

Hidden promises

Mark 13.1-8

The disciples are so positive about how amazing the Temple looks, but Jesus warns them about what is to follow. He explains that there will be difficult times ahead. The disciples are keen to know when this might be and Jesus encourages them to always be looking out for these times of difficulty and always to be prepared.

Now read **Mark 13.1-8** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

We may find ourselves in difficult times in life. We know that life may not always be easy, but we also know that God will be with us at all times. Often, the difficulties we face have been faced by others before us, and we can benefit from their experience and support.



Find out about this memorial cairn (do an internet search for 'Aignish cairn'). Why is it important to remember past events?

YOUR SHOES

On Remembrance Sunday, we think of the soldiers – and others – who faced very difficult times indeed. Part of soldiers' uniforms are the strong boots they wear to help them on their difficult paths. On a sheet of paper, draw round your shoe. Inside the shoe outline, write or draw times in your life that have been hard. Put a circle round those where you have known that God was with you, or when God provided someone to help you, or similar.

A-MAZE-ING

Have you ever done a maze puzzle – or been in a real maze? Did you manage to get through it? Did you take any wrong turnings along the way or hit a dead end? Have a go at some maze puzzles – there are lots to try out, and you can print them too.

<https://www.mathsisfun.com/games/mazes.html>



Sometimes we may feel as though life is like a maze: we may not be sure which way to go or where to get help. Can you think of things that make you feel as if you've reached a dead end? Or where you are not sure which path to choose? Talk to God about those things, asking for help to guide you on the right path and/or find the right people to help you.

LIGHT UP

Do you have a light/torch on your phone? Each day, turn on the light/torch, sit by it and say these words (from Psalm 119): God's word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. If you don't have a phone, you could use a small torch, or a battery-operated tealight, or a bedside lamp. Ask God to help guide you on your path of life. If you write a journal, note down the times you have felt God guiding you.



Create a path in your home or garden, using soft clothes or toys to make the edges. Make some parts narrow, others wide, with bends and straights. Put a few 'bumps' in the road to represent the difficulties in life that we may face. Walk your path from start to finish, slowly, heel to toe, stepping over the bumps. How many steps does it take you? What if you take bigger steps? Ask other people in your household or friends/neighbours to walk it – how many steps does it take them? Think about how you feel when you faced with the bumps (difficulties) of life? How might you ask God for help?

WALK

Reach for your coat (it is November!) and go for a walk. Along the way, how many different colours can you see? Notice bright colours among the darker ones. Thank God for the world, for creation. Tell God about things happening in your life. Ask God to help you see glimpses of hope around you, and for people to walk with you in your darker moments. Pray for others facing difficult times.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.



As they were leaving the Temple, one of Jesus' disciples said to him, 'Isn't this place amazing? Look at the size of the stones and the huge buildings!' Jesus replied, 'Don't be impressed by the way things look. These stones and these buildings won't last for ever. They will all be destroyed.'

Later, Peter, James and John came to Jesus privately and questioned him about what he had said.

'What did you mean when you said the Temple would be destroyed?' they asked. 'When is this going to happen?'

'Things are not always what they seem,' Jesus explained. 'Many will come pretending to be acting and working for me – and many will believe them, but you must not. They will come with warnings that the end of the world is coming and that my kingdom is close at hand. Indeed, it will seem so, for there will be terrible wars and fighting, and earthquakes and famines. But do not be afraid, for these things must take place, and the end won't happen immediately. These are just the birth pangs, the beginning of what is to come.'

Mark 13.1-8

Did you know?

- A grand new Temple (place of worship), built by King Herod, was started in 19 BC but only completed in AD 64.
- When Jesus says, 'kingdom', he doesn't mean a place, but the power of God's love in people's lives.

Mark 13.1-8 (NRSV)

As Jesus came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

When Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?' Then Jesus began

to say to them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.