

The Lord still reaches out

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Second Sunday in Lent) is Luke 13:31-35. Jesus was probably in Perea, which was under Herod's jurisdiction. The Pharisees wanted to frighten Jesus into leaving this area and going to Judea. Jesus' life had a predetermined plan that would be carried out, and no harm could come to him until his purpose was accomplished.

It was ironical that Jerusalem was the Judean capital and the site of the temple. Yet, the people had a history of killing God's prophets there. Jerusalem's history is a bloody one. That is why, when Jesus arrives at the city, he will weep over it and lament once again.

The word "gathered" is often used to describe God's gracious return of his people after the exile. When a hen senses danger, she draws her chicks together and protects them with her outstretched wings. It is an image of God offering refuge under his wings. Jesus repeats His determination to press toward Jerusalem and God's will for Him there.

Like wayward chicks, the people stubbornly resist God's will for their lives. Unfortunately, the impenitence mentioned in this passage continues today, keeping people out of God's kingdom.

The Lord still reaches out to His wayward children, earnestly seeking to gather them under His protective wing. The following texts echo Jesus' desires: *"Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11)* *"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9)

The Lord has called us into his kingdom and keeps us there through his Word and Sacraments. These gifts strengthen us so that we can share the wonderful news of forgiveness for everyone. The compassion he has for us he has flowing through us to others. We are his hands, feet and spokesmen.

Prayer: "Delay not, delay not! Why longer abuse The love and compassion of Jesus, your God? A fountain is opened; how can you refuse To wash and be cleansed in His pardoning blood?" Amen. (LW 349:5) (TLSB)

