

Mark 13:1-8
November 14, 2021

Distraction (Merriam-Webster): An object that directs one's attention away from something else.

- I'm easily distracted
 - This a.m. in this space (sanctuary) trying to capture my thoughts...the rush of wind on the windows distracted me, caused me to lose focus on the mission at hand
 - My family will concur I get distracted; especially on vacations
 - Caught up in taking in the sites, new scenery
 - Thankfully hasn't resulted in an accident
 - Maybe a missed turn or two
 - Racquetball
 - Years ago with roommate
 - He serving, me distracted by grip coming loose on my racket
 - He didn't realize I had become distracted
 - Serve ricocheted quickly off the wall and struck me
 - Football receiver
 - Often take eyes off the ball anticipating the hit of a defender they drop the pass
 - Sometimes so wide open that instead of making sure they watch the ball, bring it in their eyes get big and they begin to look at all the green grass before them they fail to catch the ball
 - Favorite cartoons growing up
 - Tom and Jerry, Road Runner and Wylie Coyote
 - Tom and Coyote so consumed by catching their nemesis which usually results in their elaborate scheme backfiring to their own peril – coyote gets blown up by TNT or falls off a cliff
 - Of course, not sure how fun the cartoons would be without these comic events
 - What are they missing out on by capturing the other?
 - A relationship
 - Hallmark movie
 - Main character now successful adult returns home for business
 - Stays in hotel, doesn't even want to go to the house where parents live
 - Dispute with dad many years ago
 - As Hallmark movies do, it ends happily ever after
 - Dad and son reunite
 - Let go of the difference that really had become a distraction to their relationship
 - Confirmation lesson on Exodus
 - Large book with many happenings
 - How to capture in 45 minutes
 - One theme we talked about was following Israel's being led through the waters of the Red Sea and set free from their slavery in Egypt

- Yet, what happened?
 - Instead of celebrating, being thankful, praising God for what had just happened they grumble
 - Complain
 - Only see through eyes of scarcity
 - Were better off back in Egypt
 - At least had food
 - Roof over heads
 - Led astray from trusting in God
 - Relationship with God suffered
- Mark's gospel
 - Apocalyptic text
 - Not uncommon in scripture
 - Intent of apocalyptic texts were not to scare
 - Think the intent, at least in scripture, were to assure God's people of God's faithfulness
 - To see beyond the kingdoms of the world that might bring harm to God's people
 - See hope amidst pain and suffering
 - See a new day beyond the cross of death
 - Promise of resurrection
 - The beginning of something new
 - Remember the concluding passages of perhaps the greatest apocalyptic text in the Bible, Revelation, from last week
 - New Jerusalem
 - God will be there
 - Wipe away tears, no more pain and suffering
 - Text of hope, promise, new life and beginnings
 - See in Mark's text theme of distractions
 - Being led astray by false teachers claiming to be Jesus
 - Enamored with grand structures of the kingdoms of the world
 - Temple had been rebuilt by Herod
 - One of seven wonders of the world
 - So much gold it is said to have blinded travelers to Jerusalem as the sun shined off it
 - Disciples want to know when this happen, what will be the sign
 - Jesus warns them to not get caught up in that
 - Eugene Peterson (The Message)
 - Don't lose your head and panic
 - Don't be derailed by fear mongers
 - Stay the course
 - Focus on the mission
 - Be proclaimers of good news
 - Follow me, stay in my word, abide in me

- Can't help but read this passage and think what distracts us
 - Derails us from the mission at hand
 - Gets in the way of our relationship with God
 - Clouds are vision of seeing as God sees the world
 - Part of our current mission statement
 - "Celebrate the love of Christ by reaching out"
 - What distracts us from celebrating? Reaching out?
 - Distracts us from seeing and living into the abundance of God
 - Distracts us from being the body of Christ
 - Vessels of joy
 - Vessels of love
 - Vessels of good news
 - Vessels of thankfulness and gratitude
 - Vessels of hope
 - Vessels of forgiveness, reconciliation, peace
 - Can we let go of those distractions?
 - If we did, what might happen?
 - What would God be able to accomplish through us?
 - What would people see?