

Pastor Jon's Sermon from Sunday, March 13, 2022

“Jesus the Mother Hen”

I have never seen a mother hen trying to protect her chicks when danger is near. But I have seen a mother killdeer... fiercely protecting her eggs by pretending she had a broken wing in order to draw the threat away. She would squawk and drag her wing to show that she was vulnerable. She was relentless in trying to get us kids to follow her, instead of the eggs. It was an amazing thing to see. One thing is for sure. The mama killdeer will never give up on her mission to protect her young.

This is like the image Jesus uses to describe himself in our Gospel... a mother hen. A mother hen will never leave her chicks, even if it means that she might be killed.

In Luke 13:31-35, we see that political threats, obstacles, interruptions, and the temptation to preserve his own life will not deter Jesus from completing God's mission to save the world on the cross.

A little background.

First, the Pharisees tell Jesus of Herod's scheme to kill him. Since when to the Pharisees care about Jesus' well-being. They wanted to kill him earlier. The Pharisee's, Jewish Lawyers, are fed up with Jesus attracting huge crowds and breaking their laws from Torah... especially the Sabbath laws and for threatening the Temple business.

Throughout the Gospel of Luke, Jesus has been in conflict with the Pharisees. But when compared to siding with Herod Antipas, it seems that Jesus is now part of their in-group. If you take the Pharisees at face value in this text... they actually want to preserve Jesus' life... prevent him from going to Jerusalem to be killed. This is an about face.

Second, we have King Herod... the politician. He oversees Galilee and Perea. He is a tetrarch with ties to the Roman Empire. It is obvious Jesus has no loyalty toward King Herod. He calls Herod a fox. In the ancient world, a fox was known for its craftiness, its lack

of strength, and its proclivity for destructiveness. I get the impression here that Jesus does not fear Herod and his puppet rule.

Third, we get a real window into Jesus' heart. He is tired of rejection. Rejection by the Pharisees, the chief priests, and the scribes to name a few... the disciples aren't batting a 1000 either. Many don't believe that Jesus is the Messiah and/or God in human flesh. Jesus is tired of the injustices going on in the Temple in Jerusalem... the place he holds dear after many family pilgrimages to the city.

Jesus says that he longs to unite people of all backgrounds, to gather people together under God's new rule, like a hen gathers it's young under her wings. Jesus longs to be like a mother hen who gathers her young under her wing... a powerful feminine image for God.

But when I think of a hen gathering it's young, especially if a fox is near the coop, I think of the fierceness of a Hen flapping her wings, spinning around, pecking, and squawking like nobody's business. Jesus fiercely wants to gather all people, including his antagonists, under his wings regardless of political and religious differences. What does that say to us today?

And finally, Jerusalem. Jesus has predicted 3 times that the religious leaders will reject him kill him and hang him on a cross and after 3 days he will be raised from the dead. Jesus has tried to be nice, teach through parables, healings, and miracles, and exercise means of non-violence. But they don't get it.

Yes, the religious leaders will join the procession on Palm Sunday and say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. But, they will soon turn on Jesus again.

So what can we take from this lesson?

First, God will never give up on us like a mother hen protecting her chicks... even if we reject God or miss the mark like the Pharisees. Jesus still longed to gather everyone together. Remember that Jesus laid down his life for whole world. He died to save us from sin and death.

Second, maybe you are getting weary of standing up for justice or living out God's mission of love for the neighbor. When you get weary... think of Jesus and his dedication to his mission. He was not deterred to take the easy way out.

Third, our salvation is not found in politicians, power, or popularity. It is simply found in the cross of Jesus Christ. It is found in weakness and rejection. There God was saving the world in the opposite of worldly power and domination. Thanks be to God for Jesus who longs for all to gather under his gracious wings of love and Justice.

Amen!