

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Wonders, warnings and watchfulness

In Luke Chapter 13, the disciples go on a journey ... from wonder to the warning to be watchful.

It all starts in the temple, when one of the disciples' remarks on the magnificence of the temple buildings. Jesus uses this opportunity to prepare his disciples for what will come in the future. He predicts that the temple will be demolished completely.

Jesus' words must have played on the disciples' minds as later, when looking down to the temple from the Mount of Olives, the disciples ask Jesus to elaborate. Jesus again uses the opportunity to prepare his disciples for the future.

Through pictures of seasonal change, when fig trees bud and produce leaves, Jesus teaches his disciples that, in the future, there will be wars, earthquakes, famines, betrayal, deception, arrests, trials, hatred and even death. This is a very sobering and worrying future. However, Jesus gives his disciples words of wisdom.

When faced with troubling times, what is Jesus' advice? He tells his disciples to be watchful, don't be misled, don't panic, don't worry, stay alert, endure and be on guard. As well as watchfulness, he also reassures them that these will be times of opportunity to tell people about Him and strength will come from the Holy Spirit who will give them the words to say.

In the coming days, they would see Jesus lead by example as he is arrested and crucified. However, Jesus's death, as we know, is not the end of the story. The disciples witness the resurrection and find their own lives transformed as they then, through persecution, tell others the good news of Jesus on roadsides, in homes, in court rooms and for some, like Stephen, in their dying moments.

Having told his disciples at least three times to be watchful, his final words are 'Watch for Him.'

In troubling times, we watch for Jesus, knowing that He has made it possible to be set free from all that separates us from God and each other. He also promises that He will return in great glory and power.

When he returns, 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.' Revelation 21:4

Keep Watch!

**Joy Rushton, Being Witnesses Manager**

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