In the scripture lesson today we get a little bit more of a glimpse of the issues taking place during the Roman Empire. Here we hear the description of New Jerusalem; the ultimate city that is grand and imposing. It looks like a place for the ultimate royalty as it is God’s city. But in the description, we hear that there is no temple in this new Jerusalem. And that is because the Lord IS the temple. There is no need for a massive building with gold walls, expensive ornaments, or massive altar. The Lamb is the light that illuminates everything that needs to be seen. In other words, Jesus is the one who sits in glory.

The words themselves give comfort to a people still trying to figure out what was next. Scholars assert the Book of Revelation was written in A.D. 90-95, about twenty years after the destruction of the temple. Once again, there was the question of if it would be rebuilt and what would be next. In centuries earlier, the temple itself had been attacked, raided, and burned to the ground. The Romans were no different. They supposedly came to the Temple, tore it down, and dealt a blow to the psyche of the people throughout the land.

The author wants the people to understand that the destruction of the temple is not the end. Even though this beautiful place of worship and holiness may have been raided to the ground, the Lord is still the same. The Lord will continue to give life and the Lord will continue to be the one who reaches out to people to show them the right way. Nothing can overpower or diminish the glory of God. The people are to see that Jesus continues to be with them and will be wherever they go. And that does not always mean large structures or buildings that can contain God. God will continue to care for God’s people and give them what they need to go on in life.

 Application
How perfect that we read this scripture passage after the 2016 U.S. election. For months we have heard both parties and candidates go at each other’s throats in one of the most heated elections in our nation’s history. Some families and friends have had major arguments and split paths for the time being. People have accosted others on social media and anonymously barraged others on forums on the internet.

We have even heard some people say that we are entering the Apocalypse and that our country is going towards a downward spiral. Surely we are doomed and must realize that God has left America. It is only a matter of time before we find ourselves feeling wrath and devastation.

But our text today tells a different story. Even in contentious times where there is fear of the future and people feel hopeless, we hear that the Lord cannot be contained in buildings or even certain institutions. The Lord continues to come into lives sharing light and reminding all people that God is eternal. To place our hope or power in one political party, one candidate, or one institution, says that we cannot see God at work in something bigger than ourselves.

As Christians our hope is not in any one person or place, it is in Jesus Christ our Lord who continues to come to us over and over again calling us to do his will by
worshipping him, caring for the sick and the poor, and seeing each new day as an opportunity to be his disciples.

During my senior year at BSC, the Wesley Foundation looked at different movies about Jesus. One of my favorites was the musical “Godspell.” written by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak. During the course of the musical was the song “Day by Day,” a song where the group prays to the Lord for three things to see each morning: “To see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly.” The words came from the prayer of 13th century English Bishop Saint Richard of Chichester. Richard supposedly said this prayer on his deathbed.

The words have resonated with me ever since I heard them and think about how I am called to live as a follower of Christ. I am called to search for God, to love God, and try to follow Jesus Christ as best as I can in a hurting and broken world.

Some of us may be happy about the election results and others may be in mourning. While you may feel entitled to either of them, remember that Jesus Christ is still Lord and that we are called to continue to follow him. Our scripture reading today reminds us though they we have not elected “God” and that the Lord will continue to call us to be disciples. There are still people in prisons to comfort, children who need food, and sick people who need care and devotion. God is still God and God expects us to be honorable in whatever we are called to do.