Text: Mark 13:1-13

**Introduction**

I always have a little apprehension scheduling congregational meetings in the second half of November. The gospel readings for the day are always the apocalypse. And I’m always a little worried the apocalypse might roll over. That rumors of wars might become war.

We will get to some of the more dramatic images, but before that I want to spend a little time in the story that sets it up. There are two reasons for the apocalyptic. And being a Lutheran I’d say they roughly conform to the law and the gospel. That legal reason for the apocalyptic is that we might wake up and see. Apocalypse itself simply means a revealing. The veil that covers things is being lift. The mystery is being proclaimed. And that law forces us to see ourselves rightly. To see our works and our ways by what they produce. The gospel reason for the apocalyptic is that we might be assured. After seeing, after looking under the veil, the correct response is fear and horror. Isaiah seeing the train of the almighty’s robe fill the temple brought out of him “woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips.” The almost universal response of people seeing angels is to fall down blubbering. When confronted directly with the holy, we know that we are not, and that judgment is both proper and that it comes. The repeated cry in other places “let the hills fall on me.” Cover it back up. The revelation is too much for me. Those are all proper responses to the revelation itself. If we don’t recognize the one who is the judge.

**Trouble in the Text**

What sets off Jesus’ apocalypse is a rather natural action of his disciples. They are leaving the Jerusalem Temple. One of the wonders of the world. And they motion Jesus, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings.”

I think we can understand this action in a few ways. We’d certainly have exactly the same thoughts leaving any cathedral. We’d have it on the mall in Washington DC - the Capitol or any of the monuments. It’s the demand to look at how great we are. Look at what the collective we have done.

Of course in the immediately preceding stories what this work is built on has been revealed. The parable of the tenants reveals stealing what belongs to God, the Sadducees rejection of the resurrection reveals the lack of faith, the desire of the Scribes for the best seats and honor reveals the temporal desires, the collection of the widows’ mite reveals the oppression of the poor. The most beautiful things we can build are often built to hide the ugly means. To put the veil over how and why.

Jesus, teacher, look. Notice the downgrade. Teacher. Not the King of the triumphal entry or the Christ of Peter’s confession. But teacher. Just another rabbi. Teacher, join us in marveling at how great we all are. Look at our Tower of Babel that ensures we will not be forgotten. This work that will survive the next flood and save us.

**Gospel in the Text**

And it is to all that thinking that the revelation comes. Jesus asks them back, “Do you really see these stones?” How great and marvelous they are. Everything they stand for. Why you are asking me to look at them. “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

There is definitely that law reason in Jesus’ response. “Wake up and see.” Even our grandest collective works will not last. Not one stone upon another. But there is also the gospel invitation. Thrown down by who? See the one who you are with today. God in not tabernacled in tent or in stone. But today God is tabernacled in flesh. You are worshipping dead stones. Yet you have the Lord of life in your midst right now. See the one who is with you. Stop staring at towers of babel, and turn to the one calling you by name. Your salvation has come to you. Not in polished stones and grandeur, but humbly. You salvation has come to you not in towers, but by faith. Look not at the temporal things, but the eternal thing.

**Trouble in the World**

But that revelation sets up the ultimate challenge of this world. This world is the temporal things. All its grandeur and glory. Everything that it is constantly throwing up and saying look at these great stones. Everything that tempts our gaze and promises salvation.

Loose your life here. Look at our works.

But in its offerings the world is remarkably the same. The same things that have dominated our collective attention from the beginning are still here.

Many come saying they are the one. That if you follow in my cause, salvation will follow.

Many start wars that add to the glory of the nation. Nation rises against nation to test their mettle. And Kingdom strives with Kingdom for the pride of life.

Earthquakes that some will promise that they themselves will be able to control.

And in the train of messiahs, and wars and promises to control – there are the famines. To make an omelet you have to break a few eggs.

All these this must happen.

Look at them. See them rightly. Understand what the glamour they offer covers overs.

**Gospel in the World**

And understand what you have been called to. Because you have been called not by that temporary glamour. Because it has been revealed to you. And when you understand how the glamour works, you can see. But when you can see it, those who are casting that glamour will know you are not on the team.

You will be delivered.

You will be delivered to councils. You will be delivered to governors You will be delivered to kings.

But you will be delivered.

The one who endures to the end will be saved.

Because all the councils of this world, all the governors and kings. Everything that even our brothers, and fathers and children might have gone over to. Not one stone will remain on another.

Only what it done for Christ will last. Only the word of God. Those words given by the Holy Spirit. Is eternal.

**Conclusion**

And that word that we are given to proclaim is look. See your judge. It is Christ. Your Father who receives you. Your brother who consoles you. Your family.

He was delivered. Crucified under Pontius Pilate. He was delivered. The Father raised him up. He was delivered that we might be delivered.

Our Brother comes again in glory to judge both the living and the death.

And unlike the glamour of the kingdoms. His kingdom has no end.

Look. See. See not the swiftly passing glory of the world. But see the Truth. See the one who delivers you. Not by glamour. But by his grace. See the one who is with you and calls you today. Stop fearing. All these things must happen. But you have been saved.