

**BY YOUR ENDURANCE YOU WILL GAIN YOUR LIVES- Biblical Commentary by
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Luke 21,5-19

And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, “As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?” And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”

Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. 1 But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.

This Sunday's reading presents us with what wants to be an encouragement for the Christian community that was subjected to outside attacks on the behalf of religion, governments and also from inside their own families. Well, Jesus' words do not want to put fear into them , but to take it away, they do not want to discourage the believers, but to encourage them.

The verses begin with the disciple's admiration of the temple, as they have not yet understood the novelty that Jesus brings. The evangelist writes . “ *And while some..*” referring to the disciples,”.. *were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings..*” Well, Jesus had said that the temple was a den of thieves, a temple where God had become like an extortioner, instead of communicating life to his followers he takes it away, like the previous episode in these verses, that of the widow, that lost everything to keep alive the God that exploited her.

God, in the Old Testament, in the law, had foreseen that with the proceeds of the temple the weakest category was maintained , represented by the widows. Well, the religious institution had disfigured God's face and not only with the temple's proceeds maintaining the widows, but it was the widows, the weakest part of the society, that had to maintain alive this ‘vampire’ God.

Jesus does not tolerate all this and so at the admiration of the disciples He replies: “... *the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.*”

This is the first of the great changes that will come in history. Every religious and civil institution that is opposed to the good of mankind, that exploits and demeans, Jesus assures us – and this is the great prospect, that great certainty of the believers – will fall, even if it seems an impossible thing, like the temple at Jerusalem, one of the wonders of the world, a splendor as admired by the disciples, all will fall.

All systems of power, economical, political and religious that exploit mankind be will destroyed .Therefore Jesus had words of encouragement for His followers, for the Christian community, warning that all this will not be without pain, because this society will turn against Jesus' disciples that announce a new world.

Jesus, here deludes His disciples, He has not come to restore the dying kingdom of Israel, with His grand ideas, but has come to begin the Kingdom of God, a new alternative society and the principle enemies of this kingdom will be those three sacred pillars of every society, pillars that are based on the values considered so sacred for the defense for which one can give one's life or take the life of another, and they are God, Country and Family; systems of power based on obedience.

The believers God of obedience, through the religious representatives, the citizens that must obey the governors and the family where the wife obeys the husband and the sons the father.

Well there will be just these three areas that will revolt against Jesus and against His disciples because He has presented a different God, a God that does not command, but serves, and above all a God that does not ask for obedience, but for a love similar to his.

So, these three areas dominated by power and obedience turn against Jesus' disciples that, with their announcement of a changed society, a completely different model of live, bring about a crisis at the base, the roots of this authoritative society, This is why Jesus says: “..*they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake..... You will be delivered*

up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death."

Why? Because following Jesus will be considered so grave a crime that even the blood ties will be annulled. But Jesus assures: *"You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish."* And concludes with; *"By your endurance you will gain your lives."*

And Jesus assures that not even a hair, a very small part of a person, will be lost.

So, who cooperates with Jesus' message, to the beginning of the Kingdom of God, is already a winner against these seemingly dominant forces, against these forces that crush, these forces that seem indestructible, Jesus assure us: *"work for the Kingdom and one by one, beginning with the temple of Jerusalem, all these institutions will disappear"*

The evangelist's verses continue with verse 28, in which He confirms that there is hope and salvation and to not be afraid. Jesus announces: *"Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."* (Luke 21,28) Therefore no catastrophes that put fear into the group of disciples, but the announcing of a great truth: all that dominates, that oppresses and humiliates mankind, slowly through history will fall.

This will inevitably bring sufferance to the members of the Christian community, but this must not discourage them because they are already winners.