

Luke 13:31-35

³¹At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." ³²He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' ³⁴Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

Jesus is determined to do things he knew were in the way the Father had ordained. In the wilderness he had been tempted to do things for short-term success. He would not go that way.

We here find the Pharisees warning him to get away from the region in Galilee for it was a dangerous place for him, as Herod wanted to kill him.

Jesus would not leave because of their warning he was doing things in the timing of his Father. He knew it was in Jerusalem that prophets before him found death and he would in turn find the same fate. Jesus was determined to go the way of Jerusalem and on the way the crowd would shout, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

There seems to be the characters here for a fairy tale or a children's tale. We have mention of a fox and a hen. Many are the keepers of chickens who have had problems with a fox or two. But that is not the story Luke is telling.

We have seen on a television screens many buildings on fire in Ukraine. Earlier this week, on Monday, there was a fire in a tower block in Whitechapel, east London, which had very little news coverage.

Residents of the tower block say they had complained and were concerned about the fire alarms and a "stay put" policy in the building in case a fire was to break out. On Monday the major fire did break out. In the light of the Grenfell Tower Blaze there must have been fear. Dozens of people had to be evacuated from the Relay Building in Whitechapel High Street on Monday as flames were seen coming from the 17th floor of the block and debris was falling to the ground.

Fire also causes fear amongst animals. When there is a fire in a farmyard the animals panic. Perhaps it was this image Jesus had in mind as he used the image of a hen sheltering its chicks under her wings. If an animal cannot escape some have developed techniques for protecting their young. There are stories of farmyard fires, which when investigated have revealed hens that have been burnt with their chicks till alive under the shelter of their wings; their willingness to lay down their life for their young.

Jesus desires to shelter us under the shadow of his wings but we must be willing to accept that shelter and place of safety.

In a worship song by Bob Silvester and David J. Hadden we find these words

Living under the shadow of His wing
We find security
Standing in His presence we will bring
Our worship, worship, worship to the King.

In the shelter Jesus offers us we are secure and can, and should, worship.

We pray for those in Ukraine who have sought shelter in underground bunkers and who seek shelter in safe places inside and outside their country.