

**SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT  
MARCH 13, 2022**



**Luke 13:31b "Go! Get away from  
here,"  
said the Pharisees**

St. John United Church of Christ  
10207 Lincoln Trail, Fairview Heights, IL  
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Rev. Rosemary Captain

**\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Put away your hesitation to come before God;  
quiet your fears and anxieties, for God welcomes us.  
**God is our light and our salvation;**

**Whom shall we fear?**

Look to the heavens for inspiration and assurance;  
Look around you, for God's presence is everywhere.

**God is the stronghold of our lives;**

**Of whom shall we be afraid?**

Let us watch and wait with our Creator;  
Let us trust in the one who gives life and hope.

**Teach us your ways, O God,  
And lead us on a level path.**

**\*INVOCATION:** In this place, our hearts take courage. Your goodness is all around us. The trials and cares of life are stilled before you. Show us your face, O God; let your love be known to us. We need this hour to remember who we are, to let you gather us under your wings. We need this time to feel close to one another, to recognize ourselves as brothers and sisters. We need reminders of the humanity and glory of Jesus Christ that empower our discipleship. Hear our cries and help us. Amen.

**\*CALL TO CONFESSION:**

God has drawn the church into covenant, calling us to be faithful people who walk in the ways of Christ. Yet how often do we explore what that means or examine our behavior against the example of Jesus?

A time of confession gives us the opportunity to reclaim and grow in our relationship with God.

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

**God of all people, we confess that we would like to claim your majesty and power for our exclusive benefit. We relish the good things of life and are reluctant to share with those who seem less deserving. We resist the prophets who point out our greed, even when we feel we are being generous. We resent persons in positions of authority over us who seem not to have our best interests at heart. We are angry about ones whose evil deeds seem to go unpunished. O God, how can we receive your mercy when we are so reluctant to pass it on? Help us to center our lives in your love more than in our own desires.** Silence

**\*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS:**

God does not cast us off or forsake us but is with us in our suffering, and adversity. Even when we live as enemies of the cross, the God of Jesus Christ does not give up on us. Surely there is shelter for us in the midst of our troubles and forgiveness when we have gone our own way. Lift up your eyes to behold God's promises. We are forgiven. Praise the Lord. Amen.

**\*GLORIA PATRI:**

**Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three- in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE: Philippians 3:17-4:1**

The words of Paul

<sup>17</sup> Brothers and sisters, become imitators of me and watch those who live this way—you can use us as models. <sup>18</sup> As I have told you many times and now say with deep sadness, many people live as enemies of the cross. <sup>19</sup> Their lives end with destruction. Their god is their stomach, and they take pride in their disgrace because their thoughts focus on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> Our citizenship is in heaven. We look forward to a savior that comes from there—the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>21</sup> He will transform our humble bodies so that they are like his glorious body, by the power that also makes him able to subject all things to himself. **4** Therefore, my brothers and sisters whom I love and miss, who are my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord.

**\*GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 13:31-35**

<sup>31</sup> At that time, some Pharisees approached Jesus and said, “Go! Get away from here, because Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup> Jesus said to them, “Go, tell that fox,

‘Look, I’m throwing out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete my work. <sup>33</sup> However, it’s necessary for me to travel today, tomorrow, and the next day because it’s impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’

<sup>34</sup> “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather your people just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn’t want that. <sup>35</sup> Look, your house is abandoned. I tell you, you won’t see me until the time comes when you say, *Blessings on the one who comes in the Lord’s name.*”

These are the ancient Words shared with us anew.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**MESSAGE: “There is no stopping Jesus”**

Is there such a thing as a favorable picture of the Pharisees? Evidently there is, at least for some of them. In this passage they are warning Jesus about Herod and advising Jesus to flee and hide from Herod.

I can’t tell where Jesus is at this time, but I know where he is headed and that is Jerusalem. Jesus is not focused on what Herod will or won’t do to him.

Jesus is focused on his mission. “I must be on my way,” he tells these Pharisees.

Jesus even tells them his itinerary. “Look, I’m throwing out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete my work. <sup>33</sup> However, it’s necessary for me to travel today, tomorrow, and the next day because it’s impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.” (*Did you notice the reference to the third day?*)

In fact, many prophets were killed in that city. Compare the death of the prophet Zechariah, 2 Chronicles 24:20-22; the death of the prophet Urijah, Jeremiah 26:20-23; and the future death of the two witnesses, Revelation 11:3, 7-8. Jesus links his fate with that of the prophets. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and he says, “you won’t see me until the time comes when you say, Blessings on the one who comes in the Lord’s name.” Jesus is referring to his triumphant entrance into the city, six days before he is arrested.

*(The important point to note is that Jesus’ death is in continuity with the rest of his ministry — “today,” “tomorrow,” and “the third day” go together. Jesus’ death is not of a fundamentally different character than his ministry while he was alive: They are all about establishing the kingdom of God. Holding*

*together Jesus' life and death helps us to make better sense of both.)*

<sup>34</sup> "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather your people just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn't want that."

Immediately following this "indictment" we have the compassionate and agonized plea of v. 35b: Jesus (speaking for God?) longs to shelter the children of Israel like a mother hen does for her brood.

Nevertheless, punishment is also announced in verse 35: "your house is left to you desolate." This may be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (the "house" of God) in A.D. 70.

So, what can we learn from these few verses? According to Dr. Scott Shauf from *Working Preacher*, there are many questions we should ask ourselves at this time of lent.

"Throughout Lent we are preparing ourselves to experience Jesus' cross. This passage calls us to do so by considering whether our lives lead appropriately to that cross. Can we make sense of our lives as a part of the establishment of God's kingdom in our world? Or are we frightened from our mission by the threats of earthly rulers? Moreover, if Jesus were to

speaking prophetically to us, what would his message be? How have we resisted God's messages and kingdom?

Paul refers to the church as a temple, as the dwelling of God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). So how have we played the tragic role of Jerusalem? On the other hand, how have we recognized God's messages and kingdom, and how can we continue to do so?"

Jesus continues and persistently follows God's will, no matter the suffering he will experience. God help us to do the same. Amen.

**PASTORAL PRAYER:** Beginning with a time for silent personal prayer.

Eternal God, we are grateful for the life and suffering of Jesus and rejoice in the glory that will be his on resurrection day.

Generous God, you have given us a goodly heritage in your church. Grant to us new zeal and perseverance to extend your kingdom so that people everywhere so we may be united in spirit and love.

Gracious God, you have promised that the Christ shall not fail nor be discouraged until justice shall rule the whole earth. Save us from dishonoring your name, from strife and contention. Unite all nations in the search for peace with justice.

Today we especially pray for the people in the Ukraine who are searching for peace and are leaving their homes to survive the violence. They are innocent people who are the victims of this violence that no one understands.

We pray for all those on our prayer list. May they find strength in your compassionate love.

All these things we pray in the name of your Son, Jesus . . .

**THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**OFFERTORY INVITATION:** All who find a home in the house of God are invited to extend its sheltering and serving ministry to the world. We are challenged to do this in person but also by sharing the wealth God entrusts to us. What sacrifices do we offer in the name of Jesus Christ, who risked everything for us?

**\*UNISON OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

**In the confidence that you will multiply our best efforts, we bring our offerings for the work of your**

**church in the world. Holy God, it is a joy to present our sacrifices, for we are as blessed in our giving as we have been in receiving abundant goodness from your hand. Keep us from seeking to build permanent structures that might block spontaneous responses to your love. Amen.**

**\*COMMISSION AND BLESSING:**

Be strong and let your hearts take courage.

The God of our salvation has met us here.

**Our hearts will not fear, for God is our shelter.**

**Our spirits are confident, for God is our shield.**

God's blessings for each of us outnumber the stars.

The commonwealth of heaven is our dwelling place.

**We will lift up our heads with shouts of joy.**

**May our witness win others to God's realm.**

Go on your way with Christ as your companion.

Seek opportunities for witness and service.

**We find our example and inspiration in Jesus.**

**In the valleys of every day, we will show God's care.**

**Amen.**

**PRAYER LIST:** Urban Baum, Donna Isselhard, Agnes Doctolero, David Seneczyn, Warren Neff, Lynn Hursey, Carol White, Dennis Franklin, John Biehl, Cheri Schutzenhofer, Rich Schmitt, Dorothy Wagner, Granddaughter Captain.

**LENTEN STUDY begins on March 16 via Zoom 6:30 pm. If you don't have a computer, you can join us on your phone. The Zoom meeting ID is 878-8123-0951 and the pass code is 651278. The phone number is 1-312-626-6799 and use the same ID and passcode.**