Text: Luke 21:5-28

**Introduction**

We as humans always get drawn to the bright sparkly stuff. Now what we consider bright and sparkly might change. We laugh at the talking dog going “ooh, squirrel”, but we laugh because our human behavior is not that different. “Ooh, gull-wing Mercedes.” “Ooh, 4 beds with a pool.”

We are so drawn to that stuff that we will base our entire identity around bright shiny things. So much that even if we don’t understand it or it blows up in our face – like day trading or crypto pyramid schemes – if other humans think it is bright and shiny, we will chase it.

**Text (Not One Stone)**

There are two levels of this bright and shiny stuff in our text today. The first I think is actually the most important, if the quickest. In the overall story this is Wednesday of Holy Week. Just as the shekinah – the presence of God - would leave the temple before its destruction by the Babylonians, the presence of God in Jesus Christ would leave the temple and signal its coming destruction by the Romans. Jesus has been teaching these disciples for three years. But the bright and shiny thing of the temple is still what captures their imagination. As the presence of God is getting up to leave, they call once more to him. Jesus, don’t you see this magnificent building. Such large stones and all the centuries of gold offerings hammered onto various places. This is what defines being a Jew. Better to spend a day in these courts than a thousand elsewhere.

“As for these things that YOU SEE, the days are coming when there will not be one stone left upon another.”

**Application (Not One Stone)**

Think about all the shiny things – the noble stones, the offerings – that we build our own identities on. And this is what Jesus says about all of them. The days are coming when not one stone will be left upon another. Our Shiny Things can be as great as a wonder of the world – as the second temple in Jerusalem was supposed to be – and they are all temporal. All of the things that WE SEE that we think are worth building an identity on…come down.

They can be good things, like family. (Anyone who loves his Father or Mother more than me is not worthy of me.) They can be pretty lies, like wealth. (How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom.) They can even be ugly things like various tempting sins. (It would be better for him to have a millstone around his neck.) If you are building your identity on any of the shiny things that our world lifts up, you have erected an idol in the temple. And all idols will fall. Because they are all of this world which is now passing away. They are all temporal things. And building an identity on temporal things is building on the sand.

The things that are not temporal are your soul and the Father. You are the living stones of the new temple that the Spirit has taken up residence in. The Father has placed you on the cornerstone of Christ. And in the temple of God, you shall have no other gods before Him.

Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials-- gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames. Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? (1 Cor. 3:12 NLT) That’s the apostle Paul to the Corinthians. Know how you build. Look with the eyes of faith. Look with the eyes that the Spirit within you gives. Because today we might see all kinds of shiny things. On that day, what the Father sees is revealed to all.

**Text (The Disciple’s Questions)**

Now this message pushes those disciples into a panic. And they ask Jesus two questions. The first one is “when will these things be?” The second is “what are the signs they are about to take place?”

Now I want you to think a bit about those two questions because they are truly different. When is a question of absolute time. How long do we have?

And contrary to what you might think, Jesus gives them an answer. “See that you are not led astray. Many will come in my name…many will say ‘the time is at hand’…you will hear of wars and tumults…do not be terrified, these things must happen, but the end will not be at once.” Jesus doesn’t give them…or us...a date. But he does say it will not be at once.

**Application (question 1)**

And this is the general experience of the church through the ages. False messiahs come shining lights of shiny things and leading people astray. Many people have looked at the scriptures and think that they have determined the time. And it is always now. Because doomsday is a shiny thing. Every war is the war to end all wars. Until we find out our troops are also in some other foreign outpost. Nations rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. They all eventually lay their hands on the church as the great scapegoat. All of this is the great tribulation. All of this is the chance to witness.

Are you building on temporal things, or on the eternal one? Will you give the pinch of Salt to whatever the world demands as great and good, or do you entrust the hairs of your head to the alpha and omega. “Not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.” Is your identity around whatever temple the devil, the world and your own flesh has erected? Or is you identity in Christ? Only Christ is the way, the truth and the life. Only in Christ will you gain your lives.

The disciples asked when? The answer is long enough.

**Text (question 2)**

The second question the disciples ask Jesus is a little more interesting, or it gives way to the type of things we look at, compared to God. They wanted to know what would be the signs. Now everything – all the shiny things that we would normally look at as signs, Jesus has already said “no, not yet.” Even if Jerusalem – the center of our temporal world – would fall, not yet. These things have to happen. “Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” The holy things in this world have always been fragile. “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force (Matt. 11:12 ESV).” …”Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. (Jn. 15:20 ESV)… For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (Lk. 23:31 ESV)”

We’d like persecutions and martyrdoms and Braveheart screams of freedom to be the shiny signs of the end. But they aren’t. They are simply the signs of a world and its master who knows his time is short.

What are the signs? The real ones? They are unmistakeable. The Sun and the moon and stars will be wrapped up. The powers that be will be shaken and cast down. And the Son of Man will come on the clouds with power and great glory. If it is the end you won’t miss it.

**Application**

Now there are two things about that which have meaning to us. First, you can’t time it. If you see those signs, its already to late. Today is the day of grace. That day is the day of power and glory.

How long do you have? Enough time. You have now. Now is the time to build on the rock. Now is the time to find your eternal identity in Christ.

But what if I’m not done sinning? That day will come like a thief.

When it comes do you want to see all your works burn? Or do you want to “straighten up and raise you heads, because it is your day of triumph, because your redemption has come.”

**Conclusion**

We get pulled to the shiny things of this world. The things that cause wonder and terror.

Jesus’ words are “do not be afraid.”

Jesus’ words are “your redemption is near.”

Those things should be the shiny things, if you are looking not with your eyes, but with the eyes of the Spirit.

Amen.