

March 7, 2004
Lent 2

"Look at the Love on Jesus' Face As He Goes to Jerusalem"

LUKE 13: 31-35

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 drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' ³³ In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day-- for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! ³⁴ "O 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, but 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.'"

It's amazing how you can read what is going on inside of a person by what you see on their face. If a face looks like this (happy face) you draw the conclusion the person is happy. If you see a face that looks like this (sad face) you assume they are sad. If you see a face that looks like this (angry face) you would draw the conclusion they are mad and you may even want to get as far away from them as possible.

This morning we ask you the question, "What do you see in the face of Jesus as he prepares to go to Jerusalem to suffer and die for our sin?" What we see in the face of Jesus is love, love unlike anything you have ever seen in your husband or wife, your mom or dad, or someone who really cares about you. The disciples of Jesus were so taken back by his love and determination on the face of Jesus, that they even tried to talk him out of going. Remember how Jesus had to turn to Peter and say, "Get behind me Satan." Satan tried to use Peter's good intentions to discourage Jesus from going to Jerusalem.

If there is one thing that I will always remember from seeing the movie "The Passion of the Christ" it is the love that was portrayed in the film on the face of Jesus. This love showed itself on the face of the actor who portrayed Jesus whether it was love shown to the dying thief, or to Peter who denied him, or Judas who betrayed him, or even the enemies who were beating him. That's the love that we see this morning in our text as Jesus talks to the Pharisees about going to Jerusalem. Come and with the Holy Spirit's abundant blessings, let's **"Look at the Love on Jesus' Face As He Goes to Jerusalem"**

1) He shows determination to die for us

Oh, look at the face of Jesus as he prepares to go to Jerusalem. Look at the amount of love and the determination that shows on his face. The Pharisees did not want to see the face of Jesus with its love and determination. That is why they told him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you." As much as the Pharisees hated Jesus, I cannot imagine that they are the least bit concerned that Herod was plotting to kill Jesus. What they really wanted is to scare Jesus into leaving their area of Galilee and staying out of the villages and to stop teaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath.

Sometimes scaring people doesn't work. A man tried to scare people who stole oranges from the orange tree in the front of his yard. He put a sign out that said "one of this oranges is poisoned" hoping this would frighten people so they would not steal his oranges. The next day he found another sign next to his that read, "Two oranges on this tree are poisoned."

Jesus did something similar to the Pharisees who were trying to frighten him into leaving. He turned the tables on them. He was not afraid of Herod. He told them, "Go tell that fox, 'I will drive our demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.'" Instead of showing fear from the threats of Herod, Jesus showed resolve and determination to get the job done and do it right. The word for "I will reach my goal" is the same word Jesus spoke from the cross when he completed his work, those well known words, "it is finished" one word in the Greek- "teteletai." Herod was a fox, just a little fox, sneaking along in the vineyard, hardly a dangerous roaring lion, or growling bear. Bear, fox, lion, snake, a hundred thousand demons working in perfect syncopation, nothing would stop Jesus from accomplishing his purpose of being the Shepherd who would give his life for the sheep. Think of the resolve and the love that must have been on the face of Jesus the night before he died when he told his disciples, "I have come that they might have life and have it to the full."

We see even more determination on Jesus face as he speaks further words to these Pharisees about what he was going to do. "In any case I must keep going, today and tomorrow and the next day, for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem." The plan was to go up to Jerusalem. That's where the sacrifice for the sin of the world was going to happen, and nothing would keep Jesus from that appointed task. Jesus told his disciples again and again what was going to happen in Jerusalem. In Luke 18 we hear him tell his disciples, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him. On the third day he will rise again." Nothing would stop Jesus from going the full way to complete the sacrifice that was necessary to rescue you and me from our sin.

We are in the season of the year called March Madness. This is the time of the year when the best basketball teams in the country begin battling it out for the national championship. Have you ever watched a game, and looked at the expressions on the faces of the players? You can almost tell those who have given up by the way they sit on the bench and hang their heads. Those who want to win show that determination on their faces as they listen to the coach, as they prepare to shoot a free throw. And if it is a close game, down to the wire, one point behind, then the best player on the team wants the ball and wants to take the shot, not because he wants to be the hero. He knows he is the best chance to win the game and the national championship. The players have a term for this. They say, "Give me the rock."

I am so thankful Jesus took my salvation into hands and did it with eagerness and determination written all over his face. How do you feel about your performance this week, this past year? Perhaps sad (hold up face), perhaps mad (hold up face) and even afraid (hold up face) for you know how far your life has fallen short of God's glory and how much you deserve eternal death and punishment. Perhaps you might even have a totally pathetic and hopeless look written on your face. Then we look at Jesus, and see

the determination on the face of Jesus, and we know he has not dropped the ball, as he prayed the night before he died "I have brought you glory by completing the work you gave me to do." Or as he prayed fervently, "Not my will but yours be done!"

2) He shows love for those who reject him

This amazing love and determination on Jesus face even shows itself in his relationship to his enemies. Notice how Jesus prays for the people of Jerusalem who would reject him and yet cry out those horrible words, "Crucify! Crucify!" Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as hen gathers her chickens together and you were not willing."

Have you ever seen a hen gather her chicks around her, under her wing? If the hawk is flying overhead, she emits a clucking sound. The little chicks come running as fast as they can, and hide under her wings. She hunkers down tight to the ground, ready to defend her chicks with her own body if necessary. There was once a prairie fire that destroyed a farmer's crop of wheat. As he went out into the field he notice a prairie hen, dead in the burnt over field. He kicked her scorched bodies, and out from under her body came little chicks that had found safety under the mother's wings.

Jesus wanted the people in Jerusalem to come to him and find protection in the suffering he would undergo for their sin. They did not want these blessings. They refused to acknowledge the depth of their sin and their need for Jesus They did not want him to provide them with the pardon and peace they could never find in themselves.

Perhaps a little story will illustrate how stubbornly the people of Jerusalem refused to accept Jesus and put their trust in him. An older brother was wrestling with his little sister. As they rolled around on the carpet, they became more intense in their wrestling, and soon he was making fun of her how weak she was and how much stronger he was than she was. Suddenly the parents heard the boy scream out in pain, "She bit me. She bit me." The parents came running, and he showed them the fresh teeth marks on the calf of his leg. The parents asked her why she bit her brother and she said, "I didn't do it." Then they said, "How did the marks get there, did he bite himself?" And she said, "Yes, that's how it happened." Then they asked her to show them how he could bite himself, and no matter what she did she could not reach down low enough to show how he could bite. Yet she insisted and stubbornly refused to admit that she was to blame and she had bitten her brother.

That's the way it was with Jerusalem and some of the Jewish people at the time of Jesus. No matter how many stories or parables he told such as the shepherd going after the lost sheep, and the lost son coming home to his dad, the people stubbornly refused to listen to Jesus words and believe they needed him. If you could have seen the face of Jesus as he spoke these words, you would have seen the deepest love, perhaps even tears for these people.

He knew what would someday happen to Jerusalem when the Romans put the city to siege. It would become desolate. He knew that the only time some would recognize him was on judgment day when finally they would admit the words of Psalm 118 were true,

"Blessed is he who come in the name of the Lord." Then they will realize the only blessed ones are those who come in the name of the Lord. Those who reject the name of the Lord will be cast off forever. On Palm Sunday, Jesus wept over Jerusalem when they sang these words, "Blessed he who comes in the name of the Lord" because so many still rejected him.

This past week one of members Andy Hill went home to be with his Lord. He is privileged to be with Jesus in his presence and he is experiencing the glory of the Lord. The words of the psalm 118 are true for Andy "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." I am sure that he would be pleased to have me tell all of you here, just look at the face of Jesus, look at his determination, and look at how much he cares about you, and even wants the people who reject him to believe in him. Put your faith and trust and hope in that love, and then look forward to someday joining with all the saints and seeing Jesus face to face, just as he is. What a joyful moment that will be to see Jesus face to face in glory. Amen.