

Lent 2 3/17/19
Luke 13:31-35 C

SERMON TEXT IS THE APPOINTED GOSPEL FOR THIS SUNDAY,
FROM THE 13TH CHAPTER OF LUKE'S GOSPEL

Oh, how you love Jesus! You love Jesus with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. You'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold. Oh how you love Jesus, and oh how you want Him around when you are dying so you don't go to hell, but there are those days when He just rubs you the wrong way. There are those days when having Jesus around is a plain nuisance. Those are the day when you just say "Get away from here, Jesus," so you can be done with Him.

What? Don't look with those shocked looks on your faces. Look at your life, your heart, your words, your deeds.

Your neighbor ticks you off. And that neighbor may well be your spouse, your child, your parent, but you are angry and in your anger you say mean, hurtful things. And Jesus comes along, "I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire (Mt 5:22)."

And you have your pride. So, yes, you are angry because someone has sinned against you, you have been offended, your feelings have been hurt, and you are filled with rage. So, to get even, you gossip, you spread all kinds of evil, nasty rumors about your neighbor; you even post them on social media for all the world to see. And Jesus comes along, saying, "If you brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone (Mt 18:15)."

You think it's perfectly ok to ogle and lust after that woman in the magazine or on that website. God has given you a wife, but you don't treasure her as a gift of God. Honestly, you could care less about restraining your lust. And here comes Jesus, "I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Mt 5:28)."

You think that all good and pious people, Muslims, Mormons, Buddhists, will be saved. They follow their path to peace and you follow your path to perfect peace, so you should all just peacefully co-exist. And, along comes Jesus, saying, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (Jn 14:6)."

There are those times you want to think, say and do whatever it is you want to think, say, and do. But, Jesus comes along and just rubs you the wrong way. You would much rather have your way than His way. So, Jesus has to go. You want Him to get away; just leave you alone.

And you know what? You're not alone in your thinking. At the very hour that Jesus was teaching about who would be saved, a message is brought to Him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you (v. 31)." And that message is brought by some interesting messengers – the Pharisees. When it comes to people who want Jesus dead, the Pharisees trump Herod in every way, shape, and form. The Pharisees hate Jesus. They hate His preaching, His teaching, His miracles, everything that He says and does. They hate Him because He rubs them the wrong way, just like He rubs you the wrong way.

The Pharisees think they know all about how to be holy, and pious, and righteous before God. They made up a bunch of rules and regulations, and said and taught that if you wanted to be right with God, you had to

follow their rules and regulations. Along comes Jesus telling them that their manmade rules and regulations, like hand washing, will not make one right with God. They also hate Jesus because of the way He honors the Sabbath. They say you can do no, and I mean no, work on the Sabbath Day. And along comes Jesus and He goes around, healing on the Sabbath Day. And they really hate Jesus because He made it crystal clear to them and to anyone who would listen to Him that the Pharisees do not practice what they preach. They are filled with hypocrisy. They honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. And, as if that wasn't bad enough, He goes around, hanging out with tax collectors and sinners. No, they don't like Jesus at all.

And so, Jesus just rubs them the wrong way, and He needs to go, to get away from them. Just leave them alone. So, who better to bring a message to Him than, "Get away from here, because Herod wants to kill you" than the Pharisees? They are the perfect messengers.

And what about Herod? After all, He is the one who wants to kill Jesus. What about Him? Well, what can you say but "Like father, like son." This Herod is the son of Herod the Great and you remember the Great One, right? He's the one who, when he heard Jesus had been born king of the Jews, put the order out that all little boys two and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding region should be killed.

He rubbed dad the wrong way, and guess what, Jesus rubbed junior the wrong way as well. So, he decides Jesus must go. And, junior is pretty good at getting rid of people who rub him the wrong way. You will recall this King Herod took a fancy to his brother's wife and John the Baptizer rebuked him, so he threw him in prison. The day of his birthday party, his

significant other's daughter asked for the head of the Baptizer on a platter, so he had John beheaded.

The Pharisees want Jesus dead. Herod wants Jesus dead. And the people of Jerusalem, they don't want Him either. Jesus tells us that when He says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not (v. 34)!" Jerusalem would not, Herod would not, the Pharisees would not, and you would not either. You all want Jesus to go. You just want Him to go away.

What does Jesus say about all that? He says this, "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' (vv. 32-33)."

With these words, Jesus is saying this – You may not like me very much. I'm going to rub you the wrong way. But, guess what? Here I am. I long to be the One who gathers you to Himself like a hen gathers her brood under her wings. The **BOTTOM LINE** is this: He loves you and there's not one thing you can do about it.

So, there He goes off to Jerusalem. And when He gets there, what do they yell, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" and greet Him with palm branches. Then, it all goes south. He is betrayed, abandoned, condemned, and marched out to Calvary. Does this hatred, this unbelievable hatred, deter Him? No, not anymore than the devil in the wilderness can keep Him from the cross. He continues all the way to Calvary, where nails are pounded through His hands and His feet and He's

lifted up upon the cross. And the hatred and wrath of God against sin and sinners is poured out upon Him.

But, Jesus is not deterred. Even when taints assail Him, "Save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross," He won't do it. He's hanging there because His way, His course, is to save you. So Jesus hangs upon the cross and dies. Tomorrow, He rests in the tomb. And the 3rd day, He completes His course. As the Scripture says, Jesus "was delivered over to death and raised for our justification (Ro 4:25)."

Christ rose from the dead and you are justified before God. Christ is raised from the dead and God declares you not guilty. Christ is raised from the dead and all of your sin is forgiven by the blood and death of Jesus upon that cross.

By Baptism, by His Word, by His Supper, He gathers you to Himself like a hen gathers her chicks, so that you may have forgiveness, life, and salvation. All that is yours because He went His way, He accomplished His course. Nothing could deter Him. He did it all for you, and you, you are His.