

Sermons at All Saints Anglican Church, Luxembourg

Preached by Rev Geoff Read on Sunday 18th January 2026 (First Sundays Service)

Bible texts: Revelation 21:1-6, Matthew 7:24-end

Welcome to our kitchen

If I stand looking one way I see a unit with a wide top drawer. It's the place where we keep our bread ... and our chocolate!

Turn around and you can see out of the window. Look left to where the noise is coming from and you can see a building site. The old house has been demolished and now they are preparing the ground for a new one, digging deep into the sandy soil to put down strong foundations

What are your signs of stress or anxiety? For me I find myself comfort eating ... which is where the chocolate drawer comes in

I was given a Lindt chocolate Father Christmas and over the past week late at night he has gradually disappeared



It's January and its time, I know. But I know this is my stress responses, and I found myself asking: Geoff, why are you doing this?

And I think the answer is Donald Trump and all that he stands for, and how the chaos and undermining of a Rule Based Order is playing out in places and for people that I care about - Ukraine, Palestine and now Iran

Yes, I pray ... but I also secretly eat chocolate

As your chaplain I know I should be able to say that I just pray

But I think acknowledging this combination is more honest and more real

I was in the Zoom meeting on Wednesday evening with stories from Palestine, including from Father Fadi

And one of speakers, also a priest, said something like this:

“for me, hope and despair are constant companions at the moment, and I have to wrestle daily to allow hope to win over despair ...”

In a moment we are going to have our first Bible reading. It's from that strange last book of the Bible, Revelation

The writer, John, was probably also a secret chocolate eater.

A prisoner of the Roman Empire on the island of Patmos, and his circumstances and those of the big picture world order looked bleak

But then, as he prays one Sunday, Jesus pulls the curtain of world events aside, gives him a Revelation, lets John see round the back of world events, see them from a different perspective, God's perspective, about what is going on in God's purposes

The Book of Revelation is not about what will happen in the future.

It is about getting a bigger picture, a Godly picture of what is happening in the present for John then, and also for us now

READ: Revelation 21:1-6

Did you hear that: I am making all things new

Not I will make all things new

I am making all things new - that's what Jesus says

This is what it means to pray the Lord's Prayer: "your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven ..."

To claim, by trust, that God is at work in the here and now, that despite what the news suggests, somehow, He is making all things new

We know the things of the Kingdom by how much they reflect Jesus - truth, love, humility, self-sacrifice

And we know the things opposed to the Kingdom by how different they are from Jesus - distortion of truth, othering and violence, pride and the desire to get and acquire things, places and people at all costs

Do you remember what that priest said: "for me, hope and despair are constant companions at the moment, and I have to wrestle daily to allow hope to win over despair ..."

And so each day we have to do this wrestling in how we see the world and how we respond - either out of the place of hope and trust that God is making all things new, or the place of despair, that might is right

How do we do that?



Well turn around with me from the chocolate drawer to the window and take a look out at the activity across the road where they are digging foundations

Let's have our second Bible reading: Matthew 7:24-end

READ Matthew 7:24-end

It's such a well-known story. Maybe as a child you sang the song, with actions, about the wise and foolish men. But it is told to adults

It comes at the end of a long series of teaching by Jesus at the start of Matthew's gospel that is up on a mountain, so it is called the Sermon on the Mount.

It starts in Chapter 5 with what we call the Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven - the invitation to choose how we will see life

And what Jesus calls "poverty of spirit" is the way He offers - no longer out of self-sufficiency, but God-sufficiency

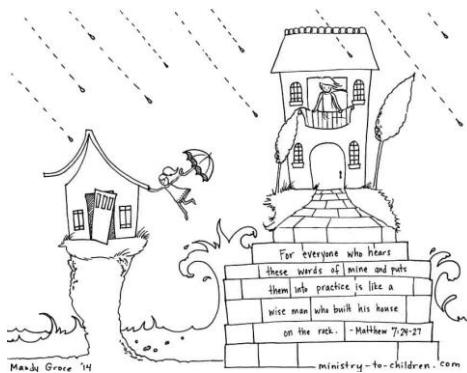
Jesus then goes on, showing all the choices we need to make in our 24/7 lives

If you have a Bible lets follow though - choosing how we will see the world, history, money, worries, enemies, sexuality, commitment, revenge, generosity

In Chapter 6 he gives the Lord's Prayer - Your kingdom come

And finally, at the end of chapter 7 he says: well, you choose

Will you build on rock or sand?



Of course, we all say Rock!

We want to believe Him, what He says in Revelation: See, I am making all things new

But if you anything like me, we turn constantly daily between the window and the chocolate drawer

Jesus understands this, which is why the parable has, on the one hand a firmness about it - "like a wise man who built on rock ... when the wind and rain comes, it did not fall ..."

And on the other hand, a choice, a daily choice, a wrestling between the alternatives of rock or sand, hope or despair

"Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts of them will be like the wise man ..."

Who hears - present, ongoing, a daily choice

What shapes your choice each day of how you see the world - hope or despair?

Words of Jesus or circumstances?

What gets to me first as I wake and get up in the morning?

What gets to me most throughout the day?

Words of Jesus or circumstances as told by my phone or TV news source

Over the years Christians have found ways - simple, daily practices - to put the Words of Jesus in the Bible as the foundation for the day on which we can then build.

Some people call this their "Quiet Time"

It is a simple mix of Bible and prayer - 5 minutes a day, best as the day begins

Here we seek His promises, His perspective and His power to see differently and act on that - in fact, here we find and meet Him, Jesus

There are lots of resources to help create this space, like Lectio 365



Or how about coming along to the Lyfe group series on how to have a Quiet Time. It's this Wednesday at 19:00. Just ask me for the Zoom link

But maybe a simple way to begin or start again is to decide, now, to start Monday and then each day, before you open any news app, with 5 minutes to gain Jesus's perspective

It could go like this ...

Pray: "Lord, I want to build on the Rock of Your Word today - give me your way of seeing and acting ..."

And then take a few minutes to repeat this Bible verse, these words of Jesus: See, *I am making all things new*

Then pray the Lord's Prayer

And as you then step into the day, as you live the day, as you encounter the news ...

... stand firm, repeat the words of Jesus as often as you need to, and ask Him to give you the power to act on them