

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“PREPARATION FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE, PART 2”

For individual study or group discussion

In Luke 21:12-19, Jesus warns the disciples of approaching persecutions. Jesus' prophetic pronouncements of approaching wars (v. 10), terrors (v. 11), and persecutions (v. 12) are anchored by verse 13, *“This will be your opportunity to bear witness.”* Understanding God's ultimate purpose for his people as he **prepares them for faithful service** encourages them to embrace opportunities to testify amidst persecution and to expect gracious provision from him so that they can stand firm till the end.

Jesus prepares his disciples for faithful service by calling them to witness faithfully. Opposition is an opportunity. (vv. 12-13)

Throughout history, the church has faced tribulations. And as one historian outlines, the oppositions to the church served as an opportunity for its flourishing: *“From Nero to Diocletian, Roman imperial and provincial persecutions were fierce. Tradition tells us of gladiators in the Colosseum, lions in the Circus Maximus, and staked pyres in the Forum as threatening the earliest believers. They were forced into a precarious, often secretive existence, living on the margins of society and meeting in catacombs, caverns, and copse hideaways. Yet they persevered. As Tertullian quipped, ‘The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.’”*¹

- What different things does Jesus prophesy will happen (v. 12)? Throughout the book of Acts we read of their fulfillment. Scan the book of Acts (cf. 4:1-13; 5:17-21, 27-33, 41; 7:51-60; 8:1-3; 9:20-25; 12:1-11; 14:19-23) and note each occurrence where these predictions come to pass.
- Read Acts 9:1-5. Jesus confronts Saul on the road to Damascus. According to Jesus, when Saul threatens the disciples of the Lord, who is Saul ultimately persecuting?

Jesus prepares his disciples for faithful service by calling them to depend fully. God equips us for the moment. (vv. 14-15)

During trying times, God promises his Spirit, who can transform our trials into triumphs. Our job is to testify of Christ and depend fully upon his grace to equip us in adversity. The Spirit will guide and provide wisdom as his people bear witness to their oppressors, equipping the church with courage even in the midst of persecution.

- Jesus says not to prepare beforehand how we are to answer. Does this mean that we are not to study and have a defense for our faith when asked? What did Jesus mean? Read 1 Peter 3:15-17. Why should we study God's Word and what should be our demeanor toward others as we share the Gospel?
- Recall the words of the hymn, *How Firm a Foundation*: *“Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed; for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid; I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.”*² Read Isaiah 41:8-13. Share how God has upheld you during trials you have faced.

Jesus prepares his disciples for faithful service by calling them to endure hopefully. We persevere because God preserves. (vv. 16-19)

Jesus warns the disciples, *“you will be hated by all for my name's sake”* (v. 17). The hatred Christians face is often deeply personal, even coming from family members. The pain we experience is real, but God guarantees strength in the face of adversity. Note that God's plan does not center around our comfort, but the hope of our eternal reward. Jesus' eschatological promises of verses 18-19 should stir us to take courage and never give up. As pastor R. Kent Hughes summarizes, *“The Christian life is not a sprint, but a marathon. And by refusing to give up, we will continue to enjoy the eternal life we cannot lose.”*³ Persevere because God will preserve you.

- Read and meditate on Romans 8:31-39 this week. How does Jesus' ultimate rejection at the cross encourage you to remain steadfast during challenging and even frightening times?

DATE: October 27, 2024

SPEAKER: Brian/Wil

SERIES: The Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 21:12-19

RENEW: 31 Days of Prayer

DAY 9: Centrality of Community

PRAYER: Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, for all eternity you have existed in perfect community together, and we praise you for the startling reality that, in Jesus, you have lavishly welcomed us into your community. We confess that we are not the community that we should be as we compare ourselves to one another, neglect the least and lonely, and prefer to love ourselves instead of loving our neighbor. All too often, we view each other as vehicles to be used or obstacles to be removed, instead of loving one another honestly and humbly. Would you kindly form us into a gospel-centered community, where we no longer feel like we have to hide from you or from one another? Grant us the courage, the energy, and the patience to live vulnerably and sacrificially for each other. Great God, give us the wisdom to know how to steward our time and resources, so that we can live others-centered lives. Father, Son, and Spirit, you are always giving glory to one another; teach us to build relationships on trust instead of fear, giving instead of taking, compassion instead of cynicism, and forgiveness instead of resentment. Would you so transform us as a people, that as unbelievers see us, your people, they would see you too? In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Highland Park Fellowship,
supported church plant

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Amina and Phil, supported
missionary partners

¹Grant, George. *A History of Persecution*. July 25, 2015. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/history-persecution>. October 23, 2024.

²*How Firm a Foundation*. Text by John Keith from Rippon's Selection of Hymns, 1787; traditional American melody, FOUNDATION

³Hughes, R. Kent. *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Vol. 2. 1998. Wheaton, IL. Crossway Books. 299