**Luke 13: 31-35 Jesus Grieves over Jerusalem**

In Luke’s gospel today Jesus is given a warning by the Pharisees. Go somewhere else as Herod wants to kill you. Isn’t this a little strange - a warning to Jesus coming from the Pharisees – not known to be his biggest fans.

There were several Pharisees who were secret disciples of Jesus such as Joseph of Arimathea. Saul who became Paul was also a Pharisee. These may be some of the moderates who were not hostile to Jesus and wanted to know more about him. Maybe they are warning him because they feel more aligned to him than to Herod.

Or perhaps they have been sent by Herod himself.

Herod Antipas was put into his position of power by the Romans because of his ability to keep control. He was a brutal man who killed anyone who spoke out against him as we have seen with John the Baptist but perhaps at that moment he didn’t want another death on his hands.

Whatever you prefer to think the response from Jesus was clear – I am not going anywhere and here is a message for you to take back to Herod. Except that he doesn’t name Herod but calls him a fox. For the Jews a fox was a symbol of one of three things:

A sly animal

A destructive animal

A worthless and insignificant man

Jesus is showing contempt for Herod by not naming him. He is not afraid of Herod but will continue to finish the work God has given him to do but I still think it took some courage to respond to him in this way.

Jesus work is casting out demons and healing the sick, both activities related to establishing God’s Kingdom. He will continue that day, the next and he will be finished on the third day. The reference to three days occur through Luke’s gospel - when Jesus is found as a young boy on the third day in the temple and Christ alive again on the third day following the crucifixion.

Jesus is making the point that it isn’t his time. Neither the right time or the right place and not by the right hand. He has work to be completed, a destiny to fulfil but it will be of God’s will and God’s timing and not of mans.

Jesus had been travelling through the towns and villages surrounding Jerusalem gathering followers as he went. On arrival perhaps the expectation is that God’s chosen people will listen to him, understand he is the Messiah and follow him but this is not the case. Jerusalem should have been the very place that God’s chosen people welcomed him with open arms. In fact the opposite is true – he was rejected.

Just like Jenny Henny in our story, looking after Henny Penny and her friends, Jesus is showing us how God protects and looks after us. Hens are known to protect their young by shielding them under their wings when faced with danger.

I think there is both courage and compassion to be found in Luke’s gospel.

Jesus shows courage in continuing his ministry, following his own path and ignoring the warning from the Pharisees.

Compassion is found in the protection of the hen’s wings, a representation of God’s love and protection for us.

You may have seen this week the story of Hassan, an 11 year old boy who set out from Ukraine with only two small bags, a passport and a relative’s telephone number. Having travelled 750 miles he arrived safely in Slovakia. A very brave boy but for me I find the actions of his mother Julia the bravest part of the story. They live next to the largest nuclear power station in Europe and staying behind to look after her elderly mother she put her son on a train to send him to safety.

I struggled to understand how far Hassan had travelled alone – so to give you an idea it is a little over 750 miles from Liverpool to Venice.

There were two other stories that spoke to me this week – one showing an older woman leaving her home with a small bag of possessions but you could clearly see dignity and courage in her. She walked with her head held high and her back was ramrod straight, determined to move forward.
The other was a grandmother who had already left Ukraine and was with two of her grandchildren waiting to continue their journey. At the end of her television interview she simply said “In God we trust”.

Jesus gave us two simple commands - love God and love one another. Following a God of love can be challenging when faced with the human choice of greed and power over love and compassion. We may struggle to see where God is in situations of hopelessness and despair.

The love of God is in the donations given by ordinary people – these are pictures of a fraction of the items donated here at Christ Church. It is in the charities supporting the afflicted and in the families offering a safe place to refugees. One of the challenges of discipleship is to put yourself amongst the people Jesus would have spent time with. People have been moved to do just that - the owner of one of Daniel’s favourite clothes shops in Liverpool closed his store, packed up a van and drove with a couple of friends to deliver goods to Poland.

If you haven’t been able to donate then after this service ends and until the end of Tuesday there will be a further collection here at Christ Church of items going to support Ukraine’s people.

Next Saturday St. Andrew’s church is holding a Bring and Buy Coffee Morning from 10am with proceeds going to the Ukraine appeal.

The overwhelming response shows us that the love of God spreads far and wide. The God who knows us and loves us is a God of compassion, kindness, protection and mercy. His compassion covers all humankind and the love he showed through his son Jesus Christ shows us the way.

When Jesus calls us we may reject him – perhaps the path is not one we want to follow. Maybe he is calling you today but you lack the courage to respond to his call. But know this – Christ will welcome you whenever you are ready – his love for us is constant.

As we reflect through Lent on the journey of Christ to the cross we know that it is not the end but an opportunity for us to follow in Christ’s path, spread our wings and help others. Knowing Jesus and living in the love of God give us the opportunity to build God’s kingdom here.

Hassan said “My hope carried me”. Because of God we can hope and choose to hope. The choice is rooted in truth – that hate can’t win because God is a God of love.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is no less for us today than all those years ago. The truths of the gospel don’t change and it is in the darkest times that those truths shine the brightest

**Amen.**