

“Jesus’ Sorrow”

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Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 13:31-35

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.” (Luke 9:51) Jesus is on a mission....come hell or high water, he was going to make it to Jerusalem. It was his destiny....it was why he was born.... ***“he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”*** On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was warned to stay away for his own good. Today’s Gospel reading: Luke 13:31-35

³¹At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” ³²He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ ³⁴Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God!

Can you believe it.....Pharisees came to warn Jesus that Herod was out to get him? Pharisees have gotten such a bad rap many probably assume that this group of Pharisees were trying to trick Jesus....maybe double cross him or mess with his plan to go to Jerusalem. But try this on for size.....some Pharisees were friends of Jesus. Remember Jesus dined with Pharisees... ..Pharisee Nicodemus had a late night theological discussion with Jesus and ...Pharisee Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus’ body from the cross and made arrangements for Jesus to be laid to rest in an unused tomb. I think those who came to warn Jesus were friends who were genuinely concerned for his safety! Let’s hear a positive word for the Pharisees!

But Jesus will not be detoured. He is, after all, on a mission. So he tells his Pharisee friends to give that “fox,” Herod, a message. Remind that “fox” of the good work I am doing and let him know that I am coming to Jerusalem, **“because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.”** Because Jesus knew his mission ended in Jerusalem, he was not going to be scared away by Herod who was cunning like a fox and who had recently ordered the beheading of John the Baptist.

Jesus knew Jerusalem was a dangerous place for prophets but he also knew Jerusalem was why he was born. We can almost hear the grief and sorrow in Jesus’ heart as he cries out, **“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”** This is known as Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem and Matthew (23:37-39) records the lament during the last week of Jesus’ life while he is in Jerusalem while Luke records it, as we have seen, while Jesus is on his journey to Jerusalem.

Luke also records a deeply moving passage of Jesus overlooking Jerusalem with great compassion, weeping with sorrow over the hard heartedness of Jerusalem. **“As Jesus came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, ‘If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.....’** (Luke 19:41, 42) A chapel commemorates the traditional site on the Mount of Olives where Jesus is said to have wept over Jerusalem. The name of this chapel is ***Dominus Flevit***, which literally means, in Latin, **“the Lord wept.”** To symbolize what occurred on or near this site, the chapel was fashioned in the shape of a teardrop. (*show slide*)

One of the most remarkable features is its arch-shaped picture window, purposely situated behind the altar with an incredible view of the Old City that includes the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Then, almost as if accentuating the point of Jesus’ grief and sorrow over Jerusalem, one sees a beautiful mosaic of a hen and her chickens decorating the bottom of the altar. (*show slide*)

This mosaic is a picture of what never happened in the holy city. It is a mosaic of a white hen with a golden halo around her head. Her red comb resembles a crown, and her wings are spread wide to shelter the pale yellow chicks that crowd around her feet. There are seven of them, with black dots for eyes and orange dots for beaks. They look happy to be under the protection of mother hen. The hen looks ready to spit fire if anyone comes near her little chicks.

Jesus said, ***“How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings....”*** The love of Jesus is like a mother hen gathering her chicks under her wings and, if necessary, prepared to give her life for them. The image of a mother hen, with wings spread wide to envelop and protect her little chicks, is a beautiful picture of Christ’s mission of love to Jerusalem. Jesus said, ***“How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings....”*** But do you remember how he concluded his statement? Some very sad words indeed!***“and you were not willing!”*** This is Jesus’ grief and sorrow..... ***“and you were not willing!”*** With all my heart, Jesus laments, I have sought to gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you were not willing. If we have ever had another spurn our love, our good intentions or our sincere efforts to offer care then we have a slight understanding of our Lord’s grief and sorrow.

Why would people respond to Jesus’ love with fear, hatred, betrayal and even death? Why did the people of Jesus’ day reject his love? Why do people of our day reject his love? Why do we sometimes scatter like chicks and refuse the shelter of our Savior?

Could it be that we are scared of being vulnerable? In our moments of honesty we would all admit that we wear masks to hide certain real or perceived defects. When Jesus comes with his amazing love, could it be that we scatter like chicks thinking that we can hide from the One who sees into our deep heart...our true self. Are we afraid to expose our thoughts, motivations and secret desires? Maybe we are scared that Christ’s love will invite us to give up certain things we’d like to hang onto. A sin....a habit.....a characteristic with which we are quite comfortable but we know is not pleasing to God.

Could it be that we scatter like chicks because Christ's love reminds us that we are more precious than we would like to think of ourselves? If, indeed, Jesus' love for us is so passionate that he willingly faced betrayal, torture and death for us then our lives are worth much more than we dare to imagine. Could it be that we scatter because Christ's love might call us to lay down our lives for others thus messing with our comfortable lives? Could it be that we scatter because, if we accept Christ's, love we might risk being called into a new way of thinking....living....or giving? Jesus' love is scary....it forces us to reexamine our lives and commitments in the light of his love.

When we accept the love of Jesus....when we welcome him into every room of our lives and recognize that Jesus is for us and desires nothing but our very best then we are freed from our fear and unreservedly nestle under his wings. It all comes down to one response. ***Trust!***

Because of Jesus' love we trust him with all of our disappointments and failures.

Because of Jesus' love we trust him with all of our hopes and dreams.

Because of Jesus' love we trust him with our dark side....our secret temptations....our dysfunctions....our sin.

Because of Jesus' love we trust him with all of our doubts, questions and imponderables of life.

Because of Jesus' love we trust him with our finances, friends and family.

Because of Jesus' love we trust him with our gifts, goals and generosity.

Because of Jesus' love we trust him with our past, present and future.

Because of Jesus' love we trust him with our body, mind and soul.

Because of Jesus' love we ***trust him!***

Amen

