

Sermon by Rev Onosai Auva'a

Luke 13:31-35

Jesus' unstoppable mission of love

Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem

31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."

32 He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.'

33 In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

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.

35 Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' [a]"

Jesus expresses deep sorrow for Jerusalem. The city has a history of rejecting and killing God's prophets, and He knows it will reject Him too. Yet, instead of anger, Jesus speaks with love, using the image of a mother hen gathering her chicks. He longs to protect and save the people, but they are unwilling. As a result, their city will be left desolate, and they will not see Him again until they recognize Him as the Messiah.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts full of awe and gratitude for the unstoppable mission of love carried out by Jesus. No threat, no earthly power, and no rejection could turn Him away from His purpose to save us. As we reflect on His journey to Jerusalem, His courage in the face of danger, and His deep longing to gather us under His care, we ask that You fill our hearts with the same boldness and love. May we trust in His perfect plan and walk faithfully in His footsteps. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Context

Luke 13:31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus

Luke 13 takes place a few months before Jesus' crucifixion during His final journey to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51) , Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem," – This marks the shift in His ministry where He focuses on heading toward His death and resurrection.

Message

Life is full of obstacles—fears, threats, and rejection. But Jesus shows us what it means to stay faithful to God's calling no matter what stands in the way.

One obstacle are people discouraging us on our journey.

and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."
At first glance, this sounds genuine, but there was more to it.

The Pharisees had Hidden Agendas:

Trying to Scare Jesus Away

Jesus was teaching powerful truths that exposed their hypocrisy and challenged their authority. If they could convince Him to leave, they would no longer have to deal with His influence over the people.

Acting as Messengers for Herod

Herod Antipas had already executed John the Baptist (Luke 9:9) and may have seen Jesus as another threat.

The Pharisees may have been working with Herod to pressure Jesus to leave Galilee.

Setting a Trap

If Jesus ran away, they could discredit Him as weak or fearful.

If He stayed, they could accuse Him of defying Herod, possibly leading to His arrest.

Do we have hidden agendas in life?

Do we use other people as an excuse to get your own way

These are the distractions in which can hinder our direction and journey forward.

As mentioned, Life is full of obstacles—fears, threats, and rejection. But Jesus shows us what it means to stay faithful to God's calling no matter what stands in the way.

What are things standing in our way this morning Church?

1. Spiritual Barriers

Doubt and Unbelief / Past Church Hurt

2. Emotional and Psychological Barriers

Fear of Judgment – Worrying about being criticized for their past. Personal Guilt or Shame. Mental Health Struggles – Anxiety, depression.

3. Social and Cultural Barriers

Negative Experiences with Christians. Different Beliefs – Growing up in another religion or culture may make it hard to connect together. Church Politics & Divisions – Internal conflicts

4. Practical Barriers

Busy Schedules – Work, school, family, or other commitments

5. The Influence of the World

Materialism & Comfort – Some prioritize work, entertainment, or personal success. Distractions – Social media, technology, and entertainment can keep people from spiritual growth. Secular Influence – Society often promotes self-reliance and discourages faith.

In this passage, we see the Pharisees warn Jesus about Herod's plan to kill Him. Whether their warning was genuine or a trick to get Jesus to leave, it didn't matter—Jesus was not afraid. He had a mission to complete, and nothing, not even the threat of death, would stop Him.

Do we follow that same mindset as Jesus did with the ability to stand firm and strong during times when people distract us and lead us astray?

Jesus' response to the Pharisees is powerful. He calls Herod a "fox," a cunning but ultimately powerless figure compared to God's plan. Jesus declares that He will continue His work of healing and casting out demons. His words, "on the third day I will reach my goal," point to His coming resurrection.

Even in the face of danger, Jesus presses on because His love for humanity is greater than His fear of suffering.

Then Jesus turns His attention to Jerusalem, the city that had rejected God's prophets time and again. His words are not angry but sorrowful. He longs to gather the people of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chicks—offering safety, love, and care. Yet, they refused Him. This is the heart of Jesus: even when people reject Him, He still longs to save them.

This passage reminds us of two important truths.

1. Jesus is unstoppable in His mission. No threat or danger could keep Him from fulfilling God's plan.

Jesus deeply loves us, even when we reject Him.

2. He longs to gather and protect us, but we must be willing to accept His love and salvation.

Today, Jesus still calls out to us. He longs to gather us under His wings, offering us His protection and love. Will we respond, or will we turn away like Jerusalem? The choice is ours. Let's be people who embrace His love and trust in His unstoppable mission.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank You for Jesus' unwavering commitment to Your mission. Help us to follow His example, pressing on in faith even when obstacles arise. May we never reject His love but always remain under His care, trusting in His perfect plan. Amen.