

Heads up

Luke 21.25-36

This passage comes just before Jesus is arrested. The religious leaders are trying to catch Jesus out and to get him into arguments. It seems a very dark and difficult time, but there are small signs of hope. And there is encouragement in difficult times to stand up, look up and look for hope.

Now read **Luke 21.25-36** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Often in difficult times, we may only be able to see the challenges and they may seem so big that we may not always see the small signs of hope. This passage encourages us to look upward with hope. How might we spot the small signs of hope in the dark and difficult times?



The artist writes: 'It takes a lot of courage to show yourself, to open your own cage, and let your soul be free!' – how is this a hopeful image?

LOOK UP

A rainbow, the sun, the stars and the white clouds – which is your favourite and why? What do they have in common? There may be many answers, but perhaps the simplest is: we have to look up to see them. Draw your favourite from the suggestions above. Inside, on or around what you have drawn, write your hopes for you, for the street where you live, for your country and for the world. The Bible encourages us to keep looking up, looking forwards, praying and looking to God for hope.



Make a 'hope' banner. Write the letters H O P E in bubble writing on four separate pieces of card or paper. Decorate and cut them out. Stick them on a wall using non-marking putty, or on a window facing outwards for others to see. Leave it up throughout Advent which is a time of hope and waiting before we celebrate Jesus' birth – bringing hope to the world.

Daily Prayer

At the beginning of each day, ask yourself two questions: What am I most looking forward to today? What is my hope for today? Then, at the end of the day, ask yourself three questions: What did I most enjoy today? Did I learn anything new today – about myself, someone else, something I never knew? Did my hope happen or come true, or did something else give hope that I wasn't expecting? Take time each day to thank God for the good things that happen, and to pray for your hopes.

GROW

Plant cress pots as a sign of hope.

You will need: small plant pots (yoghurt pots are ideal), cotton wool, cress seeds. Put cotton wool into the pots and soak gently with water. Sprinkle cress seeds onto the cotton wool and gently press down. Keep the pots in a light, warm place. Within two days you should see cress appearing. After five to seven days, it may be tall enough to cut and enjoy on a sandwich – or however you choose! How does it feel to see the cress growing? Where might you see tiny signs of hope today?

DRAW



Often when we are worried or afraid of something it can seem so big; yet even the smallest sign of hope can help them seem more manageable. Think or talk with others about how you felt/feel during the pandemic. Where did you see signs of hope? Has it been easier to be hopeful as the time has gone on?

What are your hopes now? Draw a rainbow on a small piece of paper. Write these words underneath the rainbow: 'God plans to give you a hope and a future' (Jer 29.11). Keep this with you all week.

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.

Jesus said to his disciples, ‘The time will come when there will be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars. There will be roaring seas and confusion on earth. It will seem like the world is in danger. People will be very afraid of what might happen, and that even the power of heaven is being shaken! It is then that people will see the Son of Man, coming with power and great glory.

‘Now when these things happen, stand tall and proud; hold your heads up high, because freedom from all that is evil will be very close.’ And he told them a parable. ‘It’s like the buds that you see on the trees every year – they are signs that summer is near. It’s just the same with these other things that I’m telling you about. They will be signs that the kingdom of God is near.

‘Believe me, even if everything else disappears, the truth of my words will last for ever. So be careful; don’t get weighed down with worry or drawn into what



is not good. Be on the lookout! Pray for strength and make yourself ready at all times, for we don’t know the day when the Lord will come.’

Luke 21.25-36

Did you know?

- The Son of Man is a title from the Old Testament which Jesus uses to describe himself.
- This passage happens just before Jesus’ journey to the cross and his death, which may be why he is preparing the disciples for difficult times.

Luke 21.25-36 (NRSV)

‘There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.’

Then he told them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see

these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

‘Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.’