

Gospel lesson

We hear today about how Jesus was challenged in the temple in the early part of Holy Week.



picture from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Phарisees_and_the_Saducees_Come_to_Tempt_Jesus_\(Les_pharisiens_et_les_saduc%C3%A9ens_viennent_pour_tenter_J%C3%A9sus\)_-_James_Tissot_-_overall.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Phарisees_and_the_Saducees_Come_to_Tempt_Jesus_(Les_pharisiens_et_les_saduc%C3%A9ens_viennent_pour_tenter_J%C3%A9sus)_-_James_Tissot_-_overall.jpg)

Luke 20:27-38

²⁷ Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him

²⁸ and asked him a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.

²⁹ Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless;

³⁰ then the second

³¹ and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless.

³² Finally the woman also died.

³³ In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her."

³⁴ Jesus said to them, "Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage;

³⁵ but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.

³⁶ Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.

³⁷ And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

³⁸ Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive."

The Word of God for the people of God

<Children's time>

Breath prayer

breathing	in	out
Example 1	Lord, take away my frustration	and help me to live in love
Example 2	Lord, fill me with your spirit	and wash away my sin

<Hymn "We'll Understand It Better By and By" UMH #525>

Message: The Latter Splendor



picture from
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/the-days-are-surely-coming/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Gracious Lord who sees us through all things,
as we take time now to further consider today's
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may trust in You in the now and look for the
glory of Your kingdom to come. Amen.

As we near the end of the Christian year, we look at
how "The Days Are Surely Coming" with consideration
of "The Latter Splendor":

"The invitation of this series is to look to a
future that resembles the kingdom that Jesus spoke
of. There are aspects of the community of faith
that resemble this kingdom or kin-dom living.

Celebrating who we are and who we are becoming is
a way of inviting the one we worship to come and
walk alongside us as we seek to be the presence of
Christ in the world and not just in worship."



picture from
<https://www.epaumc.org/news/native-american-heritage-month-celebrates-indigenous-u-s-communities/>

November is Native American Heritage month (not to be confused with the recently celebrated Hispanic Heritage month mid-Sep to mid-Oct). What do you know of Native American history? <[Let them respond](#)>

When European colonists moved onto this continent, they displaced the natives living here. One of the most notoriously tragic of these events was the Trail of Tears. Do you know what that involved?

[**<Let them respond>**](#)

President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, forcing the displacement of about sixty thousand indigenous people and additional thousands of them to be ethnically cleansed over the following two decades. En route to the reservation, many died from exposure, disease, and starvation. At the reservation lands, other tribes already living there deemed them intruders rather than welcoming them.

How do you think the members of the Cherokee, Muscogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, and Choctaw nations felt by the end of it? [**<Let them respond>**](#)

Do you think they wanted to listen to the white man explain about the love of Jesus after being treated that way?¹ [**<Let them respond>**](#)

Haggai's people had been marched out of Jerusalem and lived in exile for about seventy years. When they finally were able to return to their homeland, it was kind of like Palestinians returning to Gaza after the latest cease fire: everything they cherished had been destroyed. As Haggai said, "How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?"

¹ Methodism was big in the country at the time, and Methodists were involved both in carrying out the legislation and in objecting to / resisting it. The repression of indigenous peoples went far beyond the Trail of Tears. For example, [the Sand Creek Massacre was led by a Methodist minister; the UMC has since expressed deep repentance and works toward healing and reconciliation of our peoples.](#)



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/rebuilding-temple-2/>; credit: Jim Padgett / Sweet Publishing

Furthermore, there were Samaritans already living in the area that they did not get along with. How do you think the Israelites felt? [Let them respond](#)

Haggai wanted the people of God to rebuild the temple. He told them, “Take courage, all you people of the land, says the Lord; work, for I am with you... My spirit abides among you; do not fear... The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, ... and in this place I will give prosperity.”

In the face of near hopelessness, he gave them a project of creation. How do you think that affected the people? [Let them respond](#)

Do you think the rebuilding was easy? Why do you think God made them work at it? [Let them respond](#)

When we are faced with loss and hopelessness, fear for the future, we need to remember to turn to God. Our Lord is with us; His spirit abides with us. We can have hope for the future because the Creator cares for us. We can praise God just as fully as the psalmist did, for the “Lord is [indeed] near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”



picture screencaptured from <https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/Lumo-the-gospel-of-luke.html/Lumo-Luke-19-45-20-47/dhivehi.html>; credit: Lumo Project Films

The Sadducees of Jesus's day were a temple-based sect that did not believe in resurrection of the dead. Such a thing was not mentioned in Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible which also contain the law of Moses. Descriptions of it came through the prophets Isaiah and Daniel,² but not everyone embraced the idea. I think it makes sense that since God spoke through the prophets, what Jesus explained would support the position of the prophets.

We go through a lot in this life that is really unfair. In the Sadducees' story, I feel badly for the woman having to accept seven different men as her husbands over time; was there any love there? What kind of stigma developed about having her as a wife?

It is typical of people to think about issues from their own perspective and much rarer for people to really consider others' perspectives without prompting. One of the reasons I advocate committed marriage is because it forces a person to start thinking beyond themselves even when they do not want to – and parenthood magnifies that beyond measure.

Jesus helped the Sadducees to understand the truth, by explaining it from a perspective they were familiar with: the story of Moses. He prepared them (as well as His disciples) to be able to accept the truth of the events of the week to come, His impending resurrection – as well as the hope for their resurrection to come.

Note that we are not brought back to the same life we

² Isaiah 25:7-8; 26:19; and Daniel 12:1-3

leave. We die to grow into new life.



picture from MMMS collection

The second temple was built bigger and grander than the original one Solomon built. We will be alive as something more than we are now – like a butterfly coming out of its chrysalis, we will be children of the resurrection.

Our relationships with one another will be more beautiful, no longer bound by the sin of this world. Marriage as a means of economic accountability or teaching care for others will no longer be necessary.

Now I am NOT advocating free love in the hippie sense of it. We still live in a very sin-filled world where marriage matters. Following laws and societal customs is still very important for people to get along.

Paul had to address the Thessalonians in a similar vein. With Jesus having ascended into heaven, word on the street was that He was coming back – any time now! And if the world is ending, why bother working? Why not just lollygag and chatter?

Paul makes it clear that the timing of Jesus's return cannot be predicted. We need to live in the now, hoping for the parousia as caring and contributing members of society. We are to live in a way that proclaims the glory of our Creator, the love of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit to everyone around us, that they too may be “fruits for salvation

through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.”

It can be hard, though, in the face of daily life. We may lose hope when thinking about how people are struggling, such as more becoming food insecure, as the government shut down continues. So how do we let God “comfort [our] hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word”? Through faith that God will bring something better in the future and the sharing of holy love that nurtures life.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/the-days-are-surely-coming/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

We talked in the announcements today about how the community in South Otselic is pulling together to provide supplemental food for those who rely on SNAP. As we work together to build something positive for the community, we strengthen our relationships with one another and grow more as God intends us to be.

I “give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord,” as you proclaim the good news through your actions. I give thanks that you stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught from the Bible, to love one another and care for the well-being of all even in the face of sin.

When I see your hearts in action, I know that God is at work shaking the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land and all the nations, such that the latter splendor will be greater than the former, and grace will prevail in the end to bring us new life.

