



God's Desire to Save

Luke 13:34-35

34 " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!

35 "See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' "

I grew up watching nature specials. I was raised in an unbelieving household, so while my parents didn't take me to church on Sunday, every Saturday morning they would drop me off at the Cora Hartshorn Arboretum where a kindly old naturalist by the name of Mr. Vitzuhm – funny isn't it, he's probably gone by now – and I never knew what his first name was – would regale us with stories of turtles and bears and then we would inevitably watch one of those 1950s Ranger Rick style movies about Bear Cubs or Racoons.

One of the inevitable impressions I came away with was how oblivious most young animals are to danger. The bear cub spots a porcupine, "here's something interesting to play with" he thinks and in the next scene Jr. has a snout full of quills. Later he decides that its time to explore the mountain lion den and only survives because momma bear comes to his rescue. Again and again in those films, the theme is momma bear or momma racoon rescuing her little ones from the terrible danger they are in.

Chicks (and by that I mean young chickens) are similarly oblivious and far more defenseless than even the average bear cub. But God has provided for them as well, although they may not be aware that the aggressive young rooster, or the circling chicken hawk, or the prowling weasel is a threat, the mother hen is. The moment one of these gets too close, she begins to cluck in a particular way that tells her chicks that there is a danger about and they come scurrying home to mother. Then that mother hen will lift up her wings and scoop those chicks underneath. She will lay down her life first before she will allow anything to get to her brood. God has hard-wired that mother hen in such away that her number one concern is to watch over and protect her young ones, and he has also built-in to those chicks an instinctive understanding of what her alarm call means, and a willingness to obey it.

IF only young children worked that way. You perceive danger, you call your child to you, making sounds that probably sound to them a lot like clucking. They pretend not to hear, or they begin to return at a molasses in wintertime kind of pace and when the finally get back to you, the constant danger is that they will wander off again almost immediately.

You see the problem is that children are not only not hard-wired like the chicks in the barnyard, they have been affected by the fall. Their natures are not perfectly good, far from it, they are born into this world with hearts inclined towards rebellion and evil. God Himself declared in Genesis 6:21 "*the*

imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." David wisely acknowledged that when he confessed in Psalm 51:5 *"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."* (I am quoting the NIV translation there because it better conveys his meaning in that verse)

So our children are unfortunately inclined to do not what is right, but what is *right in their own eyes*. Mommy may be calling me, but I'm having fun over here in the road. *I don't hear her*. God is very gracious though, and while their hearts may be hard, he has made their bottoms sensitive. As Proverbs 22:15 beautifully puts it *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him."*

But there is some foolishness that not even the rod can drive out. In the poignant verses we just read, Jesus is lamenting over Jerusalem and her own **intractable foolishness**. You remember that He has told his disciples on several occasions that Jerusalem is where he is headed and that would have made sense to them. Peter has already made that good confession of Luke 9:20 expressing the belief of the disciples that He was the Christ of God. Christ being the Greek word for Messiah, the Anointed One of God. So now that the Messiah has come were else would he go but Jerusalem, the capital – there to begin his Messianic reign and usher in a golden age that would make David's pale by comparison. But Jesus has also told them that in Jerusalem He will not be greeted by the nation as its king and redeemer. Far from it, his destination is not an earthly throne but a wretched hill called Golgotha – the place of the skull.

But the disciples don't seem to hear that part. They hear the parts about being the Messiah and going to Jerusalem, but they become selectively deaf when Jesus says things like: *"The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."*

At heart, the disciples, like so many of their countrymen still want the conquering hero, not the suffering servant.

Jesus knows full well that final rejection by his countrymen, lies ahead of Him and He is lamenting that rejection. But not because of what it means for Him – *betrayal, humiliation, scourging, crucifixion, death*. But because of what it means for them.

I was talking with a fellow PCA pastor a little while ago, and he had commented that one of the things that He particularly disliked about Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* is that it encouraged indeed it expected and wanted the viewer to weep for Jesus. My friend pointed out that that emphasis went exactly against what Jesus had commanded!

You remember that as Jesus was going up to the cross and the women of Jerusalem were weeping for Him what he said to them? Luke 23:28 *But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*

29 "For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!'

30 "Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" '

31 "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

Jesus in Luke 13:34 is weeping and sorrowing for Jerusalem, His heart is breaking for the Children of Israel, the Jewish People. Why? Because of what he knows the crucifixion will mean to that unbelieving nation.

Verse 34: ***"How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!"***

There Jesus is undoubtedly referring to the times that he had already visited the city and preached the Good News in the streets, and houses, and the temple. He had proclaimed to them that their promised savior was finally with them, and yet they still would not believe. He had desired to gather them to Himself, to give them protection from the danger, the danger of the wrath to come that he could see approaching, and yet they would not come to Him. In His awesome Humility he compares himself to a mother hen who clucked to gather her chicks that she might save them, and they would not come to her.

But here Christ is speaking not just as another prophet, but as the Messiah, the Son of God, the very one who had sent prophet after prophet to them to warn and to exhort. To prepare them for His coming, and yet like the wicked workers in the parable of the vineyard they had stoned and killed his messengers one after another. And now finally the Prince has Come, the King of Kings has come to His own. Will they hear Him? Will they Come to Him? No – ***He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.***

And so what will happen to them? Why is Christ's heart breaking? Because Jesus sees the storm clouds coming, he knows the doom that will follow their rejection of the Messiah:

Luke 19:41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

43 "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,

44 "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Had the Jews accepted that Christ was the Messiah, and that what he had come to deliver them from was the yoke of bondage to sin, and the wages of sin which is death, then they would not have grown impatient and discontent. So discontent that in 66 AD they grew tired of waiting for an earthly Messiah, and rebelled against the Roman occupation. After 4 years of bloody war and siege so horrifying that reading the account of it in Joseph still turns the stomach, Jerusalem was sacked and all that Jesus foretold in Luke 19:41 came to pass.

Their house, no longer God's house for he Had left it on account of the idolatry and rejection of their people is desolated. The acceptable day of salvation is passing, and Jesus assures those who rejected Him that the next time they see Him will be when he returns in glory. On that day:

"we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:10-12)

Before I get to applications, some have looked at these verses and said that in essence that there cannot have been anything like election or predestination to salvation, because obviously Jesus *desired* fervently that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would repent and believe the Gospel and be saved but that they obstinately would not.

A'Brakel deals very well with this objection:

"The fact that there is such a specific election has been proven beyond the shadow of a doubt. It is equally true that there is an unconditional offer of the gospel, to which the promise of salvation is annexed upon the conditions of faith and repentance. There is no contradiction here, for the one is absolute and the other conditional. The one is a decree, whereas the other is a command. There is a difference between the objective of the worker and the ultimate realization of his work. It is a manifestation of God's goodness to present the gospel to the unrepentant with a conditional promise, and it is man's duty to obey that gospel. Election does not prevent the unrepentant from obedience, but rather their own evil nature, and God is thus glorified when He damns them for their own disobedience." – *Wilhelmus A'Brakel*

The General Call to repent and believe goes out whenever the Gospel is preached, but unless it is accompanied by the effectual calling of God's Holy Spirit that General Call will never result in coming to faith. Because only the Holy Spirit can change the rocky heart of the natural man:

1 Cor. 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Romans 9:15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

1) Therein lies the First Application: Divine Sovereignty AND Human Responsibility
Is 65.2 I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts;

If at the final day, you like Jerusalem have not come to the Lord, you will have none to blame but yourself.

2) Not turning, not repenting and believing, is not only a disappointment to Christian teachers, parents, friends ministers, it is a source of Grief to Christ Ezek 33:11 "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'"

3) The Day is fast approaching when you will no longer hear the offer. You shall not See Me, and so if they will condemn the offer freely given by those who come in the name of the Lord. A day will come Luke 13:27 27 "***But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'***"

28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.

A day of Danger is approaching, if you don't have the wings of Christ to protect you from the wrath to come

Deut. 32:9 For the LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance.

10 "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.

11 As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings,

1 Th. 1:9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.