**Series – Dr. Luke’s Perspective on Jesus**

**Text – Luke 13:31-35**

**Message 57 (October 14, 2018)**

**NEVERTHELESS…**

***31At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” 32And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. 33Nevertheless, 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.’ 34O 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 were not willing! 35Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”***

# Introduction

1. Luke mentions Jerusalem 99 times (only 49 times in the rest of the NT). Part of the reason is that he is taking us on the journey to Jerusalem where Jesus will complete His atoning work on the cross. Luke makes it clear here in this passage that nothing will deter the Lord.
2. As the time draws nearer, the enemies increase. It is hard to believe that any Pharisee, much less a group of them, would be coming to Jesus and to warn Him about Herod’s desire to kill Him. After what Jesus had to say about the Pharisees in Luke 11 and 12, they were out to get Him! Whatever their motive, the threat from Herod was real and Jesus’ enemies were multiplying. By the way, this was the same Herod who had John the Baptist’s head cut off! How would Jesus respond to this kind of threat? That’s what’s before us today.
3. Once we see how Jesus responded, there might be some take-aways for us in how we ought to respond to the increasingly hostile environment we will encounter as we move toward the culmination of the age. At the end of the message we will see if there is any legitimate application.
4. For now, let’s consider how Jesus responded.

**I. TRUSTING PROVIDENCE IN THE FACE OF DANGER (31-33)**

A. The dangers are real (31-32)

1. “Herod wants to kill you.” Herod and Pilate will figure into the plot to put Jesus to death according to Luke 23:12. The mention of Herod indicates that Jesus was still in Galilee (or Perea) in Herod’s jurisdiction. Herod certainly did want Jesus dead, so the threat was real, but this warning to protect Jesus does sound suspect. There are various theories about the motives behind the warning. Some see this as a trap to get Jesus to go to Jerusalem where He would be exposed to power of the Sanhedrin. Others believe that this was an attempt to drive Jesus into hiding, to get Him out of their hair. Regardless, the dangers from Herod and others were real.

2. Jesus’ answer is intriguing – ***“Go tell that fox…”***  Does that surprise you? Why do you suppose Jesus called Herod a name? Some assume it was a reference to Herod’s cunning ways, but there’s not much evidence of craftiness on Herod’s part. Perhaps a better answer is that Jesus was referring to him as someone insignificant. You’re familiar with the Biblical phrase from Solomon, ***“little foxes that spoil the vineyards.”*** That means it’s often the insignificant things that bring defeat or disaster. (The Jews used “fox” for one who thought himself to be a lion, but in their eyes, of lesser significance). So, Jesus was looking at Herod as insignificant in terms of what was before Him as He headed toward Jerusalem. Herod’s part would not alter the providence of God in what was destined to occur.

3. Randall Buth, in an article called, “That Small-Fry Herod Antipas, or When a Fox is Not a Fox”, offered a translation to convey the original intent of Jesus’ statement – ***“Weakling, small fry, usurper, poser, clown, insignificant person, cream puff, nobody, weasel, jackass, tin soldier, peon, hick, pompous pretender, jerk, upstart.”*** You get the point. Jesus was not just indiscriminately calling Herod names, but He was describing his character and power in contrast to the providence of God as the purpose of Jesus’ mission is unveiled. **The dangers were real, but the purposes of God will not be thwarted.** Remember that for later.

B. The purposes of God will be accomplished (32-33)

1. Whatever Herod might have intended to do, Jesus made clear that His work would continue until it had been completed. He would continue His journey to Jerusalem, and on the way, He would continue to do the work that authenticated Him as the promised Messiah. He would cast out demons, which demonstrated His power over the spirit world and over evil. He would ***“perform cures”***, which demonstrated His power over the physical world of pain and suffering, and He would continue to do these things until He finished His course, ultimately completing His work of redemption.

2. Whatever Herod might have intended to do, Jesus would make His way to Jerusalem, and there He would be put to death because that was why He came. To die at the hands of Herod or any other person outside of the area of Jerusalem was not going to happen. God, in His providence would not allow it.

3. **The dangers were real, but Jesus trusted in the providence of God that He would complete the reason for His coming**. We probably should remember that also. Trusting providence in the face of danger is crucial.

**II. SHOWING COMPASSION IN THE FACE OF REJECTION (34)**

A. The description of rejection

1. Jesus may have pronounced this lament more than once. Matthew records similar words while Jesus was in Jerusalem between the Triumphal Entry and the crucifixion (Matthew 23:37-39). Here, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem.

2. Throughout history, Jerusalem was known to have killed the prophets who came to the people calling them to hear the Word of the Lord. Jesus will address this again in more detail in Luke 20:9-18. Let’s listen to that text. ***9And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another***[***country***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke20:9-18&version=ESV)***for a long while. 10When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. 12And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. 13Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ 14But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ 15And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” 17But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? 18Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”***

3. Jesus would be rejected. He would be killed. That was coming. That, too was in the providence of God. How would He respond?

B. The declaration of compassion

1. For Jesus to speak twice the name “Jerusalem” was to show His deep affection for the city – the city where He would die, the people of the city who would demand His crucifixion! But He loved Jerusalem.

2. ***“How often would I have gathered your children…you were unwilling…”*** There is much here to process. The people would not repent and believe because they could not – they were bound in their sins, they were at enmity with God. They consistently had killed the prophets who came bearing the Word of God, refusing to heed what God had said. They would soon, as in the parable, put to death God’s own Son. Their unwillingness to receive Him would play into the sovereign purposes of God to bring about salvation to those who would be made willing to believe! The prophet Jeremiah said this: ***31“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*** Ezekiel described it like this: ***25I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.***

3. We were unwilling to receive the Lord for who He is, but God in His mercy drew some of us to His Son and made us willing to believe by giving us a new heart, but bringing us under a new covenant. We will be tempted to argue over the sovereignty of God and the supposed free will of men, and there is a place for those discussions, but let us not fail to see the compassion of the Savior in the midst of the rejection of the people as He was being revealed! So far, we have watched as Jesus trusted the providence of God in the face of real danger and we have seen Jesus **show genuine compassion in the face of violent rejection**. We might want to remember that too. Let’s check out verse 35 and perhaps hear the confidence that is announced in the face of what’s coming.

**III. ANNOUNCING CONFIDENCE IN THE FACE OF WHAT’S COMING (35)**

A. Judgment is coming

1. ***“Your house”*** (v. 35) may or may not have referred to the temple – it might have referred to Israel. If His reference was to the temple, He no longer here regards the temple as God’s house. By the time we get to Luke 19:46, Jesus described it as ***“a den of robbers.”***

2. Prior to the destruction of Solomon’s temple, the first temple, in 586 BC by the Babylonians, Ezekiel spoke of the glory of the Lord departing. The departure appeared reluctant, but certain, and the temple and the city were destroyed. Now around AD 30 Jesus announces that ***“your house”*** is forsaken. 40 years later in AD 70, this temple, known as the second temple or Herod’s temple, and the entire city of Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Romans.

3. But in a few months from the time this chapter takes place, the people would forsake God’s true temple – the One who came to earth to “tabernacle among us, the One who came as the sacrifice to end all sacrifices – this One, Lord of glory, they would soon destroy, demanding His crucifixion! His blood would be on their hands! Prior to the crucifixion, however, would be a declaration of Jesus as Messiah at the Triumphal Entry – ***“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”***

B. Jesus is coming

1. We have talked many times of the Hallel Psalms – the Hallelujah or the Praise the Lord Psalms – Psalms 113-118 – the songs that were sung by the Hebrews at Passover, the songs sung by the Lord and His disciples the night He was betrayed.

2. We return to Psalm 118 today. This quote from David Garland should help us understand what Jesus is saying. ***“The citation from Psalm 118:26 most obviously refers to Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem when the crowds shout, ‘Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord’ (19:37-38). This psalm had developed messianic connotations in Jesus’ day, which explains why the Pharisees try to get Jesus to squelch the crowd’s jubilation (19:39). The implication is that there is still time for Israel to repent and turn to God. The prophetic pronouncement echoes another part of the psalm: ‘Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter’ (Ps. 118:19-20). The prayer has been answered. The gate has been opened, but one cannot simply stroll through it, and it will not remain open forever. Jesus quotes the psalm again in 20:17, ‘The stone the builders rejected, this one has become the cornerstone’ (Ps 118:22); see Acts 4:11). The implication is that Jesus in the stone that has been rejected. In the psalm, they offer their blessing from the house of the Lord (Ps 118:26), but Jesus’ pronouncement that ‘my house’ has been abandoned is ominous (see Jer. 12:7). When it has become ‘their house’, it has become only a shell”*** (p. 562). So, what do we take from this?

**Conclusion**

1. The dangers are real, but the purposes of God will not be thwarted. God will accomplish His will regardless of what happens. His promises are good forever. I can trust Him because He is trustworthy!
2. The dangers are real, but we can trust in the providence of God that He is working out everything for our good and His glory regardless of what we see or hear or must endure.
3. As believers we will often be rejected. If they did that to Jesus, why wouldn’t the world do that to us? But because of what we are in Him, what He has done in us, we can show genuine compassion in the face of such rejection, regardless how vial or inhumane.
4. Finally, judgment will fall upon a Christ-rejecting world; it’s coming, but so is Jesus. For now, He is with us and sometime future He will come for us. If we belong to Him, we can be confident regardless what is happening around us!
5. Somewhere in mid-preparation, I changed the title to ***“Nevertheless.”*** As I was finishing the conclusion, I thought of Psalm 91. It speaks of many challenging issues, but throughout the psalm there an implied, “nevertheless.” “The snare of the fowler”, “deadly pestilence”, “terror of the night” “arrows by day”, nevertheless He will deliver me. Armies, lions, snakes, all potential death threats, from them He will protect. Then God Himself speaks, ***“Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. 15When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. 16With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”***