

22 Pentecost, Celtic
Christ and Grace
Robin Teasley

Luke 21:5-19
November 17, 2019

My granddaughter is working on her fine motor skills. She has a set of blocks that she loves, but she has not yet mastered building towers. She loves to knock over the towers her parents build for her, and she does this with great joy. But when she tries to build her own tower, after 3 or 4 blocks are stacked, they tip over. This causes no small frustration. It's as if her world has come to an end, and she usually has a meltdown. But her loving parents scoop her up into arms of love, and they comfort her and show her yet again how to build a tower.

This has me thinking about towers, or temples, being thrown down. Towers and temples can be built and they can be toppled. There are all kinds of towers and while many stand the test of time, we know all too well that many do not. The World Trade towers are no more; Notre Dame Cathedral has burned. Some of my favorite local destinations since childhood have closed, been remodeled, or even razed to the ground.

But what about all those other kinds of towers we build? What about our temples of pride or self-sufficiency, temples of resistance to change or new ways of doing things? We all have our own personal towers of expectations about things like our health, our employment, our family story – sometimes they are toppled. Sometimes the things we hope for and expect are destroyed.

And then Jesus says, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.” And we can all relate to this as we hear the news – another school shooting, flooding in Venice, Italy due to climate change, wildfires in California, and politicians in Washington battling to destroy one another rather than work for the common good.

Like children playing with blocks, we may feel hopeless and fall apart when we are overwhelmed by the signs of endings all around us, we may fear that we are in the last days, and that there is no hope.

But that is when we remember that since the beginning of time as we know it, the seasons cycle, the crops are planted and harvested, all earthly things have a beginning and an end, and there must be death before there can be resurrection.

That is when we remember that God has promised to give us words and wisdom to endure whatever happens in this life.

That is when we remember that whenever our world overwhelms us, God is waiting for us, waiting to scoop us up in arms of love, and show us yet again how to build a new tower, a new life, a holy and enduring temple for God within our hearts. Amen.