



Grace and peace of the word made flesh Amen. Today's Gospel is about the reverence the disciples had for the bricks and stones that made up the temple. Few of us in this modern world have built an actual temple, but we spend many hours building the hopes and dreams we have for our lives and the lives of our children.

When I began to go to the Lutheran church in El Salvador, my nephew Fabricio was always at my side. Every Saturday he would come to my house to go to church at Llano Coyol with me. When his parents had plans for other Gathering that day, he would refuse to go with them and say "no, I want to go with my uncle". He considered me to be his second dad. He and I made a lot of plans for his future. Those plans changed for the first time when I moved to the United States. Fabricio thought that all of those plans had been abandoned. He cried non-stop for months.

After we had been apart for a year, my sister-in-law Jenny asked us if we would adopt Fabricio to get him safely out of El Salvador. My wife and I spoke with high powered (and expensive!) international adoption lawyers in Boston and Atlanta. But the message that we received from every lawyer we spoke with was that there was no way we could adopt him while he was still living in El Salvador.

When we told Jenny that we were having a hard time finding a way to adopt him, she made the decision that it was time for her and the children to seek political asylum in the US and to make the journey here.

When they first arrived in the US, they initially moved to Western Iowa. They only lived there a few weeks because every day Fabricio was calling me asking when he could move to Waukesha to live with me and my family. After six weeks, I flew to Omaha and drove their family here. We begin to build a new set of hopes and dreams.

I think most of you know that our hopes and dreams came crashing down on June 14, 2016 when he passed away in an accident.

Brothers and sisters, in today's Gospel, Jesus tells us that temples will come crashing down. In Mark's Gospel he stopped here, But in John's Gospel this story includes a little more. Jesus adds "and I will rebuild the temple in three days."

As Jesus and the disciples were leaving the temple, one of the disciples came to Jesus and was pointing out the beauty of the building. The disciples were only thinking of their pride in the building. To them the temple provided identity, design and meaning. This was the second temple that was built in Jerusalem, and was bigger than the first temple that was made by King Solomon.



The second temple was considered to be of the most splendid sacred buildings in that time. Gigantic stone blocks were used to build the walls. Some archaeologists cannot explain to this day how these huge stones could be used in the construction of the building without modern machinery.

With these characteristics, the temple was seen as something splendid, everlasting, and admired by all including the disciples, but not by Jesus. It was the outward admiration of the temple that prevented the disciples from understanding what was actually happening in the temple.

The disciples likely expected Jesus to share their same pride in the building. Instead of sharing in their joy, he predicted the destruction of the temple. I can only imagine the shock of his followers. As an example, look at these beautiful new floors we have here in this sanctuary. Imagine commenting to Pastor Chris about how nice the new floors look and his response to you is “well they’re nice now, but someday it will all be a pile of rubble.”

For the disciples, their temple came crashing down when Jesus was crucified. Their dream was that Jesus was the Messiah that was going to be the king on earth who would liberate them from the Romans. Their temple crashed down on Golgotha. After Golgotha, they were lost. But Jesus revealed himself to them and told them not to worry. They were not alone.

God who revealed himself, in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, gives us a new meaning of what the temple is. The apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians says "that we are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells among us." I am sure that each of us has a history where their temple has been threatened. Perhaps it could have been the loss of a loved one; some illness, the loss of a job; fear, anger or resentment, but whatever these threats, we have to remember that Jesus through the Holy Spirit is with us and it is He who will help us protect our temple against any tribulation that may damage our faith in the promise of life. Jesus tells his disciples, then and today, do not be afraid. Your temples may fall, but they will be rebuilt. I am with you to the end of time.

May the grace and peace of the Word made flesh be with you always. Amen.