

## Worshipping God Together

### Call to worship

Minister: For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his  
allotted inheritance.

**All: He shielded him and cared for him; He guarded him  
as the apple of his eye,**

Minister: like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over  
its young,

**All: that spreads its wings to catch them and carries  
them aloft.**

**MP 631 Tell out my soul**

**Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer**

**Let us pray:**

Lord our God,

as Jesus faced the future, **give me courage.**

As Jesus cast out demons, **give me confidence.**

As Jesus healed the sick, **give me compassion.**

As Jesus worked to his goal, **give me direction.**

As Jesus died for me, **give me trust,**

in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray:

**ALL:** Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy 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,  
the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

### Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Luke 13:31-35 (NT page 1047)

Reader: Andrew Coutts

### Background to the reading

**According to our reading Jesus found himself** most probably east of the  
Jordan in the Jewish province of Perea, which was with Galilee part of the  
territory of Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas had considerably more authority  
in Galilee than the priestly aristocracy did in Jerusalem; he had executed  
John and could do the same with Jesus. If, however, Jesus leaves  
Antipas's jurisdiction, he will be safe.

Calling someone a “fox” in antiquity would not necessarily imply that the person is sly; instead, it could portray the person as worthless, slanderous, treacherous or (often) cunning in an unprincipled manner. Thus Jesus here does not offer Herod a backhanded compliment. Perhaps more to the point, foxes also would prey on hens (v. 34) when they got the chance.

In the OT some prophets were martyred, and Jewish tradition applied this fate to many other prophets as well. Jesus plays on this tradition; in several days he will enter the city that had murdered the most prophets. Although the martyrdom of prophets matched Jewish tradition, that Jerusalem is the most appropriate site for it would shock many Jewish listeners, because most Jews except the Essenes considered Jerusalem the center of Jewish piety.

Jewish tradition claimed that Jewish people were under God’s wings, and when a Jewish person converted a Gentile, he or she “brought the Gentile under the wings of God’s presence.” The Old Testament also portrays God as an eagle hovering over its offspring like we heard in our call to worship and protecting Israel under his wings, and similarly terrifying Israel’s foes. This is but one image of God’s love for his people. Jesus here applies this divine role and image to himself.

The desolation of the “house” probably refers to the destruction of the temple in a.d. 70. The quotation “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” is from Psalm 118:26, which was sung during this season at the Passover and which the crowds will sing to Jesus at his entry into Jerusalem as we can read in Luke 19:38.

The message: Luke portrays Jesus as a prophet and in our reading he again emphasizes the prophetic role of Jesus. Jesus will die like all the other prophets doing God’s will in the Holy city of Jerusalem. He will not die in Perea, the territory of Herod Antipas. Even in the face of the love and compassion of Jesus, Jerusalem remained adamant. Therefore its temple would be empty of God’s presence, and it would not see Jesus until it was prepared to welcome him as the Messiah. For Luke it was important to say to his readers: The Lord will return in glory. The nature of this blessing may be understood positively, indicating either that Israel will by that time have turned in faith to the Lord, or negatively, indicating that they will be forced

to acknowledge him in the day of judgment but that it will be too late for salvation.

## **MP 450                    Love lifted me**

### **Sermon**

**The text verse for the sermon are:** 34 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.”

Our reading this morning is all about God who showed His love through the actions of Jesus. But in many regards this is rejected love and Jesus' lament is quite moving and depicted by the metaphor of the hen who gathers the chick's under her wings.

So what does a mother hen do?

Well, she watches over her chicks all the time. She makes sure that they drink enough water and eat enough food to get strong. And when there is danger she calls them repeatedly to come and shelter under her wings. It is fascinating to know that whenever a bird of prey is flying over, they only see the mother hen! Yes she protects them with her life.

So Jesus is saying, He was called to the lost people of Israel, but they did not come when He called them for protection. And now they will have to face the consequences when He comes again to judge the living and the dead.

But equally God is calling out to you and me on a daily basis to come under His wings for protection. He is watching us like a mother hen, looking after all our needs. And when there is danger or challenging situations, he calls us for protection. All you and I need to do, is to run to him and stay close to Him. There is no way that you and I will survive the onslaughts of life without His presence. And in a sense it is a relief to know that we have someone whom we can trust, someone who loves us unconditionally. We know we can go out in this world on our own, facing dangers knowingly that He is close by.

Yesterday I experienced this in a concrete way. We went to Beecraigs play park with Henro and Nehan and as you know Nehan is the daring one who decided he wants to go on the big boys' climbing frame and come down from the big slide. SO as he insisted I lifted him onto one of the platforms, saving him to climb the scary ropes to the top. But still there was two challenges ahead. He had to go through a closed tunnel and then crawl over a "ropy steep bridge" to get to the platform to slide down. Everything went fine as I encouraged him from the bottom. He even managed to crawl on the ropy bridge until when he nearly reached the end. He could not manage to get himself on to the platform. But he was calm and did not make a fuss. He knew that I was there to help him. SO then I had to climb on the scary ropes which as some of you know is not my claim to fame. But fortunately there was another man standing close by and he volunteered to climb and rescue Nehan. And Nehan well he was not faced at all by the strange man, because he knew I was close by.

And after thinking about it, I think exactly the same happens with us. Sometimes God encourages us to soldier on and then when He sees that we cannot manage help us either by direct intervention or by using other people or circumstances to help and change our bad situations for the better. And I must admit sometimes, more often than not life seems to be like "climbing a rope ladder" with big holes to fall through.

But God is in charge like a mother hen, always looking after us, protecting us.

May we always hear His voice when He warns us of danger. May we hear His voice when He calls out our names. May we never silence His voice with the meaningless bother of everyday life. Let us focus on God and make sure we have a living relationship with him.

Amen

### **Responding to God's word**

Our offerings are given for the ministry and mission of the church while we sing **MP 617 "Stand up, stand up for Jesus."**

Prayer of thanksgiving: Robert Gardiner

**MP 888**

**Loving shepherd of Thy sheep**

**Benediction Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:**

May God bless you on the journey.

If the load is heavy, may it not break you.

If the path is steep, may you not fall.

If you are tired, may you find rest.

If you have far to go, may a friend greet you at the end.

And The blessing of God almighty,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Be with you all

Now and for evermore

**Sung Amen**