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Investing in hope amid chaos

BY KATHLEEN MOORE



I don't know about you, but I sometimes find hope a bit hard to come by. A 24-hour news cycle comes at me from multiple platforms all day long. And so often the problems and the pains revealed in these stories seem insurmountable. And I find myself wondering, "How do I move forward in this life in *hope*?"

In today's Gospel passage from Luke, Jesus sounds as though he's reading top headlines from just such a news cycle. War, violence, natural disaster, the spread of disease and food insecurity are among the "portents and signs" we are told to expect. As we prepare for the upcoming season of Advent, this story offers us an opportunity to remember that Jesus's incarnation – his earthly ministry among us – allowed him to know what it is to live here. To *really* live here. Jesus knows what it is to hold onto hope amidst chaos and tragedy.

We human beings invest a great deal in attempts to manufacture hope amidst chaos and tragedy. We build towers and walls and weapons. We envelope ourselves in comfort and even luxury when we can, and we distract ourselves from the concerns of the real world with hours of screen-time on ubiquitous gadgets. We think these things will protect us from the "portents and signs" of the world around us. And yet, these are hollow attempts that leave us in that space of finding hope hard to come by. Jesus, who understands these struggles first-hand, shows us another way. Jesus shows us what it is to invest in true hope.

Jesus tells us that the tragedy and chaos that seem to surround us at times are *never* the end of the story. In fact, they are just the beginning. He tells his disciples that amidst their troubles and persecution they will have the "opportunity to testify." They will be given "words and wisdom." We are not to retreat into our own attempts at manufactured hope — our own temples "adorned with beautiful stones."

Rather, we are called to respond directly to the suffering we see in the world, to put our trust in God, and to invest in those things that shine the light of the coming Kingdom of God. This is how we move forward — not in passive waiting, but in active preparation and investment in the hope of God in Jesus Christ.

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For reflection...

- How do you invest in the hope of God in Christ?
- What does it mean to you to have an "opportunity to testify?"
- Where do you see the "temples" destined "to be thrown down" in your world today?