

In today's Reading and Gospel, we have warnings on two fronts.

John expresses his joy as he addresses a woman in respect of the way that her children have been living a life of truth as God intended. Now he wants to emphasise the crux of that truth: "To live a life of love." He does this because he knows only too well that there are many who would deceive and spoil all that has been achieved, and the result would be to lose the reward that it deserved. He says, "If anybody does not keep within the teaching of Christ but goes beyond it, he cannot have God with him: only those who keep to what he taught can have the father and the son with them."

Jesus is also concerned about deception, but in a different form. Jesus warns about taking life for granted. He cautions his disciples to stay in the moment. "Anyone who tries to preserve his life will lose it, and anyone who loses it will keep it safe." I see this as an allegory. Anyone who fails to love will lose his life but anyone who loves will keep it.

Jesus uses three examples. Two are from the past: Noah and the flood, and the destruction of Sodom. One relates to the future: Which could be the destruction of Jerusalem (which Luke would have lived through), or the end of our lives. Jesus does not use these examples to scare the disciples but rather to caution them to continue to 'live a life of love' each day. Why? Because none of us know when our end may come. "On that night two will be in one bed: one will be taken, the other left." Which one might I be? We must stand ready lest we lose 'our' reward.