

Sermon for Proper 28C  
Sunday, November 13, 2022  
“What is going to be our legacy?”

Text: Luke 21:5-19

I speak to you in the name of the one true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I hope everyone has recuperated from the power week we had last week celebrating our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. That was one heck of a celebration, wasn't it? I know it took me a few days to rest and recover from all of the activities and work putting it together. Thanks again to everyone who made it such a success.

I also hope that you remember the main focus of my message to you last week: that we not forget those who paved the way and serve as examples of holy living for us today, but also that we may never be forgotten. I hope you remember that I called on us last week to turn our attention to the legacy that we are going to leave for future generations, and that's what I want to talk to you about again today. If last Sunday marked the completion of 125 years of ministry and witness for All Saints Church, then today is the first Sunday of our 126<sup>th</sup> year. And, so now, our task is not to dwell on the past, but to look to the future.

The Gospel for today tells us to do just that. In the gospel story, Jesus made a prediction of the destruction of the temple and the end times to come. Jesus and his disciples had been sitting across from the temple that had recently undergone a major renovation project begun under King Herod that took about eighty years to complete, and they were admiring its incredible beauty. But, by the time Luke wrote his gospel account some sixty years or so later, the temple had been destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Both Jesus and Luke were telling their audience to get their priorities straight and focus on the things that matter, the things that will endure. Stone buildings will crumble and fall, but what will endure is God's faithfulness. Despite its language and imagery of destruction, this short passage of scripture is ultimately grounded in hope—in the hope that God remains present in the world in good times and bad and even when the situation seems to be bleak. As Christians, we are always supposed to be preaching this message of hope, so what can we do in the here and now so that the good news of Jesus Christ will continue to be proclaimed. As the people of this community of faith which we call All Saints Church, we want to leave a legacy of proclaiming the gospel for future generations to remember, learn, and continue for themselves and their future generations.

I spent this past weekend at our Diocesan Convention, which always happens on the second weekend in November. In the Bishop's Address, Bishop Provenzano told us about the Five “T”s of being the Church that bishops from all around the worldwide Anglican Communion had come up with at their meeting at the Lambeth Conference this past Summer. The 5 “T”s are this: to tell the gospel story; to teach the faith; to tend to the needs of communities; to transform lives; and, to treasure creation.

These are all things things that we are doing—or should be doing—as the people of All Saints, and these are the things that we want to make sure that All Saints will continue to do as it tells the good news of Jesus Christ. What legacy are we going to leave so that All Saints continues to proclaim the gospel. And as the Gospel reminds us today that even though we need to work to keep the stones of this beautiful temple we call our church, we have an obligation to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and remind the world of the presence of God, even if these very stones crumble and long after those of us here today will have gone to a greater strength.

So, how do we create a legacy that will last into the future and benefit generations to come? The answer to that question is rooted in our good stewardship in the here and now. (You knew that was coming!) The faithful giving of our time, our talents, and our treasures to this place is what ministers to God's people living today and helps to secure our ability to minister in the future. We talk about this every year at this time, but this year needs to be different. We tend to focus on what we will need to get us through the coming year—what we think we're going to spend to do the work of ministry that we want to do. But we need to think about this differently. First of all, we need to trust God to provide for us to do the work he has called us to do. He has been telling us to do it; God has faithfully come through for his people from the very beginning, as Psalm 98 reminds us: "He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel, and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God." So, let us "sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things." The next thing we have to do to create our legacy is faithfully make commitments to the work of this parish community so that it does what God has called and commissioned it to do.

When we speak of stewardship, the conversation always somehow drifts into a conversation about money. The Bible tells us that we're expected to tithe of 10% of what we get from God's abundance. It could be 10% of the grain we harvest. (Ok, none of us harvests grain, but the people in biblical times did.) It could be 10% of our ability and passion to care for someone else. It could be 10% of our artistic skills. It could be 10% of our handy work to mow the lawn or tend a garden. It could be 10% of our love for teaching children. It could be 10% of our love for cooking. It could be 10% of the money we earn week after week that is evidence that God provides for our needs. We owe God a declaration of our thankfulness for his faithfulness. That is done partly through our tithe. God is faithful to us, so we must be faithful to him. In the back of the church, you will find pledge cards that you need to take and fill out. Make a commitment to God and show that you believe in the work of this place and its necessity to proclaim the good news and transform lives. Help us to do those five T's: to tell the gospel story; to teach the faith; to tend to the needs of the Woodhaven community and beyond; to transform lives here and beyond; and, to treasure and care for God's creation.

The second way that we will create a legacy is by doing the best we can to preserve the temporal stones. We hope that we can continue to be the people of God

in this beautiful space, but the space is in constant need to be tended. We have to keep up with the constant wear and tear as we use this place to proclaim the Gospel. All Saints is going to be joining other parishes in the Diocese in a diocesan capital campaign that will take place in 2023. A capital campaign helps us raise large sums of money that we can use to make needed improvements to our beloved physical space. We need to restore the bells at a total cost of about \$50,000; we're already working on getting the first bell installed. We need new sets of vestments in all the liturgical colors, because what we have is falling apart, doesn't match as it should, and will not last long into the future; God-willing we will have a white set by Easter, but we still need to purchase green, violet, and red sets at a cost of \$8-10,000 each. We need to restore the outside doors at our entrances; they are in terrible shape from years of weather exposure and use. Originally we thought that would be a few hundred dollars to paint them, but in reality, they will need to be removed and professionally refurbished so that they can be painted, and this will cost around \$35,000. I know we're toasty warm right now, but every summer we suffer and swelter in here because there's no air conditioning. We keep talking about putting in A/C, but putting in the kind of system we need is going to cost a lot of money—probably a five- or six-figure expense. We need to make some repairs to the organ; it was repaired 10 years ago when we moved here, but we've been using it a lot for the beautiful music in this place, so it's time for a major tune up, like we have to do with our cars. Finally, we need to reinforce and increase our endowment. The money to pay for all of this cannot come from your regular pledges. That's why non-profit institutions like churches do capital campaigns, so that we can find large sums of extra money in order to secure our legacy. The great thing about capital campaigns is that we can ask people outside our membership to contribute: family, friends, companies, community leaders, other institutions with lots of money.

Finally, think about leaving your own personal legacy to this place. None of us will be here forever. Some day, we'll all be dead, but we want future generations not to forget us, and so we must leave our own legacies. How you can leave a legacy to this place is by remembering us in your wills. Designate a portion of the inheritance you will leave to the church. It can be a specific amount, or we can be the beneficiary of one of your assets. How much is up to you, but consider the 10% tithe that is already expected of you. That money goes into our endowment that will help us continue our work of ministry well into the future. God has blessed you with assets to leave to your children and loved ones. If All Saints Church is beloved to you, then don't forget us after you die, so that your legacy will be remembered.

Trust God and commit to your tithe, so that we can tell the gospel story, teach the faith, tend to the needs of the community, transform lives, and treasure creation. (This fits perfectly with our mission statement, by the way!) What will be the legacy that we leave today to benefit the people of All Saints and the Woodhaven community 125 years from now? What will people be able to say about us in the year 2147? How will we be remembered? There is much work to be done, but at the end of the day, it's about

proclaiming faith and hope. That is the message Jesus teaches us in today's Gospel lesson. That is the message we need to be telling ourselves, and that is the message that we must proclaim to the world. Amen.

### Resources

Gilberto Ruiz, "Commentary on Luke 21:5-19," [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=3059](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3059).