

Shiny!

King of Glory Lutheran Church

Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry

November 13-14, 2021

Year B: Pentecost 25 Mark 13:1-8

¹As [Jesus] came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" ²Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

³When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴"Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" ⁵Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁶Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. ⁷When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs."

In the midst of everything that is large or shiny (which attracts our attention), God is still at work. People might not notice, but God moves silently ahead. Look for the love, the grace, the offerings people make of their lives, just like Jesus made of his Life for us.

God's love and sustaining power be with all of us this day! Amen.

My cousin and I were on a family vacation when we were tween-agers brimming with hormones. As it was a beach vacation, that whole week, she and I were constantly on the look-out for cute guys. Cute guys in their swimsuits playing volleyball or getting tan. Let's just say, we were using our God given eyeballs to enjoy the view. Ok, there likely was some lusting as well, but we were 12, and didn't think about it like that.

We had this signal between the two of us, if either of us saw a handsome dude, we'd say, "shiny!" This was the cue to look around. We thought we were so cool, instead of pointing and outright ogling, we'd simply say, "Shiny". You can imagine it I'm certain.

In today's culture there is still plenty of "Shiny!" going on. It's whatever catches our attention in that moment. This week it was Country Music awards and Harry

and Meghan celebrating Veterans Day in New York City at the Intrepid Museum. Last week it was the World Series, Alicia Key's cliff house in California, the Met Gala before that, and on and on the list goes.

For the disciples, it was the large rocks. "Look Jesus, what large stones and large buildings!" That was their "shiny".

Here's a quick context. Jesus at this point in Mark's Gospel has just entered Jerusalem as He heads towards His crucifixion. In the last couple of days and hours, the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders is rising. They are trying to trap Jesus but are afraid of the crowds. They know they want Him dead.

In addition, over and over again in Mark's Gospel, Jesus has told the disciples, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, be rejected by the religious leaders and be killed." They don't get it.

On this day, the group comes out of the temple and all the disciples can muster is, "Ooo....so large!"

David Lose wonders if we aren't more like the disciples than we might want to think. <http://www.davidlose.net/2018/11/pentecost-26-b-beyond-spectacle/>

Oo what a large house you have! What fast cars he has! Look how many Facebook followers she has! Or the "shiny" is checking the news all day, so we don't miss anything. You understand and can likely think of what your own "shiny" might be.

But right before Jesus and disciples come out of the temple, the widow has put in two copper coins. A small but courageous act of faithfulness to God in the days when Roman laws kept widows' poor. After this, Jesus will again say to the disciples, "Listen, guys. I'm headed to the cross. Doesn't that make sense to you?"

Here's the point. In our fast paced, shiny, 24/7 media centered world, there are examples after examples of God showing up in small but mighty ways. Perhaps no one sees. It's not covered on any news show. Yet they are certainly there. Just like the widow putting in two copper coins.

Spouses tell one another, "I love you." Parents drive children and youth to soccer practices and games. Staff in nursing homes deliver medicines. Office

administrators keep things moving for the boss. People pick up our garbage each week. Teachers teach $4 + 6 = 10$. Mothers and fathers work two jobs to put food on the table. Judges listen to court room cases for troubled youth. Counselors listen to troubled hearts.

Just this last week, we celebrated Veterans Day. Our nations' vets, deserve our thanks. They put our country first and their families second for the times they were away on tour. No one published their picture or name in the paper. They served and we thank them.

God is still at work. We come to church to get centered each week, because we understand the world is about so much more than all the shiny things. We pause and are quiet. We listen for God's still voice encouraging us to keep going. To stay focused on what's important.

It is here we are reminded of how very much God loves us. God loves us and God reveals that love through the people who love us and work behind the scenes each day to keep us going.

Worship renews us and refocuses us from the constant 24/7 of a world that might never see the small but mighty acts of love that happen each day, 24/7.

Take heart, God's people, God's church. God is at work. God is at work through us. Jesus still went to the cross even though the disciples never quite understood. It doesn't matter if they didn't get it. Our tiny acts of love and service and long-suffering matter. They matter to God. They matter to our loved ones.

Amen