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South Eastern Minnesota
Sermon Starters for November 2009

November 15, 2009 – Mark 13:1-8

I had a wonderful opportunity for a sabbatical this summer, and I spent 30 days in Israel, and I spent much of that time in Jerusalem. While there, I made many trips to the “Old City” of Jerusalem with its stone walls around it and remnants of the temple mount retaining walls from Solomon’s time. In this Mark passage, Jesus is standing in front of the rebuilt temple with its massive stones creating the temple and other buildings. I can see how the disciples must have been impressed by the seemingly permanent nature of the structures. We like big, solid tangible things; it makes us feel secure.

It must have been shocking for Jesus to tell the disciples that not one stone they see will remain in its place, that every stone will be thrown down. Those words came to pass in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the temple, throwing the massive stones down from the temple mount. So what was Jesus trying to say?

I think he was cautioning his disciples about where and in what they put their trust. Jesus goes on to share other scary predictions about what will happen. In fact many of these events will seem to be the end of the world. Yet in the end of verse 8 are these words: “*These are the beginning of birth pangs.*” Where does that leave the disciples and where does that leave us?

It leaves us in God’s hands, where we have always been. Security is not found in possessions or buildings or stone or anything else. We are God’s creatures, created in the midst of tribulation, but gloriously made in God’s image. In the midst of uncertainty we are thrust into the outer world – born in pain but also born into a world of promise with a Savior at our side who gives us hope. So be not afraid and celebrate your lives as blessed and loved sons and daughters.



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