2026-10-25 … 10am Service Sermon … Revd Bev Jameson
Matthew 24.30-35 Colossians 3.12-17

PRAYER

Father may these spoken words be faithful to the written word and lead us into the living word, Jesus Christ our Lord - Amen

SERMON

The lectionary is a wonderful thing but occasionally its choice of starting point does not always give the a clear understanding of what is going on The verse before our gospel reading today verse 29 describes various cosmic signs (the sun will be darkened; the moon will not give its light) which herald violent destruction. This refers to the end of time; for God's judgement upon our world. Its quite bleak and not a little scary.

But there is hope at the beginning of our gospel reading. The Son of Man will come in clouds with great power and glory. This phrase is taken from Daniel 7.13. Just when everything is as terrible as it can be, there is hope, there is salvation in the son of man. In Daniel chapter 7 the coming of the Son of man immediately follows the judgement by the ancient of days and it is the beginning of an everlasting kingdom Throughout the Old Testament it is God who commands the angels of heaven, but now it is the son of man who has the authority from God who will send out the angels.

What **is** Jesus really trying to say about himself in this cryptic conversation with the disciples? That the son of man, the messiah is in fact himself- Jesus – It is he who has the authority of God. He will gather all the chosen who have been dispersed and scattered to the four winds and keep them safe. He makes a promise that no matter how fearful and uncertain events become the son of man **Jesus will** appear. It is a promise made to the disciples 2026 years ago and it is a promise made to you and me today

Jesus will come, but it is clear no one knows precisely when. The approaching end is like a budding fig tree at the beginning of summer. The sprouting leaves indicate that the time is approaching when the leaves will unfurl fully, but the exactly when cannot be predicted. Similarly, no one can predict when the world's end will come, not even the angels or Jesus himself. So in order to be ready, the Christian must be forever watchful and prepared. We must live our lives clinging to Christ's teaching and values. We are to undertake his work here, today, faithfully observing his word, alert and watchful, in order to be ready for his coming again.

The early church believed Christ's second coming would be soon and they were desperate to be ready for him. Colossae was a small town about 100 miles east of Ephesus in modern Turkey. Paul never visited Colossae but he had heard a great deal about the fledgling church and cared enough about those new Christians to write to them, probably from a time when he was in prison to make sure they were ready for the end time when Jesus would come again. PTO

The new members church had begun to introduce new ideas from other philosophers and religions on a level with Christian truth. Living in a secular environment with all sorts of secular values and differing perspectives it was understandable that some of these secular values would seep into the Christian teaching, or at least dilute the Christian teaching to fit in with the secular world around them. Sound familiar? Our world is perhaps not so very different from that of Colossae. We too are surrounded by secular values of power, possessions, status money and celebrity. Not a great deal of kindness compassion and forgiveness around

In his letter Paul is eager to remind the people of Colossae of Jesus who taught the world a different way of life a different way to behave to others especially fellow Christians. Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, Paul says Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

We are to show constant forbearance with one another. Even if we irritate and disagree with one another, we are to be patient. When legitimate complaints occur within the community the people of God are urged to forgive one another. Jesus forgives all of **our** sins by his death on the cross. We are urged to forgive one another in honour of the absolute forgiveness **we** receive from Jesus

It is love for one another in the all-embracing all-encompassing love of Christ that binds the community together.

2026 years on The world has not ended and Jeus has not come back for a second time. We do not know when the end of times will be. We still cannot predict the exact day or hour so we are shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Colossae unsure of the future, eager to follow Jesus and be ready when he comes again. The advice Paul gave the Colossians 2026 years ago is still valid for us today. We must try to behave with compassion, kindness, humility, forgiveness, patience and love. Some times that’s not easy. Sometimes that takes an effort from us to change our attitudes and turn away from the world values and behaviours. We see celebrities, politicians, ordinary people hurl abuse at one another as demonstrated on TV or social media. It is so easy to respond in the same way especially if someone is hurling abuse at us.

But for us we have to turn away for whatever we do, in word or deed, we are to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. That’s what makes us different, that’s what make us followers of Jesus this day and every day