

November 15, 2015  
Mark 13:1-13

Proper 28B  
A Survival Kit

*Grace, Mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen*

The Gospel words that were heard a few moments ago must have been frightening for the disciples to hear from the Lord. Much of what Jesus tells his disciples is going to take place in a matter of 50 years. This is a prediction of the temple destruction. You see the disciples they are looking at this grand temple. It's magnificent! It's made though by human hands. In the coming decades the following things happened: There was a rebellion of the Jews against the Romans and so in 70 AD, Jerusalem was besieged by Emperor Titus. They surrounded the city and those inside suffered terrible famine. Jewish historian Josephus was an eyewitness of those times and wrote that parents were stealing food from their own children, brothers from sisters, neighbors from each other. Those who didn't die from starvation tried to desert to the Romans only to be arrested, beaten and crucified. Finally, the Romans were able to destroy the walls of the city and rampaged the temple. Not a single stone of the original temple stood after the destruction. It was a horrible, horrible time.

So yes there were wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, etc before Jerusalem was destroyed. Yet what happened in 70 AD is only a foretaste of the end times. If you look throughout history we have seen similar atrocities – Nazi, Germany, Cambodia under Pol Pot, Russia, China, and other places around the world. Jesus says this in verse 8 of our text: *<sup>8</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.*<sup>1</sup> It's the beginning...and any woman whose ever given birth to a child knows what pain there is in child birth. This was serious and is serious. Things were not and are not going to get better.

What I could do this morning is take a look at the signs of the end, which really are the signs for the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. So that's not really helpful is it? What I intend to do this morning is provide for you A Survival Kit as we live in the end times. In order to do so, let's look at the words of Jesus. He is the one that provides them to us.

As we think about a survival kit, many of you know this past week was Winter weather awareness week here in Minnesota. With that, we know winter is coming! Bitter cold – maybe to the point of -40. The possibility of blizzard after blizzard. Perhaps UND should have named themselves the North Dakota Blizzard...anyways we are preparing for longer nights, shorter days, colder weather, and more snow. We prep for being on the road at various points in the winter. So you put a blanket, a shovel, a flashlight, some water, food, and perhaps some flares in your car. We do this so just in case we are caught in a blizzard on Highway 2 or the surrounding countryside we'll be safe.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Mk 13:8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

The Lord is telling his people in the Gospel reading that we better be ready and have our Survival Kits ready. Jesus gives us our Survival Kits for the storm that is even already now here.

**BINOCULARS** First of all the Lord says in response to the disciple's question: <sup>5</sup> *And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. <sup>6</sup> Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray.<sup>2</sup> <sup>9</sup> "But be on your guard. <sup>21</sup> And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. <sup>22</sup> For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. <sup>23</sup> But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand. <sup>3</sup> <sup>33</sup> Be on guard, keep awake.*

The exact word is used in all of these verses. It's a word that comes from the Greek βλέπετε that means to see. We must keep our eyes open and see what's going on around us. There are people who are out there that are false christ's and false prophets. There are people out there that are leading you astray. There are people that proclaiming to you a message that isn't Christian. You are hearing prosperity gospel. You are hearing that if you do more good, God will provide more good to you. Do you know the Scriptures and study them and come to church or do you believe what anybody says about the Scriptures. Or perhaps you hearing people tell you that you don't need the scriptures, they aren't worth anything, and it's a good story and fairytale. The Scriptures must be our truth. It's what God has given to us. The moment we are drawn to a new book, new teaching, new movement that departs from the truth of Scripture is the moment our alert system is down.

Stay awake, stay alert, stay close to the Word of God – how else would you know what is true or false? Stay alert with the light of the Word leading your path. Stay alert with Christ the light of the world as your leader.

**WORLD ATLAS** – This second part of our survival kit is a reminder that we are to continually share the gospel in all the nations. Jesus gives us those exact words: <sup>10</sup> *And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.<sup>4</sup> We will be persecuted, arrested, slandered, mistreated. We see it today in our world. A Coach is fired for praying with his players. Christian people have to support people with alternative lifestyles even if it goes against their lifestyle or be fined. The Gospel message though needs to continue to shine. The enemy may try to silence it, but that will never ever happen. For the Word of God stands forever As it says in Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."*

We need to keep this at the forefront of our churches and in our families. We are to be light to the nations. A light that God has given to us in our Baptisms. We are not to

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<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Mk 13:5–6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Mk 13:20–23). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Mk 13:10). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

hunker down and ride out the storm. That would cost millions of peoples their lives in hell. We are called to go to the nations. But where do the nations begin: They begin right out our door. They begin in our neighborhoods of Fisher and Euclid. We are called to live in the Gospel light of Jesus every day of our lives. Next week we have a great opportunity to come together as God's people to listen, learn, and come up with practical ideas to serve our community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To date, no one has signed up to join me. The time is now to share the love of Jesus. The end is coming.

Third, we need a Cell Phone...smartphone, whatever it might be. This cell phone is a reminder to listen to the prompting of God's Spirit. Jesus says: *<sup>11</sup> And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.*<sup>5</sup>

There will be moments when it looks like everything is crashing down on you. Maybe you've had those moments in the past. In the book of Acts, the disciples were arrested for their faith. I foresee in the not too distant future we will be arrested for our faith. That's quite scary. The amazing thing though is that Jesus will use these troubles for His glory. Across the globe and history, where the church is persecuted, the church is the strongest. As we are persecuted, God will give us the words to speak! That's what happened to the disciples in Acts. It's hard to imagine the fact of this happening here in the land of the free and the home of the brave but when it does...Trust in the Lord and His Word's to you. Stay in His Word. He will not fail you!

The final piece in your survival pack is three parts...here we have A Bible, a Shell, and a Chalice. You see in order to survive in such a violent world that hates you because of Christ, you need to be grounded in the Word and the Sacraments. You see the enemy hates you because it first hated Christ. The Lord tells us that our survival does not depend on being liked and popular, well loved by the crowd. It's standing firm with the Lord and His Word. The Lord will give us His courage and strength.

Where do you receive His strength and a continuous basis? You receive it right here as you hear God's Word, you remember your Baptism, and you receive His Supper. It's how the church has done it for 2000 years. As it says in Acts 2 <sup>42</sup> *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*<sup>6</sup>

Family of God...this is the most important piece in your Survival Kit, for all of the other pieces relate directly to this one...they all build off of this. When you are in the Word, you will be able to discern and be on alert. When you are in the Word you will be able to witness to all nations, starting right here. When you are in the Word you will hear the message of Jesus that the Holy Spirit gives to you to speak.

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<sup>5</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Mk 13:11). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>6</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Ac 2:42-43). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

As the text began, Jesus was talking about a handmade human building, the temple in Jerusalem. That temple was destroyed. The true temple was also destroyed...but yet raised again on the third day. The day the true temple was destroyed He won for you forgiveness, life, and salvation. On that day, He gave to you His Body and His Blood. On that day, the enemy met defeat. On the third day, the temple was brought back to life to provide for you a grand life eternal.

As we continue to live in the ends times, we know there are troubles in the world. We know it's going to get worse as time moves on. However, if you have your survival guide with the Word and Sacraments being at the top, you will survive...you will have life at the end.

IN Jesus Name. Amen.

*Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.*