**I Love to Tell the Story**

Explore every story of Jesus in this year-long devotional guide. Go at your own pace using the online archive.

**Day 181: “The Desolating Sacrilege”**

**Read: Matt 24:15-22; Mark 12:14-20; Luke 21: 20-24**

Guided reflection:

From last week’s readings, Jesus is in his last time at the temple before he goes to the cross and is in a prophetic mode. “The desolate sacrilege” is from Daniel 12:11, when the altars were taken out from the temple and pagan artifacts were brought into the holy of holies. Seventy years after Jesus, when the temple was destroyed, other things were placed on that site. Those in Jerusalem had to flee to the mountains in a hurry. His words came true. Some read in vs 20-22 a vision of the great tribulation that has been the basis of the “Left Behind” series. If Jesus’ words were for that generation or for a future that is still ahead for us, I choose not to fear, but to live each day, ready to meet my maker… in a disaster or in my natural death. So, dear ones, do not live in fear.

Guided prayer:

*“Loving and caring God, I place my trust in you. Whether Jesus is foretelling of some terrible event still in our future, I trust that you are, and will be, God and my place of refuge, on this side of life or beyond. I trust in you. Amen”*

**Day 182:“Others who say they are Christ”**

**Read: Matt 24:23-25; Mark 13:21-23**

Guided reflection:

Since the people to whom Jesus was speaking were all Jewish and awaiting the Messiah, Jesus is telling them that there is one true Christ. Jesus wants his disciples to remember his words when they look back one day. Of course, these words were written in these gospels years after Jesus rose from the dead, but I wonder if they caught them the day they were uttered.

Guided prayer:

*“Thank you, God that I live on the other side of the cross and empty tomb and can understand that Jesus is the Christ. But there are many who do not know the stories of Jesus. Help me to learn them and then live them around those I meet. Amen”*

**Day 183: “The Son of Man”**

**Read: Matt 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28**

Guided reflection:

Many believe that these words are the prediction of a great tribulation that will come to this earth just before the end of time. In Vs. 31, we find a visualization of a gathering up of those when Christ returns. Could this be the basis for the Second Coming of Christ theology? Is it near? Some scholars have said that this might be the foretelling of Pentecost – when “the

spirit descended from heaven like a dove” and the “wind” blew the spirit that showed up like a flame over each of those in the upper room, 50 days after Jesus arose. They would say this is the wind that stems from the angel activity in heaven. So 2000 years and still counting, or 50 days later? Could it be? Who knows, but it does make you want to live in wonder and readiness, right? Not out of fear, but out of the thrill of being in Christ!

Guided prayer:

*“God of hope and love and peace, may my heart be ready for whatever heaven wants to bring my way. May I be open to see Christ all around me. Amen.”*

**Day 184: The Fig Tree**

**Read: Matt 24:32-33; Mark 13:28-29; Luke 21: 29-31**

Guided reflection:

Jesus uses a fig tree to help his disciples put his warnings into context. When you see all the signs Jesus just talked about in the previous daily readings, Jesus says take them as signs to get ready – God might be up to something! Just like you can tell the seasons by a fig tree’s cycle, you can tell God’s activity as well. I wonder what Jesus was talking about – was he just talking to those disciples, or is this one of those ‘forever holds true’ words. Since I am not sure, I shall stay open… and when the wars and hurricanes and tribulations come, I will ask “God, are you speaking to me today?”

Guided prayer:

*OK, Lord, there are wars, there have been hurricanes, there have been days when there is no moon and times when the daylight is not visible…and there is such unrest and such inhumanity toward humanity… are you still on schedule? Are you still with*

*us, Immanuel? Amen”*

**Day 185: More predictions**

**Read: Matt 24:34-36; Mark 13:30-32; Luke 21:32-33**

Guided reflection:

Now, when Jesus says “this generation shall not pass away until all these things take place;” then I know Jesus is speaking about what was to happen 70 years later when Jerusalem fell, not 2000 years later. I believe that some of Jesus’ teaching was for that generation and some are timeless. That Jesus is the Christ is timeless, but might these words be for that generation alone? I think so. But whole denominations have been started over literal interpretations of these words. This is one of those I can handle as ambiguous and not need to know for sure about the signs and predictions yet know that God is still God!

Guided prayer:

*“Whether these words are for that time only or a warning for all time, I am not sure. But my not knowing does not take away my trust in your love. Amen”*