On this Second Sunday of Lent, we re invited to look again. In a season of seeking, longing, and connecting, we are invited to return to our first love. In this season of repentance and preparation, as our journey takes us nearer and nearer to the Cross of Christ, we are re-establishing patterns of prayer by dedication and devotion. We are invited to re-establish faith disciplines: Bible reading, spiritual awareness, church attendance. We are called to re-establishing spiritual discipline, practices, and motivation. In our reading of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is still on His journey to Jerusalem from Galilee. During this journey, He calls people to repent, heals on the Sabbath, and teaches in parables, drawing the attention of the Pharisees, who tell Him that Herod plans to kill Him. Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem gives us great insight into our Messiah. Family, I want us to see a few things here that should help us in our awareness and preparation. First, Jesus is vulnerable, but He is not weak. In this passage, we see our Jesus is undeterred:

Luke 13:32-34

 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! 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.’”

Jesus uses this threat to make clear the nature of His upcoming death as a part of His mission. His words confirm that the devil couldn’t deter him in the desert, and Herod will not deter Him now. He WILL fulfill the prophecies and God’s purpose, motivated by obedience to the Father. He is resolved to fulfill the redemptive mission of the cross. UNDETERRED!

 Truthfully, we may not often consider this part of the nature of Christ. How resolute He is in fulfilling the mission! How determined Christ is to rescue us!\* Nothing will deter Him from fulfilling His mission and pleasing the Father.

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\*John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

Lent, Church, is a time of intentionally making room for the ministry of and greater life in the Holy Spirit. Intentionally, we need to seek and rediscover the attributes of our God. Think on this: Jesus was resolute to fulfill the mission only He could fulfill to the Glory of God. He was resolute in this mission because He loves you completely. \* At my worst, He has loved me. In my darkest days, He loves me. Over in Psalm 63, we see that the loving kindness of God is found in His grace and His mercy. The psalmist David writes while in the wilderness of Judah, praising and thanking God for His love. Until approximately 400 CE, the early church sang this psalm at each church meeting. They called it “the morning hymn.” Early church father John Chrysostom said of it, “The spirit and soul of this whole book of Psalms is contracted into this Psalm.” It reminds us that in the face of every circumstance, we are the object of God’s grace and love. It affirms that God cannot be deterred from loving us. This song also speaks of our response: We must earnestly seek Him; we must long for Him. Family, to live in His loving kindness and the power of resurrection, we must be satisfied only in Him—in His provision of protection and sacrifice. We must find refuge under the shadow of His wings: “Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings”(Ps. 63:7): “often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings” (Luke 13:34).

 Family, as we are looking again at this journey to the cross—at this Lenten season—we serve a Savior who is undeterred in His mission to rescue us and to give us life. I encourage you to earnestly seek Him; seek Him with sincere and intense conviction. Allow yourself to be loved by Him! Rejoice in Him! In Psalm 63:3, the Hebrew word for “loving-kindness” is the word *hesed*; it is used 248 times in scripture and is the predominant way God describes His love for us in the Old Testament. *Hesed* is greater than a deep, emotional bond. It includes that, but it involves God’s faithfulness. I encompasses His resolve and **covenant** choice to love, to show mercy, to display faithfulness—constant, unchangeable, and

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\*Romans5:6-8

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

undeterred. *Hesed* is a love that chooses a cross to redeem the object of that love (Psalm 63: 3 “Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.) *Hesed* is better than life because in it, we truly live. It’s not about the thrill of romance but about the security of faithfulness. It is what enabled Paul to write in Philemon 1:21 “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

 And what then, Church, is our response? This love should motivate us in the mission. It should kill excuses. It should motivate us to seek Him earnestly while finding our satisfaction in Him. We should give our praise and devotion in gratitude as our loving response. We should glorify God with word and deed (1Peter 1:3-4\*). We must remember that we are forgiven; we are citizens of Heaven. We must learn to live loved! What will you do? In view of God’s *hesed*, how will you and I respond? Knowing that no kings, no crowds and not even the devil could deter Christ from His mission—could not keep Him from, in complete love—sacrificing Himself to rescue us, let us love in return, motivated, undeterred in the mission He has called us to? Are we earnestly seeking Him?

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\*1Peter 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,

Passages in support of this sermon:

Luke 13:31-15

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.’”

Psalm 63:1-8

A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.

1 You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. 2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. 3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. 4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. 6 On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. 7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. 8 I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.