Its that time of the church year when the lectionary presents many apocalyptic readings for us to hear, read, mark, and inwardly digest per our collect this morning. Jesus warns us of things to come that may point the way towards the end times. Do not fear, these things must happen he tells us. Jesus also tells us that only the father knows the when and how these events will take place.

The times we live in today sure feel like the end is coming. Climate change is causing severe drought, the melting of glaciers threatens loss of habitat for some of our beloved animals. Wildfires burning out of control, hurricanes and other weather events have become more intense than ever. Political extremism and an increase in hatred, as well as an uptick in violence directed toward our elected officials and their families have become a part of our daily lives. Christian nationalism has everyone and their brother claiming that God speaks to them and directs them to cleanse our nation of those who don’t conform to their twisted visions. It seems like we’re stuck in world spinning out of control riding down the highway to hell.

But there is good news to be told. Isaiah tells us that God will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered. God will make all things new. We must endure all the craziness, wars, famine, disaster, hate, and all the not so nice things to get to this point. Jesus tells us all these unpleasant events must take place first, but the end will not happen right away.

We and our ancestors have experienced two world wars, governments overthrown and attempted coups, Fire, floods, earthquakes, extreme heat and cold, disease, famine, mass shootings, and many other unpleasant things. All these things have happened, but the end has not. No one knows except God when this will happen. What’s a person to do?

Jesus tells us to be prepared, for you do not know when the bridegroom will return and those who did not prepare ahead of time will be shut out of the banquet. We will suffer, experiencing loss, gain, new life, death, persecution, hatred, peace, war, times of loss and times of plenty. Through it all, we must endure. Through all the unpleasantness, there is promise of eternal life, peace, and happiness. It’s up to us to stay on the road that will lead us to this outcome. As Paul tells us in our lesson from second Thessalonians, do not be weary in doing what is right. Paul also tells us elsewhere to fight the good fight. All kinds of things will be thrown at us. We must endure and stand for what is right so that hopefully we might change all that is not right. Read the scriptures, mark, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life.

We may be trapped on a planet spinning out of control, but we can make a difference in our times. Our love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ will see us through. Amen