

2nd Sunday in Lent

March 13, 2022

“Still room under the Savior’s wings!” (Luke 13:34)

By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today’s text for this 2nd Sunday in Lent is from the Gospel reading for today, Luke 13:34

““O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing”

Here ends our text.

Jesus gives a beautiful picture here in this verse of the safety and security of His salvation. He uses a common hen to illustrate this. Even if you’ve never raised chickens, and I haven’t, it is well known that a mother hen cares for her chicks. When there is danger, she calls them and they come running for cover under her protective wings. And on a cold day like today, there is warmth and comfort under those feathers.

In fact, we just heard this metaphor last week in our Psalm reading. We heard Psalm 91 tell us where we can find refuge and who is our fortress.

**“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.**

**2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust.”**

**3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
And from the perilous pestilence.**

**4 He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.**

Indeed, we heard last week that our great enemy, the devil, tempted Jesus in the desert, but Jesus proved victorious by using the word of God for His defense. “His truth shall be your shield and buckler”.

Oh, how Jesus wanted to gather Jerusalem. He sent the people of Israel many prophets to call them to repent and believe in the one true God. But instead of running under His wings of salvation, they ran away to false gods. They would not believe! They would not!

God was willing. He was always willing them to come to Him, but sinful man has the power to reject God. God’s grace is not irresistible. And that caused much sadness in Jesus’ heart for He wants all men to be saved. Oh, how often Jesus desired and still desires for all to believe before it is too late. Yes, there is still room under the wings of the Savior!

It's always good to read the full chapter that our Gospel verses are drawn from to get the full context. For Jesus was asked a question in verse 23 that led Him to begin His lament over Jerusalem. What was that question?

“22 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there few who are saved?”

“Lord, are there few who are saved?”

This question disturbed Jesus. For the salvation of the soul is not about statistics. And it’s certainly not a matter of curiosity. No, salvation of the soul is a deeply personal matter which each of us must take very seriously. For this reason, we have this season of Lent for greater self-reflection to make sure that we aren’t the chicks that are running away from the Savior’s wings, but running toward Him for cover.

What was Jesus’ answer to this question? He turns it around from a theoretical question into a personal one.

““Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

You strive. Each one of us is in a battle against the devil. And the devil offers a very wide gate that many run through. The narrow gate is narrow because it is the

truth of God's word and God's word alone by which one enters. The Law and the Gospel are the narrow gate. The Law brings us to repentance that we are sinners and helpless to defend ourselves against the devil. And the Gospel calls us to come under Jesus' wings where there is forgiveness and eternal life. There, no harm will befall you. He is your refuge and strength.

The consequences of not running under the Savior's wings are also eternal, and Jesus does not paint a picture of comfort for any who would reject Him. For He continues to tell what happens when the narrow door is shut.

“When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ 26 then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ 27 But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.”

Thrust out. Weeping and gnashing of teeth. Omniscient Jesus sees the horrible future of those in hell who would not believe in Him. They include those who actually ate in Jesus presence and walked near Him in the same streets as He taught. Oh, Jesus is speaking of the hypocrites feign loyalty to Him but their hearts are far away.

In the earlier verses before our Gospel reading, Jesus is criticized for healing a woman on the Sabbath who had an infirmity for 18 years.

“the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, “There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.”

15 The Lord then answered him and said, “Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” 17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

Hypocrite! There is no compassion and mercy in your hearts! Hypocrites came to Jesus to tell Him that Herod wanted to kill Him, and He needed to leave. Oh, the Pharisees just wanted Jesus to get away from them. Jesus puts all hypocrites to shame.

But there is much mercy and compassion in the heart of Jesus. Jesus has room under His wings for the hurting woman sick for 18 years. He has mercy on all who come looking to Him for protection and healing!

Jesus is willing, more than willing, and there is still much room under His wings. Jesus compares His kingdom to a mustard seed in verses 18 and 19 of our Gospel.

“What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.”

It has many branches to provide a safe nest for many people who would repent and believe in Him. The New Testament church started with a few believers but by the power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost grew and became large until a branch has reached out here in Mercedes Texas.

Oh, there is still room under the saving wings of Jesus. Yes, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth by the people of Israel, but the Gentiles will come from all directions.

“There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. 29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”

Those who were first called to gather will be last, but the Gentiles who were called last to gather under His wings will be first – first by grace, by faith in the Savior.

And Jesus says that they will see Him with eyes of faith, both Jews and Gentiles alike. For although Israel’s house, their temple would be destroyed in 70 AD, God would continue gathering His people so that they would confess that Jesus is the Blessed One who comes in the name of the Lord.

“35 See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”

This confession of faith is based on the compassionate work of the Savior on the cross. Nothing and no one would deter Him from completing His mission to offer eternal safety and protection in His kingdom. Not the pharisees, not Herod the fox, not the mob.

““Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’ 33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.”

Yes, Jesus would die like all the prophets in Jerusalem. He would continue His work of healing people and driving out demons until He would bring about the perfect complete work of the salvation of all people.

God would use all the hypocrites according to His good plan. For though they would kill the hen, but the chicks under the wings would be saved.

God calls each of us to gather under His wings of forgiveness that He offers to all. Oh, how He wants all to be saved. What a merciful loving God is our Lord! Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)