May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

When was the last time you went to bed thankful and amazed by what the day had given you, something you had not planned or foreseen? Maybe it was a conversation, a chance meeting with someone else, a moment of hope or beauty, a truth or insight that changed you, an experience when you felt really alive.

When have you been absolutely sure you were standing in the presence of God? Some would describe it as their moment closest to Christ. Some might say they saw the face of Jesus in another person. Some would say they saw the Spirit at work in a particular situation. Others might talk about an answered prayer, the beauty of nature, the first time they held their child or grandchild.

In those moments we were open and available to the promise and the coming life. Last week we heard about Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness. He was struggling with and learning how to remain open to his future, to his coming life. Haven’t there been times in your life when you struggled to stay open to the future, to what life was bringing you?

That openness to life is the call of Jesus in each of our lives and what the gospel is about. “*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly*” (John 10:10), he said. It’s why “*he set his face to go to Jerusalem*” (Luke 9:51). It’s why there are so many stories of Jesus healing the blind and deaf. He is opening eyes and ears to the promise, to the future, to the coming of life and life abundant. It’s why, so many times, he tells us to stay awake, to be watchful, and to not fall asleep. He’s telling us to keep open to our future, to our coming life. And that’s what Jerusalem in today’s gospel has failed to do.

Jerusalem has killed the prophets, the ones who were calling it into a future. It has stoned those sent to bring it life and more life. “*How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!*” Jesus says of Jerusalem (Luke 13:34).

“*And you were not willing!*” Jerusalem has closed to the future. Jerusalem has refused to respond to the promise.

And sometimes you and I are Jerusalem. Sometimes we are blind and deaf to the promise, closed to the future. It happens when life is on auto-pilot and we are just going through the motions. It happens when we hold grudges and resentments, withhold forgiveness, or refuse to accept forgiveness from another. It’s in our suspicions and rejection of others. It happens when fear overwhelms us and power, security, and control become our primary values. It’s what lies behind our illusions of self-sufficiency, our refusal to listen to another, and our belief that there is only one way, - our way. It’s what happens when we cling to and become defined by past guilts, hurts, or losses. It’s what’s going on when we refuse to question ourselves, or consider something new. It’s what happens when routines, habits, and the same old patterns govern our lives.

When this happens we are no longer growing and maturing. Despair replaces hope and nightmares replace dreams. We can no longer see or hear the promise of new life. We close to our future, and where there is no hope for the future there is no life. We declare an ending and our house is left to us.

In what ways have we closed to the future?When has our house been left to us?

When Jesus sees Jerusalem, Luke tells us, “He wept over it” (Luke 19:41). He is sorrowing and protesting the end, the death, the narrowness and short-sightedness, of Jerusalem. And yet, he continues coming to Jerusalem. He is always coming to the Jerusalem of our lives, always calling us to life, to more life, to new life. The promise never goes away, even when we do not respond.

The event of life is always coming to us, in a thousand different ways, every moment of every day. Life never gives up on us. Life will be waiting for us when we are ready and willing to say, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Blessed is the promise that comes to us in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the future that comes to us in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the life that comes to us in the name of the Lord.

In what ways are your eyes, ears, or heart closed today? What needs to happen, to change, to be let go of, for them to begin opening? What would it take for you to bless an unknown promise, an unforeseeable future, an uncertain life? That won’t change what is coming, but it will change us. Amen.