

Biblical Background

MARK 13:24-32

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: Chapter thirteen in the Gospel of Mark begins with Jesus pausing halfway up the Mt. of Olives. He is on his way to Bethany and pauses at a natural plateau that allows a perfect view to the west, across the Kidron Valley to the Holy City of Jerusalem in the distance. From this vantage point his disciples remind him of how beautiful the Temple looks from this vantage point. The response of Jesus shocks them all. "Do you see all of these great buildings? Not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down." This refers to the teaching of Jesus in regard to the Temple and its eventual destruction that Jesus promises will all take place within the lifetime of those listening to him on the west facing slope of the Mount of Olives.

TERMS: Son of Man This is a title that means "The Messiah" that is sourced from a vision of the Prophet Daniel in Chapter 7:13-15. In the vision someone who looked like a "son of man"; a male figure is conveyed on clouds to the throne of God in heaven. He is given eternal rule and authority by God. Thus "son of man" becomes "Son of Man" and then the Messianic title preferred by Jesus.

Generation This word typically refers to a period of forty years. That is enough time for something new to appear. If I marry at 16 and have children, I will be a grandparent by the time I am forty. Jesus uses this word intentionally to guarantee that many who listen to him that day would be alive to see all of the events of the previous verses realized.

That day or hour No one knows about the date, time, or hour of the end of the world. This is how Jesus begins to answer the second part of the two part question that opened the chapter. When will the Temple be reduced to rubble, and then, when will the final judgement come upon the world.

CULTURAL INSIGHT: In verses 24-25 Jesus quotes from the Prophet Isaiah. Jesus is not trying to "proof text" his teaching, rather he wants his disciples to recall that what the Prophets predicted in the past came to pass in the lifetimes of the listening audience. This is a literary technique and as such is not meant to be interpreted literally. It is symbolic language used by the Prophets to stir the hearts of those who listen to repentance. "Heaven and Earth will pass away but my words will never pass away." This is basically a way that Jesus is doubling down on the truthfulness of his prophetic teaching. This would be the way that Jesus would "swear on a stack of Bibles". You can take this teaching to the bank!

INSIGHT INTO MEANING: Prior to the opening verse of the Gospel, Jesus reveals to his disciples the kind of events that will occur before military forces arrive to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. False Messiah figures, rumors of war, actual wars, earthquakes, and famines will all be signs leading up to the end. When these events happen (and they do; with astonishing accuracy in the forty years that lead up to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Temple by Roman forces in 70 AD) the disciples are not to lose heart. Jesus calls these events the beginning of the birth pangs, and the painful birth of this prophetic warning will be even more painful.

Jesus quotes the Prophet Isaiah because the Prophet spoke these same words of warning to the King of Israel in advance of the Assyrian Empire coming in conquest from the north in 721 BC. This sort of destruction was predicted before by Isaiah, and it did come to pass. The ten tribes of the north were wiped off the stage of history. For Jesus to recall this prophecy, is to double down on what he said would happen to the Temple - Not one stone would be left on another, they will all be cast down. This is exactly what the Romans did to the Temple in 70 AD, and the stones lie in ruin to this very day.

Family Activities

SHARING THE MISSION AT HOME AND IN THE WORLD



QUESTION OF THE WEEK: What do you think makes people be extraordinarily caring and sharing in times of disasters? What is in the way of us being that way all the time?

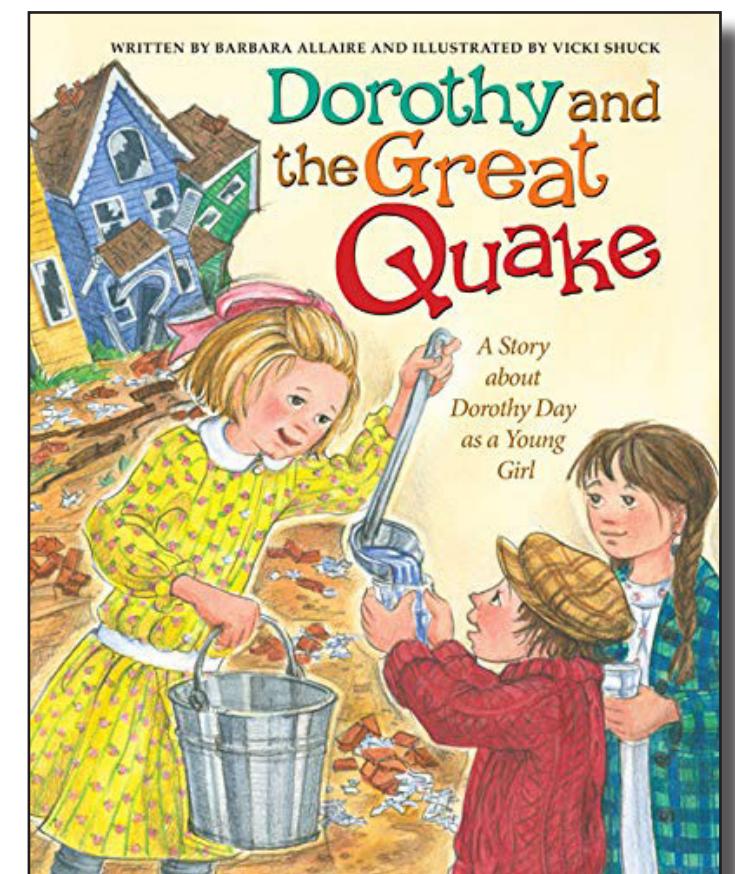
CHARACTER QUALITIES: CARE OF NEIGHBOR
JOY IN GIVING

FAMILY ACTIVITIES: Take time as a family to research the history of the Catholic Worker Movement. How did Dorothy Day begin this work, who helped her? How did it grow? Where did it grow? What kind of effect did it have on the communities? How did it grow faith and the kingdom of God in their neighborhoods? Brainstorm as a family, what would you do if a natural disaster happened in your neighborhood? How might you be ready to bring people together and their resources for the good of all? How might you take a little step to now wait, to build a way of care of others in your neighborhood without waiting until trouble strikes.

CYCLE B 33RD SUNDAY
ORDINARY TIME

Living Grace

"IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY, GOD'S PRESENCE
REMAINS THROUGH US!"



*In **Dorothy and the Great Quake**, we learn about the San Francisco earthquake that woke up 8 year old Dorothy Day and her neighbors one morning in 1906. The Day family lived across the bay in Oakland, which was less hard hit, so her family and neighbors got to work right away helping out with food, water, clothing, shelter, and more. As fires raged in the ruins of San Francisco, refugees found a warm welcome and generous assistance from the people of Oakland. A spark was struck in Dorothy, which in time made the works of mercy the center point in her life.*

Art & Faith

CELEBRATING THE BEAUTY & TRADITION
OF SACRED ART



CEILING OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL

Fresco painting by Michelangelo ~ 1508-1512
Vatican ~ Vatican City

EXPLORING THE ART:

THE BIG PICTURE

The Sistine Chapel ceiling is one of the most renowned artworks of the High Renaissance. Central to the ceiling decoration are nine scenes from the Book of Genesis of which The Creation of Adam is the best known, the hands of God and Adam reaching toward each other. The complex design includes several sets of individual figures, including the Prophets of Israel and the Sibyls of the pagan world foretold the coming of the Messiah. Both have been included by Michelangelo in the perimeter of the Genesis artwork symbolizing that the role of the prophets circling throughout all of revelation as the voice of God, always trying to bring people back to the big picture.

The Sibyls were prophetic women at shrines or temples throughout the pagan world of ancient Greece and Rome. ("Pagan" refers to people who worship many gods or goddesses, especially those that existed before the main world religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.) During the Renaissance, there was an increasing interest in the remains of Rome's pagan past by the scholars of the Roman Catholic Church who began to study classical Latin and the philosophies of the Classical world along with the writings of St Augustine. The five Sibyls depicted here by Michelangelo, are each said to have prophesied the birth of Christ. By including the Sibyls of the pagan world, in addition to the Prophets of Israel, the artwork symbolizes that Jesus was to come not just for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles (non-Jewish people).

Sunday Gospel

MARK 13:24-32

Jesus said to his disciples:

"In those days after that tribulation
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from the sky,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

"And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds'
with great power and glory,
and then he will send out the angels
and gather his elect from the four winds,
from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.

"Learn a lesson from the fig tree.

When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves,
you know that summer is near.

In the same way, when you see these things happening,
know that he is near, at the gates.

Amen, I say to you,

this generation will not pass away
until all these things have taken place.

Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.

"But of that day or hour, no one knows,
neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Read-aloud video link:

[DOROTHY AND THE GREAT QUAKE](#)

Written by Barbara Allaire and Illustrated by Vicki Shuck!

Making the Connections

FOR ADULTS

THE PROPHETS KNOWING THROUGH ALL THINGS, KEEPS CALLING US BACK TO WHAT IS TRUE AND LASTING.

Our two stories bring together similar images and experiences. Jesus describes for his disciples, those committed to him, what they can know, and warns of what they cannot know. He shares even though he does not know the full designs of the Father. Some things only the Father knows. Jesus empowers them to discern what is emerging, like the fig tree, what they can know. "You will know the fig tree's time." Time for what? To produce the way of emergence and growth. When all the world is seemingly coming apart all around, this is what to look for. Look for the paths - people and places - from whom life is emerging. Those hints of new life offer the new foundation. This is a lot to comprehend. How can we come to find new life in the midst of sorry and loss? Well, a little girl named Dorothy Day can show us the way.

In our children's story, Dorothy and her little sister were having a wonderful day playing with their dolls, but they were sad that Dorothy's best friend, Naomi, was not allowed to play with them. By dinner time, all was well - Papa was home. The whole family gather with Papa around the dinner table - these were warm and happy days. In the warmth of that dining room, nothing could prepare them for what they would wake up in the morning.

Jesus also tells us, no one can know when the whole world will break apart. Yet as Jesus encourages his disciple, and Dorothy will discover, when the world breaks apart, the Kingdom of God can and will break through. As an adult, Dorothy writes of the experience, "While the crisis lasted, people loved each other. They realized their own helplessness while nature travailed and groaned. It was as though they were united in Christian solidarity. It makes one think of how people could, if they would, care for each other in times of stress, ungrudgingly, with pity and with love." Inspired by what her mother did in a time of great need, Dorothy went on in her older years to found houses of hospitality. She became fruitful as in the potential in the fig tree.

Jesus reassures his disciples, in times of great calamity, one thing that will stand, the word/way of God. But Dorothy said, why wait?! Why wait for bad things to happen to live fully in the way of the Kingdom? This is what the gospel challenges us to, as we come to the end of the church year - why wait?! Advent is characterized as a season of waiting. In these challenging times we find ourselves in, we might find our hearts saying too, "Why Wait!!" The Kingdom is here!

Making the Connections

FOR CHILDREN

MY STORY: Do you ever worry about being in a scary event brought about by nature? Have you ever been in a lightening storm? Or an earthquake? What did it feel like? Was there very much you could do about it?

THE CHILDREN'S STORY: What was it like for Dorothy being in the earthquake? How did the earthquake work to bring people together? What were some of people's responses? Was it an unusual thing for everyone to come together and take care of one another sharing whatever resources they had? What did Dorothy learn about God's love rising in her community? Do you think it might be God's presence alive in each person that comes to the rescue?

THE GOSPEL STORY: Jesus tells his disciples that things will happen, and that will seem like everything is going all wrong. When it does, what should they put their trust in? What does Jesus tell us we can trust in when something goes wrong beyond our control? Where should we look as a way though?

Neighbors taking care of those who are in need - Dorothy decided that the world should always be this way. God's way should be present always, not just when things go wrong. What would you like to see happen in your city to bring about the Kingdom of God now, instead of waiting for a natural disaster to happen? Is there anything you can do to get it started?