

Resolved and Tender

Luke 13:31-35

June 20, 2021

We're back in Luke's gospel today, so I'd invite you to turn in your Bibles to the 13th chapter of Luke and the final verses of the chapter, Luke 13:31 to 35. The last time we were here in this text, Jesus was warning the Jews about their complacency with regard to the Kingdom of God.

And he told them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door because one day that door will be shut, closed, fast, locked, and you will be stuck outside." And then he gave them a prophetic parable, a warning to, to further emphasize that warning.

And all the Jews are contemplating for themselves what it would be like for them, the Jews, to be shut out of the Kingdom, the one, the Kingdom that they thought was theirs by birthright, and to watch Gentiles take their place, sitting at the table with their forefathers, with all the prophets. Some Pharisees

arrive on the scene, with a rather alarming report. Look at verse 31. "At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, [said to Jesus], 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.'

"And he said to them, 'Go and tell that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.' O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and, and you would not. Behold your houses forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, "Blessed is he who comes, in the name of the Lord.'""

In that text, that short, that short passage. We see two remarkable features of our Lord's character. Two fascinating aspects of his character in this account. On the one hand, we see the Lord fixed on his goal. He's utterly undeterred in his resolve to fill, to fulfill his mission in obedience to God. Not

even a royal death threat will dissuade him from doing what he came there to do.

But then on the other hand. This harder quality, you might say, of firm determination. It fades from the scene and resolves into a softer hue to, to reveal an additional picture of Jesus Christ, his, his tone. As we see in the end of the text, it turns tender, sorrowful. As Jesus laments over the future of the people that he had come to save. So we see, tough and tender. Hard and soft. Firm and gentle.

And these are not contradictory aspects of his nature, so that Jesus is some kind of an enigma. They are contrasting qualities, to be sure, but they are in perfect union with one another. They find perfect expression in the perfect man. And the more we grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ with the more of those same qualities, contrasting qualities are going to unify and clarify and harmonize in us as well. And that's what we want to see in the text this morning. And to learn from the Lord, was, as we see his firmness and also his gentleness, as we see what is hard and then what is soft.

This is what he's modeling for us. And this is, by the way, both for both men and women. This is what maturity of Christian character looks like. Firm and inflexible in the resolve to obey God no matter what, even in the threat of death. But also soft and tender, in compassion toward sinful people.

In my view, I think this is part of what makes marriage such a glorious and sanctifying institution. Men, tend, I should say tend, toward firmer resolve. We can see men that are exceptions to that, but on the most part, men tend toward firm resolve, toward harder qualities. Women tend toward softer qualities like compassion, mercy, but together, men and women in, in a marriage, they learn to appreciate those qualities in one another, and they mature in a sense toward one, one another, growing in Christian maturity together.

That's as it should be. That's by design. One can grow in maturity, and those qualities, apart from the institution of marriage, I mean, Jesus Christ is our perfect example for that, right? Both aspects of the heart and the soft qualities, resolved in him.

But regardless of our situation, or our status, all Christians are to pursue these qualities. Firm and inflexible in resolve to obey God, no matter what. But also soft and tender and compassion toward sinful people. Seeing them, through the eyes of mercy. That is what we see in our Lord in this text. In this account, that's what we hope to grow in as well.

So two points for today. We'll start with the backbone, that hard, rigid structure. First point, number one, firm in submission to God's authority. Firm in submission to God's authority, point number one. Jesus is firm and inflexible in his resolve of obedience. He is firm and inflexible in his submission to God's authority to fulfill God's will, no matter what the contingency, no matter what the situation, no matter what the circumstance. No matter what, the threat. In his example, as always, becomes our mandate.

In verse 31, Luke connects this section with the previous context, telling us that the Pharisees arrived at that very hour. OK, so this is happening right after Jesus warned the crowd, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. Enter now, don't wait." And right is there thinking about that command and

the prophetic parables that further illustrated what it would be like to be caught outside the Kingdom, at that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here for Herod wants to kill you."

So whatever thoughtful contemplation is happening among the crowd at that time, it's interrupted by this, this breaking news. Nothing like a death threat to break the silent reflection about a narrow door. Nothing like an immediate danger, to allay any concern about future reward and loss. This is stealing the attention away from thinking about spiritual realities. Redirecting the mind to temporal matters about physical safety and whatnot.

Isn't that often the case with us? You're thinking about something, you're contemplating, and all of a sudden an e-mail comes in, totally disrupts your concentration. Some news flashes across your phone and whatever good intention you had about meditating and ruminating on eternal realities and unseen things, all of a sudden you're trapped back in the here and now. Usually it's something, in a, a, a very short news cycle that's

here and gone and you wonder why is it that I do that? It's pretty typical, isn't it?

So this interruption, it's introduced a, a little test, a subtle test really, of, of Jesus' resolve, a test of his messianic credibility. What will Jesus do at this point? Will, he who claims to have the authority to open and close the door to the Kingdom, shutting people out of it, to admit and decline entrance into the Kingdom of God, will he at this news turn tail and run?

As we think about this report from the Pharisees, we, we do wonder how we should see it. I mean, is this report a lie or are the Pharisees to be taken at their word? Are they telling the truth? Is this a credible threat and a friendly warning from the Pharisees, or is this just another ruse on their part? If it's true, what are we to make of the Pharisees coming from Herod with this warning? Are they in league with Herod? What's their motive here?

First of all, this is a credible threat. Jesus takes them at their word. He responds to them as if they give a true

report. And so that's how we should take it, as well, as a credible threat. Herod Antipas really did want to kill Jesus. Herod Antipas is the Tetrarch who ruled over Galilee and Perea, and he is no stranger to violence. It was Herod Antipas, you may remember, who imprisoned and beheaded John the Baptist. And so threatening to kill Jesus is not beyond this guy. It really does fit his character.

And there's a point in Her, in Herod's life where he is intrigued by Jesus and maybe even a bit frightened, spooked. Reports of Jesus' power made him think that Jesus might be John the Baptist come back to life, risen from the dead to haunt him. So he's curious about Jesus. He wants to see that miraculous power for himself to confirm. Is this really true? See if his superstitious concerns are, are valid.

But as time goes by, and as the appeal of Jesus grows among the people in Herod's constituency, his territories, he increasingly viewed Jesus as a political problem. Herod and the political party that took his name, the Herodians, they saw Jesus as just another Galilean instigator, someone who stirred

up the people, someone who turned them away from, from paying their taxes and being good citizens.

They saw Jesus as not just merely another Galilean instigator. Those could be dealt with, but he was a very powerful one. One who was purported to do miraculous have miraculous power. He was very influential. His teaching was influential. Riveting the people, holding their attention. So that's, that's really what joins Harry's interests with the interests of the Pharisees. They also saw Jesus as a problem to be solved, a voice to be silenced, a threat to be neutralized.

These two groups, the Pharisees, the Herodians, they, historically, they hated one another. They opposed each other's agenda on virtually every issue. But here they came together, forming an unlikely but mutually beneficial expedient pragmatic alliance. To get rid of Jesus, one aim, get rid of Jesus.

So to scare Jesus out of Perea, with this death threat, that satisfies the Herodians' interests, he's, he's no longer a political problem for Herod Antipas if he gets out of Perea. And to scare Jesus out of Perea and into Judea, closer to Jerusalem,

where the Sanhedrin has authority, well, that satisfies the Pharisees' religious interests.

Pharisees don't want to see Jesus die, like John the Baptist died, only to become another hero of the people, the Pharisees see Jesus as a false Messiah. They see him as stealing the affections of the ignorant masses, dividing people's loyalties, disrupting their allegiance to them. Really, he, he supplanted their own place of influence over the people. So they want to see Jesus out of Perea, and they want to see him dead, but not in Perea. They want to see him dead in Judea, in Jerusalem.

They wanna see him in Jerusalem falling under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin. They want him brought up on blasphemy charges. They're hoping for an official decision from that official body, the Sanhedrin, the 70 rulers, elders over Israel. They want him condemned by an official trial before an assembled body of authority, one that was universally respected, universally regarded.

So the decision of the Sanhedrin, that would go a long way in persuading the people that this really is a false Messiah because after all, 70 elders couldn't be wrong. Also, the Sanhedrin had sway with the Roman governor. They themselves didn't have authority at this time in Judea to put anybody to death, but the Roman governor did, and so an official decision, from this official body, would ensure the execution of the death sentence. So that's the Pharisees play here, to scare Jesus out of Perea, into Judea, into Jerusalem, to trap him under the power of the Sanhedrin.

So is this a credible threat? Yeah, it is. Are the Pharisees being friendly here? No. Is this a ruse? Well, it's not a ruse in the sense, that it's false, it's not a trick in a sense, but it is a ploy. They are in league with Herod, they have come from him. They have brought this report. So it's not a trick, but it is a ploy to scare Jesus out of Perea, into Judea, into Jerusalem, and arrest him for blasphemy.

In response, notice what Jesus does here, or better maybe what, what Jesus does not do. He does not send any of his disciples to go and verify or falsify the report. He doesn't

change his itinerary. He doesn't do anything to mitigate the threat. He doesn't even question the Pharisees, doesn't seem to care how they learned about the threat. He doesn't try to show their associations before, with Herod Antipas and the Herodians. He doesn't try to discredit them in front of the crowd.

He says nothing at all to test and expose their motives. Instead, he takes them at face value, takes them at their word. His response shows he maintains his resolve. He's utterly unmoved, unconcerned, about the report. He is undeterred in his submission to God's will. Verse 32, he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finished my course.'"

Basically he's saying, "I'm staying. It's kind of comical how Jesus treats the Pharisees here. They've come as emissaries from Herod Antipas. They bear a message from that king, that's intended to frighten Jesus. So not only is he, unaffected and unconcerned about the report itself, he very calmly takes them on their head and turns their little heads around, and he winds them up like little toys and he sends them back with his

message. He commandeers these people and he uses them for his own purposes. Is he Lord or what?

"Go tell that fox." That's not a compliment. By calling him a fox, Jesus may have been referring to Herod as a sly, crafty, deceiver, one who takes his advantage by, by cunning. Certainly Herod was that. Frederic Godet sees, sees the term that way, fox instead of he says, "Instead of issuing a command as it becomes a king, Herod degrades himself to play the part of the intriguer. Not daring to show the teeth of a lion, he uses the tricks of a fox."

Certainly that was true of Antipas. But the epithet could also refer to someone who thought of himself as a lion. He viewed himself as a lion. He looked in the mirror and saw a roaring lion. But what everybody else saw looking into the mirror, was just nothing but a little fox. Thought of himself as a political lion, even others, the Pharisees, saw himself as a powerful, influential figure in the land.

But in reality Jesus is applying this term to him because he sees him as a man of minor significance on the world stage.

Minor significance even in his own territory, where Jesus is. In other words, Herod may have seen his death threat as the roar of a lion. The Pharisees certainly did.

Jesus only heard a very soft, faint meow. So these are the schemes of an insignificant fox in Jesus' eyes. Herod has no power to make Jesus fear. No power, no authority to command his allegiance, to call for his submission. Jesus won't, won't change his itinerary, not even for a moment. He's not persuaded, he's not dissuaded, he's not frightened at all. He remains firm, resolute, undeterred in his mission. And so the message back to him is: "Shhh, I'm working here. I'm working. Go tell that fox. Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow. And the third day I finished my course."

Jesus is conveying several things and sending that message back to Herod. First of all, his message Jesus message back to Herod can produce, hopefully produce, conviction in Herod's conscience. Think about it. Jesus is providing, in Perea, an incredible level of practical help to the constituents of Herod's Kingdom. I mean, casting out demons, performing cures, this is free and very effective health care. Psychological del,

deliverance for all those, those demon possessed crazies. They don't make good constituents in the land. And no need for endless psychotherapy sessions, where they gotta pay out of pocket and drain the bank account. I mean, immediate deliverance demon gone clear mind. Good voter.

Also physical healing for all who are sick, regardless of malady, everything, one hundred percent covered. And you don't have to pay anything. No, nothing coming out of your deductible. Cured by power, divine power, not costing anyone a dime. In light of this unearned, unsolicited, from Herod, the social benefit that Jesus is giving to Herod, giving to the people of Perea, all absolutely free. It's only a fool or an absolute tyrant who'd want to banish such an effective, beneficent miracle worker out of his territory? What in the world? The thought, this message back to him, should prick Herod's conscience. Make him stop for just a second and consider, wait a minute, who is this guy?

Which brings up a second aspect of the message that Jesus sends, and that's an evangelistic one. As I said back in Luke 9, 7-9. We know from what Luke wrote there, that Herod knew Jesus

is a remarkable figure. So much so he hoped to see him. He heard the reports. He is curious. Gospel news was coming to him. Members of his own household were bringing him the news of what was happening. Herod Antipas was surrounded by gospel witnesses, starting with John the Baptist. So intrigued by John the Baptist, he wanted to hear the message.

What he heard from John is, "You can't have your, your brother's wife". So prophetic, a condemnation of his actions. That he heard about John's ministry. He heard that John was pointing to Jesus as the Messiah, as the Christ. He heard, he heard more and more reports coming to him from the people of his land about who this Jesus is, what he was teaching, he was hearing, his, his land was saturated, Galilee and Perea, saturated with the gospel.

Joanna, one of, one of the figures in his household, the wife of Herod's steward, his household manager. Luke, 8:3, says she was one of Jesus' disciples. Can't help but think that a lot of her message, and a lot of her witness came back into the household. Manahen, a man who was a lifelong friend of Herod, he

became a Christian, eventually joined the Antioch Church, ministered there as one of the prophets and teachers, Acts 13:1.

And Herod Antipas had manifold witnesses, various witnesses to who Jesus is, and now, with this supernatural power of God active in and through Jesus the Messiah, himself, in his territory. And now he's sending him a message about it, a direct message. Here's his chance to repent and believe the gospel, to submit, to bow before Christ's authority, saying. "I'm not a king, I'm a sinner, you're the king." The power John the Baptist told you about Jesus saying, "Hey, that's my ministry, that's me, that's what I'm doing." Time to repent and believe, Herod.

So there's a message coming back meant to prick his conscience, meant to call him to attention. There's a message coming back that's intended to, to point him to the gospel, being taught in and around his country that, he should listen to and believe. But there's an immediate reason, which has to do with the, exactly what is going on here and the immediate reason, Jesus, the third thing, Jesus wants Herod to know why he's not gonna be moved, even by the threat of death, to do anything different. He submits to a higher authority. He's not

gonna bow to this illegitimate use of power, and it's illegitimate because it's designed with one intent, to threaten Jesus, to intimidate him, to frighten him, to single him out. Is this just? It's not just.

What is he trying to intimidate him into? Disobedience. To throw him off track from what he has been called and commissioned to do. So this message back to Herod really puts Herod's power into perspective. I mean, Jesus fears God. He serves God. Herod, he's only got the power over death. He's only got destructive power. That's what he's using here. He's trying to wield destructive power, threaten Jesus.

Jesus said back in Luke 12:4 and 5, "Don't fear someone who can kill the body, and after that, that there's nothing else they can do. I'll tell you who to fear. Fear the one who, after he's killed your body, now he can take your soul and kill it in hell. Yeah, I tell you, I fear him," Jesus said. That's who Jesus submits to. The one who has all power, all authority. He serves God, he serves God's interest. He submits to God's authority.

That's the authority, by the way, that's manifests in these miracles, which is why he again, he points them out. Power to cast out demons. Power to heal people. Obviously Jesus submits to a greater authority. There is a greater power working in and through him. And he wants Herod's, Herod to know. He wants the Pharisees to know, "I am undeterred. Though you threaten me, I am undeterred. I am following God's agenda. I'm on his itinerary, not yours. Today, tomorrow, the 3rd day, I obey the commission I received from my father, which is this, Luke 4:18 Jesus said there and he continues to operate under this commission, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he [who's that? God] has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, he [who's that? God], God has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. [Oppressed by tyrants like you.] To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'"

So, threats of intimidation by a little fox. From an arbitrary authority. They're not gonna turn his attention away from obeying his commission. "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today, tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course."

Today, tomorrow, the third day, he's not giving a precise itinerary back to Herod. He's not, that's not a specific reference to clock time or calendar time. It's more like an idiomatic expression that refers to a definite period of time, but also a complete period of time. Today, tomorrow, the next day, refers to, it has a start and a middle and a finish to it. So that's the time I need to finish my course. The verb there, I'm, I finished my course, I'm finishing really. It's a present tense verb *teleioo*, from which we get the, the word teleology. Study of God's design. Study of God's purposes.

This is God's design for him. These are God's purposes, working in and through him, to do his will every single day. No matter if it's called today, no matter if it's called tomorrow or even a third day, I am finishing my course. I will not be dissuaded, I will not be taken off track from fulfilling God's purposes for my time here.

Let's take a moment. Just pause briefly, having learned some of that, to, to think about this. Obviously, we're not charged with a Messianic mission like Jesus was. He knew the time of his death. He knew what was going to happen in the

future. He knew prophetically, it was written about him in the Old Testament, you're going to die of a crucifixion in Jerusalem. They're gonna pierce you, they're gonna pierce your hands and feet your side. He knew what was gonna happen to him. He knew when it was gonna happen.

We're not like that. The apostles weren't like that. There are times when threats of death were came to the apostles in the book of Acts and they got out of Dodge. They saw it as a good time to be called to another region to go and evangelize there. And sometimes the Lord works that way, sometimes he wants us to stand firm and die, and other times he wants us to move on. So I'm not saying that Jesus' pattern here, of just staying fixed and doing his course, is necessarily by immediate transfer, it now becomes the pattern for our life. Sometimes we need to leave, sometimes that's what wisdom dictates. There are significant differences between Jesus' mission and our mission, but the principle is the same.

And for us, we gotta ask that question. What does it mean to follow Jesus' resolve? What does it mean to submit to God's authority here and now, in our time, in this place? Well. It

means we will not be dissuaded. Even by the threat of death from doing what God has called us to do, from obeying the commission from our Lord, who is Christ. He gave to us in Matthew 28. We have a mandate from our Lord to make disciples, which involves us evangelizing, which involves us baptizing, which involves us teaching.

So they cannot command us, there is no authority in Heaven or on Earth, that can command us to stop evangelizing, to stop baptizing, to stop teaching. They can command us to do that. They cannot bind our consciences. That is an unlawful order, anytime it comes. They can't silence us. They can't push us out of the public square, force us to practice our religion in private only. Instead, we broadcast it. We broadcast it boldly. We preach the truth. Proclaim it.

The context in which we make disciples, is in and through the local church, which is why we also have a mandate from our Lord to meet regularly, to meet weekly, on the Lord's Day, to equip the saints for this disciple making ministry. So we are not the threats to public health and safety, they are. They are willing to ruin the land, just like Herod Antipas was, being

willing to drive the Messiah who was giving free healthcare, to his constituents, to drive him out of his territory. We too are performing a public service.

How are we doing that? By preaching the gospel. By ministering to the immaterial aspect of man, saving souls through the proclamation of the truth of the gospel. We're not going to move. We're not going anywhere. We won't bow even if the threats come to our life, to our property, to our livelihood, to our health and safety. Like our Lord before us, whose example becomes our mandate, we too remain fixed. Firm in submission to God's authority.

And they're gonna be people who accuse us of being hard headed, not loving our neighbors. And that is a lie. Take it for what it is. We may seem hard. It's because we are firm in submission to God's authority. We're firm and inflexible when it comes to obeying the commission that Christ has given us to obey. We don't modify his commission and make it fit the intimidations that come to us from the powers that be.

Now, having said that, firm submission to God does not make us hard people. No matter what they may accuse us of, let that not be the reality, that we are hard people, with hard hearts. Let us never be acrimonious or pugnacious. Argumentative. Contentious. That is unbecoming of Christians. Whenever you see someone justifying contentiousness in the spirit of pugnaciousness, wanting to get into fights everywhere, and they claim they're standing for the truth, that is not submission to God's authority. That's cowardice disguised as courage.

What's may seem to others like a steel spine is nothing more than very brittle bone. Dead and lifeless, no blood flowing through it, it's ready to snap. Its submission to the whole council of God that we're firmly fixed upon, not just part of it. And that is what gives life. That's what makes us not hard hearted people, but soft hearted people. Kind. Compassionate towards sinners, merciful in our thinking.

And that's, brings us to a second point number two. We're soft in compassion over man's depravity. The first point, we're firm and submission to God's authority, and the second point, we're soft in compassion over man's depravity. The first part of

the message that Jesus sent back to Herod, verse 32, basically it's, "Quiet. I'm working here."

A stone softens, though, in verse 33. As Jesus gives the reason that Herod is not gonna be executing any death sentence on him. And he was, he speaks, you can see, in that term, "Nevertheless," in verse 33 there's a pivot there. He's talking about a sad, sad irony. It's one that breaks his heart. Verse 33, "Nevertheless." This is all back in message back to Herod. "Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following. For it cannot be, [and you can almost hear a sigh coming out of his mouth here]. Cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem." In other words, "I'm staying in your territory to finish the job, to do the work that I came to do. But rest assured, it's not for long. I'll soon be out of your hair."

Why is that? Because it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem. The verb there conveys this bitter agony and, or bitter irony, I should say. He's basically saying, look, it's impossible. It's unthinkable for a prophet to perish outside Jerusalem. He'll never do for me to face execution

anywhere else but Jerusalem. Why? Because that city is the graveyard of all the prophets.

Once again, the expression today, tomorrow, the day following, not a pre, precise itinerary. It's an idiom about a fixed period of time. One with a beginning, a middle, and an end. So it expresses fulfillment. It expresses completion. After he fulfills. After he completes his work, yes, he's going to move on.

And when he says that he, he conveys a sense of divine necessity, he is compelled by conscience before God to move on because he says I must go on my way. Like Herod, "Even if I wanted to stay in your territory after my work is finished here, hang around a bit, gain a following, be a political problem for you. It's not gonna happen because I'm under different orders. I'm under a different obligation. My mind, my conscience is bound to God and he is moving me on."

Verb I must, the verb, little verb, day. It speaks of divine necessities compelled by God's will. He's in even here in constant submission to God's authority, God's purpose for his

life. In the same submission that keeps him in Herod's territory for a time, that is the same submission that takes him away from Herod's territory and keeps him moving toward the culmination of his life in Jerusalem. Keeps moving, because of a theological necessity. He is a servant from start to finish, to God's will he follows God's timing. He has an appointment to meet in Jerusalem, to die in, of all places, the Holy City. And that's what comes to mind as he thinks about the purported holiness of Jerusalem. And the unholiness of its character.

He has a lament that comes out of this depravity of the City of Jerusalem, and it ought not to be, comes out in verse 34, "O Jerusalem. Jerusalem. [you can hear mourning here]. The city that kills the prophets, it stones, those who are sent to it. Ohh, how often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. You were not willing. He holds your houses forsaken, I tell you. You will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" "

Twice in his ministry, Jesus said this almost verbatim again in Matthew 23. First is here in Perea. It's very close to

his journey into, his final journey into Jerusalem, but not yet, he says at first in Perea, and the second time he says it is in Jerusalem. And that's what Matthew records Matthew 23:37-39. It happens after his triumphal entry.

But here at this point, as Jesus gives this lament, he's not in Jerusalem. He's in the territory of Herod Antipas. He's in Perea. So. Who's this for? Who is his target audience here as he speaks out this lament? Certainly the crowd is listening to him, but targeted are these Pharisees. These are the ones who wanna scare him out of Perea, into Judea, into the jurisdiction of Jerusalem, to stand trial before the Sanhedrin. Why? Because that's the holy place.

So in verses 32 to 33 are Jesus' message back to Herod Antipas. These two verses, verses, 34 to 35. This message is for these Pharisees and the crowd, but it's targeted to these Pharisees. Because the end of their, their end game is to get him there under holy jurisdiction. He's saying, it's not holy. It's unholy. Far from being a paragon of righteousness and a bastion of justice, Jerusalem is a city of blood. The city of

murder. It's got a recorded history. Of making martyrs out of God's servants.

And Jesus wants them to know, look, this cannot last. This will not last. Judgment is coming in, and Jesus here is deeply moved. He's feeling heartsick about this. He's got a deep sense of compassion for his people, the Jews. That explains the repetition there. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem." It's got a Middle Eastern ring to it. It's kind of like David Mourning over Absalom, "Absalom O my son Absalom," crying out over and over.

This is Jesus doing this here. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, my people, my people. It's a depraved city. And all of that depravity is covered over by religious hypocrisy, which makes it even more vile. City that kills the prophets, stones those sent to it, kills, stones. Those are present tense participles, so. Those participles are showing this is this religiously justified murder, characterizes the city itself. Fernando Ortega wrote a song "City of Sorrows," and he captures the sense here in a line that says, "O, Jerusalem, City of Thrones. The blood of your people still darkens the stones."

That's the graphic imagery there, and it's so true. The reference here to the prophets, kills the prophets. Looks backward, to the martyrs of the past. Those who are sent. That covers all time, past, present and future. Jesus is one of those who was wsent. The word sent, that verb *apostello*, from which we get the word apostle. Jesus is looking ahead with the use of that word. He's looking ahead as well. He's anticipating even more bloodshed in this holy city, more violence. He sees more martyrs in the future of Jerusalem.

And yet, even as he's calling them out for their sin, through all the sin, Jesus sees beyond all that depravity. And this is this, is, this is God in him. It's so clear. He is son of man and also son of God. He is deity. He is God in the flesh. Because only God can look through all of that garbage, all that depravity, all that dark, bloody, murder, and violence and religiously justified, hypocritical, self-righteous as they stone the prophets. Only Jesus can look through all that and have compassion.

He sees sinners for what they are, no doubt wicked, depraved, ugly. But he also knows that the children of

Jerusalem, those who are taught in the city. He knows they're under the influence of an ignorance zeal. Fanned into flame by these, self-righteous hypocrites, the scribes and the Pharisees. Ministered to by false shepherds by these lying, unbelieving priests, elders. The religious authorities of Jerusalem, so his heart is full of compassion for them, he says, "How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing."

The translation in the ESV obscures just a bit the contrast that we need to see, because there's two *u*, uses here of the verb *thelo*, the verb for want, desire, will. Jesus used it twice, once to refer to him his own willing. And once, to refer to their willing or lack of willingness, he says on the one hand, "How often I want it. This is what I wanted, this is what I desired, this is what I willed. I wanted to gather your children together, but on the other hand, your will would not permit it. You're not willing, you're not desiring, you're not wanting."

So there's two human wills that are portrayed here. Each one of these wills is acting out of a profoundly different human

nature. Two wills, two human natures. Nature produces desire. Desire produces wanting. Wanting leads to willing, and willing leads to action. Nature, desire, wanting, willing, action.

So Jesus as the Christ, in his perfect, sinless, righteous human nature. Unspoiled by sin, untainted by any unrighteousness whatsoever, his human nature, he acted consistently out of his perfectly righteous human nature. His nature produced the desire to care for these people. In spite of their sin. His desire led to wanting to gather them together. And his wanting led to willing. Willing led to action. Action defines his entire ministry.

We have it all recorded in the gospels. What he desired, what he wanted, what he what he wanted to see for them. is the imagery here is so tender. It, it pictures a very common sight. If you spend any time in the, in, in nature, mother hen gathering or fuzzy little chicks under the safety of her wings, you can see that in farm imagery. You can see it out in the wild. You can see it in all birds. You can see them nurturing, caring for their fuzzy little offspring and, and, and pulling them under the safety of their wings.

God's often pictured that way in the Old Testament, and just that way is showing compassion for his people. Like a mother bird carrying for her brood, Deuteronomy 32:11, "God is like an eagle stirring up his nest. He flutters over its young, spreads out its wings, catches them, bears them on its pinions." All the care that a mother eagle would show to its offspring. And pictures all throughout the Psalms as well, taking refuge under his wings. Same thing Boaz said to Young Ruth the Moabitess, former Pagan, now a believer in the God of Israel. Yahweh, he says, "God bless you because you have taken refuge under the wings of the God of Israel."

Isaiah 31:5 "As birds hovering so the Lord of hosts will protect Jerusalem. He will protect and deliver it. He will spare and rescue it." That's what Jesus wants, for them. And again, his willing wasn't, wasn't, wasn't stagnant. It wasn't static. It didn't just sit passively and do nothing. It resulted in action. Jesus teaching, his evangelistic efforts, his healing, his exorcism ca, casting out demons. The forgiveness he extended to people? His works stand for themselves, don't they?

Irrefutable evidence of exactly what he has said here. How often he's longed to gather Jerusalem's children as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. What he's saying here? He's saying a storm is coming. Trouble is coming. You're gonna face problems and you're gonna need me. The refuge I provide, he wants to protect them from that storm. He wants to care for them through it. Kind intention of his will.

It meets the resistance of another will at the end of verse 34, the will of depraved sinners, "And you were not willing." Jerusalem's children did not want to be gathered underneath his wings. Again their nature, a fallen, sinful nature produces desire. Desire produces wanting. Wanting leads to willing. Willing leads to action. The Jerusalem's children, unbelieving, unregenerate, they have acted out of their fallen sinful nature.

From depraved nature comes nothing but depravity, depraved desire, depraved will, and depraved, depraved action. They were completely depraved from start to finish. Depraved in their nature, led to depravity in their desire, led to depravity and what they willed and what they will not to do. It led to depravity also in what they did, namely kill the prophets, stone

those sent. Led to their action of rejecting Jesus in his ministry.

So of course they're not willing to be gathered in by Christ. No wonder they rejected the refuge that he offered. As the Christ of God, Jesus embraced this tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. And as the Christ of God, we can see as a man, truly man, instead of this tying him up in some kind of philosophical paradox that God is sovereign over salvation and man is responsible to respond to God's offer salvation. Instead of his tying him up and freezing him and freezing his love and paralyzing his action, listen.

The reality of God's sovereignty of salvation joined together with the human responsibility to repent and to believe. Those realities didn't leave him stagnant and lifeless. It ignited his compassion for sinners. It drove his action. He isn't hardened against them. Saying, "Well and God is sovereign," irresponsible so. Good luck with that. Those hearts.

His heart is soft toward them. He sees the depth of their depravity. He sees the consequences of remaining fixed in

depravity, beginning in verse 30:35. Behold, your house is forsaken. Where does that come from? It's an allusion to Jeremiah 22:5. Jeremiah says, "If you will not obey these words, [he's recording God here], I swear by myself, declares the Lord. This House shall become a desolation." Forsaken, the verb, *aphiemi*.

To be abandoned, to be released, to be let go, that refers to God's action. That's what God does with Jerusalem, abandons Jerusalem. As Matthew records what Jesus said after the triumphal entry, these same words, his account refers to the effect there. "See, your house is left to you, desolate." That's the effect of God abandoning you is to leave you desolate.

That's the word *eremos*. The word we use and translate often is a barren desert. The graphic, vivid picture, of what Jerusalem is to become. Jesus becomes even more explicit about the judgment to befall the city of Jerusalem later on in Luke. In fact, you can turn over there just a few pages to your right, Luke 19. Luke 19 and the end of the chapter, verse 41. As he's entering into, Jerusalem and coming near, again, he wants to protect them from this coming storm. And the storm he sees

immediately on the horizon is a preview of a further eschatological storm that's coming. But here, the storm he sees on the horizon is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman General Titus, in AD 70.

He wants to protect them. He wants to gather them together, provide them refuge and shelter, but they are not willing. Look at Luke 19:41. "When he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, and he said, 'Would that you, even you had known on this day the things that make for peace, but now they're hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. They will not leave one stone upon another in you because you did not know the time of your visitation.'"

Josephus was there. Jesus spoke this around AD 33. Less than 40 years later, AD 70, this is happening in real time. Josephus is there. He's an eyewitness to these events. All of them happened exactly as Jesus said this summary is. Spot on. Siege happened in early April. Which is during the time of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So that meant the

city is, thronged with pilgrims that have come from all over the Roman Empire, traveling back for one of the three festival times in Israel's calendar.

And the city, though it was surrounded by the Romans, they'd been fighting a war around there. In fact, Josephus describes them as marching on the dead bodies of the, of the people, that they'd killed thousands and thousands of people. The Roman soldiers were just desensitized to the bloodshed and the smell. Cities surrounded by the Romans, General Titus.

Wisely, shrewdly, he allowed all those pilgrims who visited to go into the city to, to enter into the city, celebrate the feasts and joy. But he wouldn't let him leave. It was a tactic designed to use up the city's resources. To starve the people of Jerusalem. More people with the same number of resources, use up resources quickly. Hopefully the siege is over.

End of April, we can go home. That's what General Titus is thinking. Well, the Jews, true to stubborn form, did not submit. Di, Titus, deployed his soldiers around the city to cut down the trees surrounding the city and the circum, circumference of the

city so they could build siege works, build machines to assault the city, to penetrate the wall, to penetrate the gates. And Josephus says that Titus cut down the trees for 90 furlongs around the entire city, one for a long 220 yards. 90 furlongs. That's 11.25 miles. Around the entire city. You can imagine how that ravished the landscape, leaving an absolutely barren desolate, just as Jesus said.

So Josephus writes, he says, "Truly. The very view itself of the country was a melancholy thing. For those places which were before adorned with trees and pleasant gardens. We're now become a desolate country every way and it's trees were all cut down. Nor could any foreigner that had formally seen Judea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city and now saw it, as a desert, but now lament and mourns sadly, it's so great a change, for the war had laid all the signs of beauty quite waste." End that quote there.

But famine became so great in the city. Starvation decimated the population. Those who survived were driven mad with hunger. They committed abominable acts. Josephus describes those who were starving as mad dogs reeling against the doors of

houses like drunken men. Bands of robbers were going through the city, stealing from widows, stealing from mothers. Taking their children from them, for food. Josepha says this. "Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable that it obliged them to chew everything while they gathered such things, as the most sordid animals would not judge so vile animals wouldn't even touch this kind of food. They gathered them and endured to eat them, nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes, and the very leather which belonged to their shields. They pulled off and nod. The very wisps of old hay became food."

Following from that unspeakable acts of atrocity of their own people against their own people, mothers against their children, cannibalism. Mothers giving up their children participating in the act again, mad with hunger. There is no recovering from that. You don't get over that. Think about the Holocaust in short memory of our own time. And how what a mark that left on Europe. So what's happened here? That's a greater degree.

Those who survived the famine, and by the way, a fire burned through the city. The Romans set, burn through the city,

burn the temple. Those who survive famine and fire the Romans slaughtered without mercy, without remorse. Roman soldiers hearing the reports of what the Jews were doing to one another. It incited their anger even more. I mean, they were tired of killing. So much kill, killing had been going on. They wanted to just walk away. But when they heard those reports, it incited them to even more anger. Any able bodied young people were enslaved. The rest they sent to territories in the empire to become victims and gladiatorial games.

Oh and Jesus comment in Luke 19:44, they will not leave one stone upon another in you. That happened literally, just as Jesus said, because the Roman soldiers were greedy for plunder. And Josephus writes even though the city and the temple were burning on fire, even though Titus and even though Caesar himself tried to restrain the soldiers from entering into the blaze. He says, quote "The hope of plunder induced many to go on, as having this opinion that all the places within were full of money. Seeing that all around about it was made of gold." End quote. So, "Not one stone left upon another." They're looking for treasure.

According to what we read further in Luke 20, 21:20-24. What came in AD 70, as I said, it's just a preview of end time judgments coming upon Jerusalem at the end of the age when the ti, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And this, is why, again backing up, going, you can go back to Luke 13 now. Just backing up and thinking about this scene. This is why death threats from a puppet king is not gonna bother Jesus in one iota. This is why, conniving machinations of Pharisees in league with the Herodians, doing little dirty backroom deals, don't trouble them at all.

They're minor, minor players on a big, big stage that God controls. Jesus knows the storm is brewing, divine judgments about the fall in the land and these people, they have no idea whatsoever. So as the Herodians and Pharisees engaged in their petty intrigues, Jesus looks beyond them. And he looks in compassion to lament for their children. "How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. But you were not willing, sadly. You didn't know the time of your visitation. And your children, the ones are gonna suffer for it."

Even in this word of judgment that he ends on, there's a note of hope. Not for his generation who has rejected and abandoned. They're gonna suffer. But he has hope for a future generation of Israel, the nation, verse 35, he says, "I tell you truly, truly, I say to you, that's the nature of this. He's affirming the truthfulness, the verity of what he says before he says it. You will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

Till the nation is regenerate. Until they're able to look back at Jesus and say, blessed is he. Their Messiah, who comes in the name of the Lord, they will not see him as he is. They will not perceive him in his glory. Until that day, until the Jews are converted, until they receive Jesus as their Messiah, they stand alone against the world. Pray for the predator surrounded by a hive of angry Hornets, bees coming at them from every direction, under no refuge at all, because they refuse the refuge of their Christ.

Do we not see this now in that land? The words, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." They come from a Messianic Psalm, which you can turn to, as we close in Psalm

118. Which we read earlier in the service. And as we read through just portions of this again, we realize that as Jesus interprets this Psalm, he interprets it as coming from the lips of future Israel. A regenerate Israel looking back spoken from the perspective of the end of the age.

These are the words that are going to usher in his return. His coming. As you know, Psalm 118 resounds for gratitude for the Lord's salvation. And it comes at a time of grave, seemingly inescapable danger, kind of like the danger of AD 70. Like the danger of Gentile nations one day that will encircle Jerusalem as birds of prey.

Look at, say, verse, starting in verse 7. Regenerate Israel, a future Israel, a future generation looks back and says, "The Lord is on my side as my helper. I shall not I I shall look and triumph on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. [That's what Jesus is saying to them. Take refuge in me. It's better to take refuge in the Lord, verse 9, than to trust in Princess]. All nations surrounded me, and in the name of the Lord I cut them off."

Jesus saying, "O that you listen. O that you'd repent now." But Jesus knows at some point in the future, Israel as a nation will learn the lesson that Jesus wanted them to learn at his first advent. They'll see him as God's refuge. They'll allow him to gather them together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. And what will be the turning point?

Look down to verse 22. "The stone that the builders rejected," who are the builders? They're the religious powers, the Sanhedrin, the powers of Jerusalem. They're the builders. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." The very foundation of the entire edifice is Jesus Christ. This is the Lord's doing, verse 23.

"It's marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us. We pray, O Lord, Oh Lord, we pray. Give us success. Blessed is who is he who comes in the name of the Lord." It's Frederic Godet who said "this cry of penitent Israel will bring them Isaiah down as the sigh of Israel, humbled and waiting for consolation, had led him to appear the first time, pointing to Isaiah 64:1."

So Jesus leaves the people, Luke 13. Leaves the Pharisees, leaves Herod as well, to contemplate the true message of Psalm 118. To get them to think. Whoever refuses to repent and believe now, will suffer all that's gonna come upon Jerusalem. And not only that, they'll be cast outside the Kingdom, standing outside a closed and locked door because they didn't strive to enter through the narrow door when Jesus told them to. The blessing, of salvation is for all those, and only those who say "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

What can we learn from this today? First, we never despair. We never lose hope, even in times of great sadness and great sorrow. Bad news does not deter us. Death threats do not trouble us. We remember that God is sovereign, not man. God always accomplishes his will. Remember that he is always good, always wise. What he does is always best. So we stay resolute. We stay firm in conviction, steadfast in submission to God's perfect will. That's the first thing we learned from this.

The second thing to learn from this, is we always want to keep the long view in mind. Not the snapshot, but keep the entire video in mind. Remember that Psalm 118 is the testimony

of a future Israel. They're regenerate. They're believing. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ, writing that Psalm. Those who reject now are gonna face terrible judgment, and so our heart is heavy with mercy for them. We sorrow for them. We're not hard hearted toward depraved sinners. We're soft hearted toward them. We hope that God will show mercy to them, just as he showed mercy to us.

And like Jesus, we also look up from the present sorrow. We keep the future triumph of God in mind. Because of that, nothing troubles us at all. We remain fixed and steadfast. Firm in resolve. Soft in compassion. So be firm in submission to God's authority. And let that firmness, that resolve, strengthen you, to be soft and compassion over the depravity you see all around you.

And especially don't do this, voting and political issues in our day. Don't let any of that stuff turn the mission field into your enemy. These people are voting the way they're voting because they're depraved. They put all their hope in this world. What is going on in the political stage here and now, that's all they've got. That is their heaven on earth they're trying to

build. We too, were once like them. So be soft and compassion toward him. Do God's will, God's way. When we do that, that shows compassion toward lost sinners, it points them to the only way of salvation which comes in Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Our Father, we want to thank you for your kindness to us in Christ, and thank you that though we were once lost and depraved and, heading for hell under your condemnation and wrath, by your grace, you saved us and lifted us up and made us steadfast in Christ. We thank you so much for his obedience. And for your grace by which we are accepted in the beloved.

We thank you that we have taken refuge by your grace, under your wings of compassion and concern. We thank you that we are, we have taken refuge under Christ, and his authority over us is care for us. We thank you that the Spirit provides for us. We thank you, Father. We pray that you would save many more. And save and sanctify many. We pray for even those among our number who need to hear this right now and need to know that they need to walk. Not taking your grace for granted. But living obediently, following Your lordship, completely unholy, we pray

that you would work in all hearts, even now. In Jesus name,
Amen.