

**Luke 13:31-35 (Second Sunday in Lent—Series C)**  
**“Gathering the Chicks”**  
**Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Enfield CT**  
**March 13, 2022**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our text is the Gospel lesson recorded in Luke 13:

<sup>31</sup>At that very hour, some of the Pharisees came and said to [Jesus], “Get away from here because Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup>But He said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I am casting out demons and performing healing today and tomorrow and on the third day I finish my goal.’”  
<sup>33</sup>Nevertheless, it is necessary for me to journey today and tomorrow and the next day because it is impossible that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem. <sup>34</sup>O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I have wanted to gather your children in the way that a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! Behold, your house is abandoned to you. But I say to you, you shall surely not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Why is it that people often resist help and care? Children will often do this with their parents. They will say things like, “I can do it by myself,” when they really can’t. Some parents figure the child is just exercising their independence, but it is really resistance to the care of the parent with the child saying, “I actually don’t need you right now,” when the reality is something quite different. How true this becomes when our small children grow into pre-teens and teenagers. During those challenging years of life, children will often demonstrate more blatant resistance to their parents, challenging house rules, pushing the limits of respect and self-control.

There was a story in the news several year’s back about a jobless man on a street corner. You’ve seen the type, holding signs that say, “Need help,” or “Will work for food.” A local business owner near that corner went out and offered the man a job at his business, no questions asked. The man said, “no thank you.” The business own tried again. Again, the man with the sign refused the owner’s help. It’s one of those moments when your jaw drops

and you think, "Wow! Is this for real?" Sadly, it is. People resist care and help, thinking that they can do alright by themselves. It's a matter of pride.

Now some might say that's a good thing. It's the American way. Take care of yourself. You don't need anyone else to help you. But reality is often very different, isn't it? There's a time in your life when you do need help, for example, when certain aspects of geometry weren't ever going to make sense no matter what I did. How thankful I am that I had a Dad who "got it" and could help me do the homework I wanted to burn.

When it comes to spiritual things, we all need the care and help of our heavenly Father. But, like small children, teens, and adults, we resist that care and help, thinking we can do it all on our own, when reality tells us differently. It's a matter of pride.

So, we turn to Jesus' words in His lament over the people of Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I have wanted to gather your children in the way that a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!" Nothing is more tragic than the outcome of the gracious will of Jesus: "I wanted to gather you together to take care of you, but you did not want to. You did not want my love and care and help."

How do you feel when your care and concern to help another person is rebuffed? Hurt, offended, sad? How much more so does the sinners' resistance of God's care and concern and love hurt and offend Him? Consider God's chosen people, the descendants of Israel. God brings them out of slavery and bondage in Egypt into a good land that has everything that they need. And what do they do? They resist Him and His Commandments. They do things their way, worshipping the Baals and the other false gods of the Canaanites. How He longed

to gather them together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings for protection and care. But Israel would not! Time and time again as you read through the history of God's Old Testament people they walked away from the Lord. They followed false gods and false religions. They resisted His love and mercy and care.

And do we not do the same? "Oh no, not us!" Then you are far better than I am, for every chance I get to resist God's Word, my sinful nature pulls me there. The devil tempts me to go it alone and do it my way. The world tells me that it's really okay, I'm not that bad, everyone is doing it. It's acceptable now, times have changed. God's Word is old fashioned; you need to keep in step with society. After all, society knows best.

In our sinful condition, we are no better than the people of Israel. We are all the same as fallen human creatures. Our sinful wills are hostile to God by nature, wanting nothing to do with Him (Rom. 8:7). Our wills are perverted and turned toward every evil and against God. By nature, we are rebellious against the Lord, hostile to Him, and "far too energetic, vigorous, and active in everything that is displeasing and repugnant to God. Genesis 8: 'The inclination of the human heart is evil from youth'" (FC SD: II.17).

Certainly, this explains why the people of Jerusalem would not be gathered to Jesus. It explains why you and I don't want to have God take care of us. We are sinful through and through, in a state of rebellion and resistance against God, His Word, and His Christ. We only think, desire, and want what our sinful nature thinks, desires, and wants—all of which are contrary to God and His Word. And that's a bad situation to be in. Indeed, a hopeless situation. Is it any wonder that we use words like "lost and condemned" to describe

ourselves? Face facts, God has every just and right reason to say to hell with you and me. We deserve nothing but death and hell.

But even as God's holy, perfect justice should dole out our punishment, God's mercy and grace wishes to gather us together under His wings of love and protection. Ezekiel 33:11 says, "Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 33:11 ESV). And from 1 Timothy 2:4 we read that God, "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Because of the Lord's most gracious favor toward sinners, **He** chose not to condemn sinners, but to save and rescue them from death and hell. Even though, by nature, we and all people resist God and rebel against Him and will not, by our own reason or strength come to Him, **He** willed to come to us in human flesh in the person of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

And Jesus did not give up on us. He did not run from His mission and ministry even though Herod wanted to kill Him. Jesus didn't shy away from the cross that awaited Him in Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers. Jesus went willingly to cross for you and for me, to die for our sinful resistance, to suffer the punishment for our rebellion, and to make atonement with God for all sins. Despite our sinful desire and rebellion, Jesus still seeks to cover us today in His atoning blood shed for us on the cross. He still calls us to be sheltered under His loving, gracious, and forgiving care. And how does Jesus call us? By the working of the Holy Spirit through the Means of the Gospel.

The Holy Spirit “calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith” (*Small Catechism*). Through means of water combined with the Gospel Word in Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit creates saving faith in the heart. This faith trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior and receives the forgiveness of sins won by Jesus. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Baptism rescues us from death and the devil and gives us eternal salvation. In Baptism, the benefits of Jesus’ cross are applied directly and personally to you and me!

Through the hearing of the Gospel Word and in the reading of the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, the Spirit also creates and sustains saving faith in the heart which trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior. As Paul writes in Romans 10, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17 ESV).

The Gospel then, in Word and Baptism, is the means by which the Holy Spirit offers us all the blessings of Christ and creates saving faith in us. That is how the Lord gathers us under His wings and into His nest, the Holy Christian Church, which is the communion of saints.

It is the Gospel of Jesus’ cross and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting that still seeks to call and gather sinners into the Lord’s Church by the work of the Holy Spirit. Although people who have not yet come to faith still resist, we as the Church, like Jesus, do not give up on them. We, the Church, continue to announce the Good News of Jesus. We faithfully proclaim the forgiveness of sins given by God’s grace through the Means of Grace. We baptize “all nations,” young and old, at the command of Christ. It is a Means of the Spirit to bring people to faith in Jesus and deliver forgiveness to them. We share the

Word of the Gospel, Christ crucified and risen, declaring the forgiveness of sins by grace alone through faith alone, knowing that the Spirit uses the Gospel Word to create saving faith in the heart and delivers the forgiveness of sins that Jesus won for all people.

In the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, as the people of Christ's Church on earth, continue to be bold in your witness to the Savior. Continue to share His invitation to come to Him and to receive forgiveness and release from sin and guilt, a new life that is abundant life. Preach the Gospel when it is popular and unpopular, in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2). The Lord desires to gather His chicks under His everlasting wings of love and mercy. Be His mouth by calling sinners to the Savior as you give people Jesus! Amen.