



On the Promise of Abundance

When I visited Israel a few years ago, one of the highlights was seeing a scale model of Jerusalem before the Temple was destroyed. This is probably what the city looked like during Jesus' time. There, right in the center, was the Temple. When the guide started explaining how it was decorated, using some of the descriptions in our Gospel reading for today, I was struck with how the people of the day must have seen it, sitting on top of the hill in gleaming white stone with touches of gold. It really was spectacular, a fitting place for God to dwell.

Jesus foretold not only that this magnificent building would be razed to the ground, but that he, the earthly vessel of God, would be killed. As if that wasn't enough, Jesus told his followers that they would also be persecuted, betrayed, and even put to death. They would be hated because of Jesus. This would be enough for even his most dedicated followers to wonder what they were getting themselves into.

At the end of the narrative, though, Jesus provides comfort for them. Not a hair of their heads will perish. Their physical bodies may be harmed and destroyed, but they will gain their souls. In this apocalyptic description of what they might expect in the near term, they see that there is still Good News as Jesus promised. Jesus is offering us abundant life, even in the direst circumstances, although it might not be the type of life we're expecting.

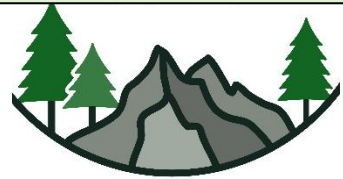
It's hard to think of abundance during times of economic instability, partisanship, and conflicts. But abundance is what Jesus has promised. Why not step out in faith this year in gratitude and pledge an extra percent of your income?

Fr. Kirby Smith is the priest-in-charge of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Vista, California and former CEO and treasurer of the Diocese of San Diego.

Questions For Reflection:

When was a time when you were expecting the worst but were surprised by a pleasant outcome instead?

How might the words of Jesus in the Gospel reading give reassurance to us today when we face grim circumstances?



Visit <http://www.christchurchwinchester.org/stewardship> for information on the Stewardship Campaign for 2026.



THE EPISCOPAL NETWORK FOR STEWARDSHIP