Text: Jeremiah 33:14-16

**Introduction**

It is a staple of marketing that we live in something called “The Attention Economy”. The most valuable thing that you have is your attention. And you choose to spend that when you give someone you attention. This is not just time. We can give people our time, but not really be present. And arrayed against us today are a vast sea of attention sucking devices. Well beyond the vast wasteland of television that my mother got so upset about, Gilligan’s Island looks like Shakespeare compared to most of what my kids watch on YouTube. It boggles my mind that they will watch video of someone else playing video games. And when I say, “why don’t you just play the game yourself?” I get that “oh, dad” look as their attention drifts away from the poor old man.

With ear buds in the ears, and dopamine releasing videos on the phone that engage the fingers in some mindless yet tactile response, the only senses not fully engaged are often taste and smell. To get someone’s attention today, sometimes it feels like you have to put on a gorilla suit and parade in front of them. Of course that famous experiment holds that only about 50% of people see the gorilla while they are concentrating on something else. Everybody in my household gets upset at me when I do it, but when I want their attention anymore I just walk up to them: put my hand over the screen and take out an earbud. “Dad, you didn’t have to do that!” Sure, I didn’t.

**Text**

Both the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek have these little particles of speech that the English Standard Version renders “Behold!” In all the bible that word is used 1107 times…quite a bit. I’ve taken to thinking of “behold” as God walking up to me and putting his hands over my screen and taking the earbuds out of my ears. When thinking about the translation I’ve toyed around with exactly how this should be translated. The New Living Translation simply says “Look!”. I’ve wondered if “Yee-ahh!” or some other barbaric yalp would work. Something to distract my attention away from whatever sin or idol current has it, to something better.

Because that is what God has to do to sinners. Worse than teenagers, we can’t turn our own attention away from sin. It fascinates us and ultimately – long past the time sin is actually pleasurable – it eats us alive.

But when we were giving all of our attention to whatever else we fear, love or trust more than God at that moment. God walked up to us. He became incarnate in Jesus. More jarring than a gorilla suit, he bore the cross. The silence broken only by the centurion’s “Surely this one was the son of god.” The darkenss over the land having grabbed the attention of those watching who “returned home beating their breasts.” As a great Holy Week hymn has it, “uplifted for the world to see, He hangs in strangest victory.” This, to get the attention of sinners.

And when he’s got our attention. When we hear the “Behold…Look”. This is the promise. The days are coming.

What days?

The day when I will fulfill the promise.

What promise?

The one I made to Israel – the people of God. The one I gave to David – a man after my own heart.

Remind me.

I will raise up a righteous branch…and he will execute justice and righteousness. (Pause)

Judah will be saved and Jerusalem – the city of God – will dwell securely. (Pause)

And you will say “The LORD is our righteousness.” (Pause)

Look, Behold….the days are coming.

By that strangest victory (point to cross) he has made us righteous.

Soon we shall dwell securely.

Amen.