

Seedling Group Questions for the 26th Sunday after Pentecost (November 18)

The sermon can be found at www.lipstosing.wordpress.com

Questions for Opening Up

Is there a hymn, song, painting, poem or piece of art that speaks to you about your life with God? If so, what is it and why is it meaningful?

Jesus talks about the destruction of the Temple, the most important institution for the Hebrews. What institution has been a bulwark of constancy in the ever-changing currents of your life?

Read Hebrews 10:11-14 and 19-25

Thinking about ministry and service to others, what provokes you to good deeds – does it matter who its for? Does it have to be a something you're "passionate" about? Does it matter how someone asks?

The writer of Hebrews tells the faithful not to neglect meeting together, but instead to encourage one another. Has anyone ever encouraged you to be apart of Christian worship or fellowship when you would've been fine to take a pass? Who encouraged you? What was the deciding factor for you? How do we encourage others?

Read Mark 13:1-8

If you were a disciple of Jesus in this time or a Hebrew listening in on Jesus' words, how do you think you would've felt to hear Jesus' prediction about the Temple?

What "headline" in the news has most captured your heart this week? Why?

Putting Things Together

Have you ever been swayed by "those who would lead you astray" – what message or ideology or person did you find captivating as a way of life over and against following Jesus?

Thinking about the William Stafford poem "The Way It Is" (included on the next page), how has Jesus offered you a thread to follow in your life? Has it been a person? A recurring theme? A story from the Bible? A particular community? Something else?

Making It Personal

Joseph ends his sermon by saying, "We don't know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future, and we know that the One who holds the future also holds us in love, and these birth pangs will give way to a glorious birth when Christ will return with all of God's healing for this weary world."

How do we hold onto this promise in the midst of all the turmoil in the larger world and in our own life?

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:11-14 [15-18] 19-25

¹¹Every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, “he sat down at the right hand of God,” ¹³and since then has been waiting “until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.” ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying,

¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds,”

¹⁷he also adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Gospel: Mark 13:1-8

¹As [Jesus] came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” ²Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

³When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴“Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” ⁵Then Jesus began to say to them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁶Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. ⁷When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.”

“The Way It Is” – William Stafford

There’s a thread you follow. It goes among

things that change. But it doesn’t change.

People wonder about what you are pursuing.

You have to explain about the thread.

But it is hard for others to see.

While you hold it you can’t get lost.

Tragedies happen; people get hurt

or die; and you suffer and get old.

Nothing you do can stop time’s unfolding.

You don’t ever let go of the thread.