
Address 7th April 2019 by Stephanie Gotze

Luke 13:31-35 New International Version (NIV) Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem

³¹ At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.”

³² He replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ ³³ In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

³⁴ “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. ³⁵ Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Introduction

In this story read to us this morning, Jesus says that He is like a mother hen who gathers her chicks under her wings.

Jesus as the caring Hen

It is a curious thing that Jesus uses the image of the mother hen to describe His love and care for His people. Hens are a little clumsy and clucky, aren't they? They're not very strong animals. As I read about chickens this week, I learned that they are, in fact, smart and wise, in all the ways that matter the most. I learned that chickens can anticipate things, and plan. I learned that they are capable of worrying about their children. I learned that, similar to humans, the brains of chickens are specially designed

The menacing fox

In this story, Jesus refers to King Herod as a fox. Foxes are cunning and clever. This is a good picture for us of what sin and temptation can look like. It can sneak up on us. We rarely wake up in the morning, planning already to do what is wrong. More often than not, we try to do what is right, but soon

enough, someone cuts us off in traffic, someone says something nasty about us, or someone has something nice which we want. Almost without us noticing, anger, unforgiveness, or envy have crept into our minds like a fox. But Jesus, like a caring mother hen, in His sacrifice on the cross, has laid down His life for us so that we can receive mercy and grace from God for our failings, for our mistakes, for our sins.

Fox, flood, fire and sacrifice

This image given to us in the reading this morning is in fact a very beautiful one. As I read more about hens this week, I learned that during times of danger, hens will go to extraordinary lengths to protect their children. This reminded me of the way selfless people, such as those in the emergency services, protect and risk themselves for others during times of danger. When faced with fire, heavy, dangerous rain, or an attack from a predator, a mother hen will cover her baby chicks with her body, shielding them from the flood, fire, or fox. Just like a mother hen, Jesus gave himself up for us on the cross. What a beautiful picture of Jesus sacrificial love. I also learned that mother hens cannot run around gathering up each of their chicks in times of danger. The chicks must run to her. We are like baby chicks, who must come to Jesus, whose sacrifice once for all upon the cross reconciles us to God.

The Kingdom of God

What is Jesus telling us in this passage about the Kingdom of God? He explains to us His way of love and sacrifice. We as the citizens of the Kingdom of God are called to follow Jesus' way of love and sacrifice. We are called to be courageous in the face of danger. Jesus, like a caring mother hen, with outstretched arms, like outstretched wings, for us on the cross, was sacrificed for our sake, rising again, victorious, on the third day. And we, like baby chicks, saved and protected because of His sacrifice, are now those who are here on earth, rebuilding after the fire, after the flood, after the attack. However, the Holy Spirit is always with us, helping us, guiding us and protecting us. Let's thank God for His sacrificial love for us, and share His love with this world.