“You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.

And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.

Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

“When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out.

Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak.

How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!

Pray that this will not take place in winter,

Message – *Rock Solid*

What do we rely on to get through our daily lives? What is it that is the bedrock we rely on? For many of us, the answer would probably be our family, and our friends. Maybe for some, their country and cultural identity. We all have things we cling to, in order to provide us with a sense of security and continuity, those anchors that keep us steady in the storms of life. But how steadfast are those moorings that we cling to? Someone once said that, “Nothing lasts forever. Forever is a lie. All we have what's between 'hello' and 'goodbye.’”

Which is part of what Jesus is relaying in our gospel lesson this morning. Standing before the grandeur and majesty of the temple complex, his disciples marvel at the huge foundation and masonry of that immense structure. Something so massive surely would last forever. Yet Jesus tells the disciples that it all will come down, that nothing will be left. All that remains today is the foundation of one wall. For those Jewish followers, that would be quite a revelation. The Temple was that rock that they as a people have relied on generations now. Ever since their return from exile in Babylon, that complex has been the center and foundation of their identity as a people. But it will all be gone according to Jesus.

In fact, for the initial readers of Mark's gospel, this had already become a reality. Mark, the oldest of the four canon gospels, is largely thought to have been written down sometime after 70 CE, which is the year the Romans completely razed the Temple during the Jewish Revolt. So for that audience, this isn't an apocalyptic prophecy, this is lived reality. They no longer have God's house to sacrifice in, to hold their rituals and dedications. In the Jewish faith, they really believed that God was physically present and resided in the Holy of Holies in the Temple.

Now, God was gone. How would they go on without God among them in a real way? Now to be sure, this wasn't the first time they've faced such a loss. After the Babylonian conquest, the First Temple built by Solomon was destroyed as well, and they had to find another way of being in exile. But now, here they are again and Jesus in his discourse is trying to prep.

Throughout this ongoing story of his time in Jerusalem, Jesus repeatedly points out that the Temple no longer serves its intended purpose. It has become a corrupt business venture, largely divorced from its original mission. And in the kingdom Jesus presents, God can be found anywhere; one did not have to go to a special holy spot. Jesus is preparing his followers to transition from a static-based faith, one stuck on rituals in a particular place, to a dynamic faith that is based on Jesus and the kingdom of God that is always at work everywhere. This would be particularly important to Mark's readers, who are now searching for meaning after losing such a big part of their identity in the Roman destruction of the Temple, as well as Jerusalem.

For the disciples, one could imagine it would be hard to have hope in the face of the imminent trials and tribulations that Jesus is predicting in this chapter of Mark. After today's reading, through the remainder of the chapter, Jesus describes in harsh, apocalyptic detail the suffering that is to come before his return.

Yet it's interesting that for this discussion we have a change of scenery in the dialogue. They move from the temple courtyards to the Mount of Olives, where one is afforded a panoramic view of the city, and where the Temple would have risen above to dominate the skyline, much as the Dome of the Rock dominates the view in today's Jerusalem. Though by all evidence, the Second Temple would have greatly dwarfed the Dome of the Rock in size and grandeur. But what makes this new location interesting is not the great view of the skyline, but what is actually located on this side of the Mount of Olives, a cemetery.

From ancient times to the present day, the ideal place for a Jew to be buried is facing the temple just outside the city walls on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives. On that side of the Old City, just below the Temple mount, is the Eastern, or Golden Gate, which has been sealed shut since the 16th century. Jewish tradition is that the Messiah will triumphantly enter the city through that gate, leading to the resurrection of the dead. Those who are buried closest will get the best spot in line.

So even in Jesus' day, he and the disciples would have been sitting or standing among the graves of the faithful. And in Mark's time, they would be surrounded by the fresher graves of those killed in the recent uprising against Rome that resulted in it all being destroyed.

But there's also a sense of hope there as well. They are sitting among the communion of saints, those who have gone before; those who wait for ultimate redemption. Jesus is telling them they are part of something bigger, the kingdom that breaks into the world through Jesus.

Yet this kingdom doesn't come without risk. He warns the disciples that there will be false prophets who will try to lead them astray. People who will claim to be the messiah. People whose perspective is not rooted in kingdom thinking, but oriented

towards those temporary, transient anchors in this world to which people pinned their hopes in vain. False prophets who saw rapture around every corner, who convinced others that they could step away from living the disciple life since Jesus would be coming tomorrow to make it all right again.

But security can't be found in structures that are not built to last. The Temple fell to the Romans. The Jews eventually were exiled from their land, left to wander and live in foreign lands for millennia, often ostracized and abused for who they were. Likewise, the Romans and the Byzantines fell, as did the Ottoman Turks, and all the other great empires before and since. Nothing in this world lasts forever.

Likewise, all the structures of this world that we cling to will eventually fall as well. The grand buildings and culture that we hold dear will someday fall to something new. The flag that many venerate will most likely become a relic of history as will the nation-state it represents. It is the nature of all things that are rooted in this world. Which is why we are not to put our hope and faith in such things. Instead we are to seek the kin-dom at work around us. We are called to be the disciples of today, to share the gospel, to join in the missio Dei, God at work around us.

The writer of Hebrews tells us to have confidence, because of our faith our conscience should be clean through Jesus, whose actions tore the curtain of the Temple, and opened for us a direct communion with God. We should boldly share and spur others on to love and good deeds, with hope, because our anchor is not the people and structures of this world, but instead the kin-dom of God here and now, and at the end of all things.

But like those early disciples and followers, we too need to be wary of false teachers and prophets. Those who would encourage us to put our trust and our hope on the things of this world. Those who would have us put ourselves before others while our savior tells us that the last shall be first. Those who think they have the end times all figured out. If you notice, when the disciples ask Jesus when these things will happen, he completely side steps the question. And at the end of this chapter, he tells them that no one but the Father knows the time.

We're told not to be alarmed. Wars and rumors of wars and natural disasters will occur and they are the birth pangs of the kin-dom to come. These are parts of a world that we are not to put our hope and faith in. But we are to be observant. We are to notice these things and act as disciples in the midst of it all: to seek peace, to give comfort and love, and share the gospel.

It's not rocket science. What gets complicated is when we try to live in two worlds; when we try to make our faith fit the values and structures of the world around us. The purpose of the watching, the waiting, and the observing is to experience and be changed by something altogether different from what we have known. Jesus is asking

his disciples to participate in the reign of God as it is being realized in time and space, without trying to conform it to the truths and values of time and space we confine ourselves to in this world.

We're called to think outside the box and to realize that God doesn't work by our rules and customs. God doesn't fit into any box we make. We are to be transformed by something beyond ourselves that we can neither understand nor manage. Jesus desires us to be open to God's kin-dom breaking into our own historical reality, challenging our understanding of what will endure and what will not.

History shows the monuments and structures we make in this world do not last. Buildings are destroyed, governments and nations come and go, and sadly, even those we love come and go as well. Some day this building in which we sit will be gone, too. The only constant we can count on is God and God's kin-dom at work in the world around us. Our only task is to live lives of love and service, witnessing to the gospel in how we live. To quote Instagram poet RM Drake, "How beautiful it is to live in a world where nothing lasts forever. We must learn to fall in love with the love inside us, only then every moment living will be worth dying for."

May we all find that love inside us to share with others. May we all encourage each other to live lives of love, putting our faith and hope in God's kin-dom, not the nations of this world, truly being Jesus in the neighborhood, tethering ourselves to the rock that will never fail. Amen.

A Call to Serve

Jesus came not to be served but to serve.

Let us follow this example and share our gifts so that we may also experience the joys and challenges of serving. As we approach the coming week, let's think about how we can use our talents and gifts in the coming week to spread the kin-dom that has true staying power, that will last the test of time.

A Time for Reflection [J.S. Bach Aria from the Goldberg Suite.](#)

Annie Center

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

We return a portion of what we have received from you, O God, in gratitude for all that you have bestowed upon us. Bless the gifts we offer you, in whatever form they take. Grant that they may continue to sustain and support the ministries of this church to bring the light of Christ into this community and the world beyond. Amen.

HYMN (Video) [*Move In Our Midst*](#) (with Lyrics)

Written by Perry L. Huffaker, Robert Lau, uploaded to YouTube by cjbecker, video created for use in his church, used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

Commissioning/Benediction

What endures is not the edifices we build,
but the work of God that we accomplish
through our ministries in the name of Christ Jesus.
Let us go forth from here empowered by the Holy Spirit
to be God's instruments of justice rooted in love
to further the work of Jesus and to move us closer to God's reign of peace. Amen.

Postlude [*J.S. Bach C Major Cello Suite, Gigue*](#)
Annie Center