

CHRIST GATHERS BELIEVERS LIKE A HEN GATHERING HER CHICKS

(Luke 13:31-35; cf. Mt.23:37-39)

“How often have I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her under her wings, but you were not willing?”

Jesus uses the image of a hen which is “territorial” bird. She is a great defender and totally fearless when she is protecting her nest, unlike the roosters (males) that fight among themselves for dominance. The hen fights to protect her brood. She covers her eggs until they are hatched and provides heat for the tender chicks until they are fledged. Hens have distinct calls for alarm different from calls to maintain contact with the chicks. The wings are both the place of refuge from danger and for warmth. She will fight to death to protect her chicks.

The figure of the hen and chicks speaks of “overall care and protection” that God has over His people. But sometimes God’s people choose not to accept God’s care and protection as some of us have. Jesus lamented over the City of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel and showed his disappointment at those who wouldn’t listen. They heard the message but they ignored the offer. Even worse, He accuses Jerusalem to “have killed prophets and stoned those sent to her.”

We too are in that number that He came to save. His love is portrayed in the image mother hen spreading her wings to protect her young from predatory birds and animals. Jesus lamented over the holy City saying: *“O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often have I gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings and you would not!”*

In other words, Jesus was working with God to gather Israel together with a hen’s motherly love. He oversaw the process of sending prophets to Israel throughout her history but His efforts were unsuccessful. Even now He tries to gather us home under His care and protection but we choose to not listen.

The mention of the holy City, *O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem* is a cry of despair. Jerusalem was the center of Israel’s worship under Israel’s theocracy. Corrupt priests were in authority. Jerusalem’s sacredness is recognized by Jews, Christians and Muslims as a religious center since David. Prior to David, Abraham worshipped there and paid tithes to Melchizedek, the king of Righteousness (Gen.14:18-20).

Why was Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem? a) She committed the sin of *stoning and killing God’s prophets and God’s messengers*, Zechariah is an example (2Chr 24:20ff; Mt 23:35); The casting of *Jeremiah in the dungeon* (Jer. 38:6); b) The *attempt to silence Amos* (Amos 7:11ff); c) Rejecting Jesus the Messiah and having Him crucified d) *stoning Stephen to death* (Acts 7:57ff). In the end Jesus says that *“Your house is left to you desolate*. Indeed, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in the year 70A.D.

Dear friends, the depth of the Lord's emotions that drove him to lament over Jerusalem are like the tears shed by Paul the apostle. Paul complained that "*many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.*" And there are consequences over all who "*live as enemies of the cross of Christ.*" (Phil 3:18). God is extremely protective of His messengers and His message which is very dear to His heart. He also holds Israel's unbelief and our unbelief as an act of disobedience. Our bodies are the very sacred centers of religion, they are spiritual Jerusalem. God sends prophets and messengers on the mission of correcting us. They are God's mouth pieces, hands, feet, ears and eyes and God expects His Word to be successful. Our refusal to obey God's correction then we are doomed.

As a messenger, Jesus was never a victim of circumstances. He chose to die on our behalf. *Go tell that fox*, Jesus said, *Behold I cast out demons and perform cures, today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.* There was no fear in Him to go to Jerusalem and suffer to death.

God gives hope to believers who commit themselves to [fasting](#), as well as giving up certain [luxuries](#) in order to replicate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ's journey to Cross. Lenten spiritual discipline, such as reading [daily devotionals](#) and praying draw us near to God. These disciplines are meaningless if we reject Jesus and His cross. If you are not yet trusting in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ do so now. Remember, if you died today, would be in His loving presence for eternity. Today is the day to repent and believe in the gospel to receive eternal life. Tomorrow may be too late. This Lenten season should better prepare us to receive Christ as our Savior and our Lord.

The Lord is patient, slow to anger and abundant in love. Think about it. He personally says, "*How often have I tried to gather you like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing?*" and you" The LORD's desire is for people to be saved. He desires for us to be saved and not to be condemned. Time and again God thru Jesus reaches out to us thru His messengers and sometimes these messengers are abused, rejected, and even killed.

God demands that we live for him and Him alone. He demands that we listen to His only begotten Son. We can't reject God's revelation, namely, His Holy Scripture. We can't reject Christ as our Lord and savior and pick whatever God we want. We can't reject God's righteousness and mercy and trust our own righteousness. We open ourselves up to God's judgment if we stay obstinate.

We are solely responsible for our failure to receive the redemption and forgiveness offered by Jesus for the sins we have committed. God is willing and makes the offer. We must not refuse it. God has done all the work. We must accept it. We should not seek the broad gate, the broad way that leads to destruction. Let us strive to enter through the narrow door leading to God's kingdom and eternal life.

So today is the day to repent and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. Tomorrow may come too late. Amen.