

Luke 13:31-35 PM

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 September 2024

Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[0 : 0 0] Folks, while you're standing, let me pray for us. Father, would you open our hearts to hear your word this evening. In Christ's name, Amen. Please, grab a seat, grab a seat, grab a seat.

Good evening, everyone. It's nice to see you. If you are brand new, my name is Aaron Roberts. I'm the minister that looks after this service. And I'd love to meet you. Come and say hi afterwards. We are week two into a three-month sermon series, a new sermon series.

And what we're doing is we're going to do a deep dive into a few chapters in Luke's Gospels. Chapters 13 to 17. This is the section of Luke's Gospel where Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem.

And there are three really big ideas. The first big idea is it's about the mission of Christ. And the second big idea is it's about the compassion of Christ. So it's about the mission of Christ and the compassion of Christ.

Let's get just straight into it. The mission of Christ. We'll start with verse 31. Because verse 31 is very curious. At that very hour, some Pharisees came and said to him, Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.

[1 : 1 7] Now, the Herods in the Bible are a bit confusing. It feels like there's lots of Herods. So let me just tell you about the Herods. So you remember when Jesus was born, there was a Herod that wanted to kill the little boy babies because he had heard that a king had been born.

That's the dad of this Herod. This is son Herod. Also called Herod. Dad Herod, you know, he parcels up different areas and gives them to people.

And he gave Galilee to his son, which is where Jesus is at this point. Now, the son Herod, like dad Herod, did not like Jesus.

Jesus was competition. He was afraid Jesus would, you know, cause problems. He would lead some kind of uprising. The last guy to cause problems for this Herod's son Herod was John the Baptist. And of course, he was beheaded.

So it's, you know, it's a thing, you know. Back in verse 31, the Pharisees come to Jesus and they say, Herod wants to kill you. You need to get out of Dodge.

[2 : 2 1] So why is this suspicious? Because Herod hated Jesus. And we know that the Pharisees also did not like Jesus. We also know that the Pharisees did not like Herod.

And Herod did not like the Pharisees. One was a political party. One was a religious party. Herod was technically the king of the Jews, but he's not Jewish. And he's just this kind of like Roman puppet, right?

No one liked anyone. So why are they, why are the Pharisees tipping off Jesus? You know, the Pharisees are like, listen, listen. We're just trying to help you out. We're just trying to help you out.

We're just trying to help you out. We just heard through the grapevine that Herod wants to kill you. So it's best for you because we really like you. He said, no. The whole thing is suspect, isn't it?

Here's what's going on, probably, because it doesn't actually say it explicitly, but probably here's what's going on. Jesus was a problem for Herod and the Herodians, which is like his crew. He was a problem for the Pharisees.

[3 : 23] So they both want him gone. So why didn't Herod just kill him? Well, he probably didn't want another dead prophet on his hands because that's a thing that you have to deal with.

So if you meet a New Zealander and you say to them, how are you? Maybe 50% of the time they'll say something like, oh, yeah, good. Yeah, no dramas.

No dramas. I think I've probably said that 30 times tonight, really, to people. No dramas. So this is what we know about the son Herod is he didn't like drama. So his thing was like, well, let's just move Jesus along to make him somebody else's problem.

And one way to do that would be just to scare him out of Galilee. So he tells the Pharisees, even though they don't like each other, he tells the Pharisees, because he's thinking the Pharisees might have more access to Jesus.

He tells the Pharisees to tell Jesus he's going to kill him, and it solves both their problems. Now, how do I know that Herod spoke to the Pharisees? Because verse 32 says that Jesus says to the Pharisees, go tell that fox, that's Herod, go tell that fox.

[4 : 24] Go tell the person who I know told you to tell me this. Jesus knows you're in collusion. Okay, so where are we so far? Because that's slightly interesting, but does not much for you.

Okay, I realize that. So where are we so far? Jesus receives a threat from a very powerful man. That's where we are. So what happens next?

And this is where it gets really, really interesting. What happens next? Well, when a typical person would receive a threat from a very powerful man, the sensible thing to do, the sensible thing to do, Zella, is what?

Is to, like, take it seriously and leave. For example, and forgive me, I love politics. You know, I love politics. I like intrigue. But the Venezuelan elections, stay with me.

Stay with me in this. The Venezuelan elections just happened a couple of weeks ago. And the election was stolen by the incumbent. I'm sure you all know this.

[5 : 22] The election was stolen by the incumbent. The opposition leader, Gonzalez, who rightfully won, and everyone knows he won. The whole world goes, you totally won. Has fled the country because the incumbent has said, he put in an arrest warrant for the opposition leader.

He's going to arrest him, chuck him in some jail somewhere, and he's just going to rot there. So, Gonzalez, what does he do? He runs. So, he's currently in Spain. And, of course, it makes complete sense.

Of course, he's going to flee the country. How does Jesus respond to this threat? Verse 32 and verse 33, if you have your Bibles open there. He said to them, go tell that fox, behold, I cast out demons and perform cures.

And tomorrow, and on the third day, I'll finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the following day, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.

Okay, there's a lot in there. What's going on there? I don't know. First, let's deal with the fox. I don't know if anyone's called you a fox recently. Well, foxy, it's been a long time, to be honest.

[6 : 28] Actually, in New Zealand, we used to have, sorry, a lot of New Zealand references tonight. Sorry about that. What are the music awards called in North America? Grammys. The Grammys, you know, you have different things, categories.

In New Zealand, one of the categories is fox. It's like the best looking musician, basically. We're primitive people. So, let's just move on. Anyway, I don't actually think they'd do it anymore.

Anyway, so nowadays, calling somebody a fox is a compliment, but not in Luke 13. So, in ancient Near East culture, a fox was a name used to describe someone who was sly and thought they were really important, but they're not important.

They're not really that important. A fox was used to describe somebody who thought they were a lion, but they're actually just a little fox. So, what's Jesus' implication here? Jesus is saying, Herod thinks he's calling the shots.

He thinks he can force Jesus' hand. And Jesus wants to make him aware that that's actually not what's going on in this situation. Jesus says in verse 33, The father has called Jesus into a ministry, a job, a thing to do.

[7 : 44] It involves defeating evil. It involves healing. These are like signposts of the life that Jesus is going to usher in. And then on the third day, he will finish his course, Christ says. I'm going to go to Jerusalem, and there I will die.

Okay, two points to make here. Jesus is very clear. Death is going to be part of the plan. There's a continuity there between the things that are happening right now in his ministry and the death.

It's all part of that one plan. We'll talk more about that later. Secondly, Jesus is making it clear that he's not going because Jesus wants him to go. He will be leaving Galilee.

But his ministry, Jesus' ministry, is controlled by a power and authority that is infinitely more powerful and important than Herod's. Jesus will complete his work. Herod is just this dude.

He's just this dude who's kind of blustered onto the stage. And Jesus is like, no, no. I'm going to do the thing that my father's called me to do. And I want you to be really encouraged by this.

[8 : 45] Why is this an encouragement to us? You know, at the end of this gospel, Jesus invites us, all of us, into a mission. Into his mission. Into his ministry.

He says to us, continue my mission in the world. So we ask ourselves, what does Christ have for us in this life? In my unique situation, how can I serve Christ?

And it will involve a death to self. It will involve sacrifice. And as you're working that out, as that's being played out in your life, as you do that, remind yourself. Your heavenly father knows what he is doing with your life.

Whatever you're doing, he knows what he's doing with your life. And you might feel at times bounced around by others. But the Lord is not going to let some pretend king and some foxes into your world.

And stop happening what he wants to happen in your life. You can be confident in that. Okay, that was all under the first point. The mission of Christ.

[9 : 46] Now we're moving on to the second point. First point, the mission of Christ. The mission of Christ is unstoppable. And it involves death. Second point, the compassion of Christ.

Christ. Let me remind you of verse 34 and 35. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.

Behold, your house is forsaken. So this is an indictment on this place that Jesus is headed to. It's very stern. Your house is forsaken.

But what's really important here is what's Jesus' response to this rejection? He knows he's going to this place.

He knows it's going to be unfairly tried. He's going to be beaten. He's going to be mocked. He's going to be killed. What's Jesus' response to this?

[10 : 42] His response to Jerusalem, this place that's going to kill him. What's his response? We know he doesn't run from this. But internally, what's going on for him? Does he just keep going kind of stoically?

Well, we've got the mission. Just got to do it. I watched Terminator 2. Stay with me.

With my nine-year-old son a couple of months ago. And I knew about 15 minutes in, I'd made a terrible mistake. It's quite violent.

If you haven't seen it, Zoe. But the T-1000, if you remember the T-1000, it's the new cyborg thing that can melt.

And when it's in its human form, it's just running like this. Completely emotionless. You know those scenes? Awesome. Like it's awesome. I thought about that when I was writing this. Because Jesus has this mission, this thing that the Father has called him to do.

[11 : 48] But he's not going about it robotically and stoically, unemotionally. He's not just trudging on. As he thinks about the rejection he's going to receive and the heartbreak.

It's, it's, it's, he feels it in his bones. He's clearly heartbroken. I mean, his ministry is all about offering life to people.

And they're going to kill him for it. How does Jesus feel about these folks? Verse 34, we have this window into his heart. He says, How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings?

And you were not willing. This is, this is like a, like a lament. In the Old Testament, sometimes God would compare himself to a mother bird that hovers over its babies.

Protecting them and sheltering them. So this picture Jesus also uses. It's this deep cry from his heart. And, and importantly also, Jesus here is identifying himself with God.

[12 : 58] This really tender, mothering love of God is wonderful. You know, we serve a God that wants to draw us in.

That wants to protect us from foxes. This is, this is the compassion of Christ. Is this, is this how you think about Christ?

Or do you think about Christ more sternly? Or like just waiting for you to mess up? Is this how you think about Christ? Like a mother hen. Just protecting her chicks.

It's a wonderful picture. I hope that that's how you think about Christ. Before we finish, I want to reference last week's passage.

Because all these things happen in a context. The immediate context of this is someone saying to Jesus, how many people will be saved? Just a few?

[14 : 00] So that's, beginning of this passage, it says that this happens within the same hour. So like an hour before this, someone says to Jesus, how many people are going to be saved? Just a few?

The attitude behind that is God is a bit miserly, a little bit mean. But here, what do we learn? What does this add to that question? What do we learn?

Jesus is saying God is not stingy. He's seeking us. He wants to gather us, even when we want to reject him. Last week, Jordan talked about, in the passage, because last week it talked about this time when the door will be closed to God, which is just very bracing.

Those on the outside of that door are not there because God is mean or miserly, but because they chose to be there. And this adds another layer to that. Verse 34, it just sort of doubles down on it. It says, you're not with me because you are not willing.

So the reason people aren't with God is due to a hardness of heart. It's not because God doesn't care. Our Heavenly Father deeply desires salvation. If we come to the end of this section of Luke's Gospel, chapter 19, when Jesus actually does get to Jerusalem, this place that's going to mock him and beat him and kill him.

[15 : 13] What's the first thing Jesus does? Is he weeps. He weeps over this place. Because he just wants to gather people. He wants to love them.

He wants to protect them. This is the heart of Jesus. This is the compassion of Christ. And again, I don't know if that's how you think Jesus thinks about you. I don't know.

But isn't it just wonderful to be reminded of this? Of the motherly love of God. And if you don't feel like that, if you don't feel like that's how you think about how Jesus loves you, then I'd invite you to pray with somebody after the service.

There'll be a couple of folks right down there that would love to pray with you. Come up to me. I'd love to pray for you as well. I'm going to finish here. Amen.