

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Grant Park, Illinois
The Second Sunday in Lent, March 17, 2019
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."

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.' In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!"

"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! 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.'"

One of the more popular TV shows over the last 15 years is the show Survivor. It dumps people in a deserted location and uses a process of elimination to eventually figure out a winner. It is a game which tests people's limits. It tests people mentally, emotionally and physically. Some people are really good at the challenges and can endure a lot. However, some people don't have a very high limit and are eliminated rather quickly.

Survivor helps illustrate an important fact about each and every single one of us. We all have limits. They might be mental, emotional or physical, but we all have limits. Our energy and abilities have bounds. I want to use this idea about limits and bounds to help us explore our gospel lesson. I want to look at our Savior's boundless love. This love takes him to his certain death. It is a love which sorrows for those who reject him. It is a love which extends hope to his followers.

The first thing we will look at is how our savior's boundless love took him to his certain death. "**At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, 'Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.'** 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.'** In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!"

One day a group of Pharisees came to Jesus and expressed a concern to him. They warned him about a plot which King Herod had developed. This plot intended to take Jesus' life. These men came and warned Jesus about it. "**At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, 'Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.'**" It looks like the Pharisees were expressing concern about Jesus' safety, but Jesus knew better.

He knew these men weren't being entirely honest with him. Herod may have been a threat to him, but Jesus knew these men were jealous of his popularity. They were using Herod's threat to serve their own evil purposes. Jesus was popular in Galilee where he had a large following and a big base of support. They were trying to scare him away from this support. They were trying to force him to go to Jerusalem where they would have more people on their side and the upper hand over Jesus.

Jesus sees through their two sided nature. "**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.'**" Jesus indicates he will not be pushed around or intimidated. He will continue to go about his business and he will do it in the manner which he chooses. He won't make his choices based on what other people think of him or how they feel about him.

Jesus won't be pushed around, but is this the source of his boundless love or is there another reason? "**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.'** In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!" Did anything unusual stick out to you about Jesus' words?

These Pharisees come and warn Jesus about a threat to his life. They want him to run and save his life, but what does Jesus mention? He says he is going to Jerusalem to die. He won't try and save his life in

Jerusalem. He is going there to die. He knows the cross is coming. He isn't afraid of dying, but he will die when he chooses to die. This choice displays our savior's boundless love. We don't like the thought of dying, but Jesus willingly chose to die out of love for you and me.

We see this boundless love in action in the next verse. "**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!**" Jesus knows what is going to happen to him in Jerusalem. He knows the people of Jerusalem are going to reject him and kill him, but what is his attitude towards the people of Jerusalem?

"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!" Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. He has tried numerous times to reach the people of the city. He has tried to gather them to himself much like a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but the people didn't want him. They resisted him and ran away from him.

How long do we continue to pursue someone who has resisted us or ran away from us? I would imagine it wouldn't take long and we would give up. We might chase after them three, four or five times before we'd hit our limit and give up. We would write the people off and move on, but our limitations display the beauty of Jesus' boundless love. Jesus knew what was waiting for him in Jerusalem. He knew these people would resist him and would kill him.

Yet, despite the fact he knew what was going to happen to him, Jesus willingly chose to go to Jerusalem. He didn't run away. He didn't avoid Jerusalem. He went to Jerusalem and continued to try and gather his enemies to himself even though they killed him. Jesus' love for his enemies has no limits. He continued to reach out to them because of his love for them. He shows this boundless love to Judas. He shows it to Pilate. He shows it to his enemies when he prays for them on the cross.

Jesus' love for his enemies is boundless and it causes him a great deal of sorrow when his enemies reject it. "**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!**" Jesus grieves because the boundless love which he offers to his enemies is rejected since they want nothing to do with it.

We might look at Jesus' boundless love and think to ourselves, "I don't come close to measuring up to it. My love is so limited. I don't grieve when someone rejects me. I reject them. I look at Jesus' boundless love and it fills me with guilt. I don't know how Jesus could love me. I've failed him so many times." Do you know what? It is normal to feel guilty about it. Our love has limits because we are sinful. Jesus' love is boundless because he is sinless.

I don't want any of us to go home feeling guilty because we don't measure up to Jesus. We will never be able to measure up to him and drive ourselves crazy trying to do it. What should we do instead? We should remember Jesus' boundless love applies to us too. Jesus came to die for all people. He came to

die for the people who rejected and killed him, but he also came to die for you and me who are gathered here today.

What is the difference between us and the people who rejected and killed Jesus? The difference is faith. Jesus' enemies resisted him and his payment for sin. However, we know our love is limited because we are sinners, but we trust Jesus' death has paid for the guilt of our sins. Jesus makes us a promise in our lesson. He says, "**I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'**"

Jesus promises the ones who call him savior will call him blessed. Why will they call him blessed? They will call him blessed because they understand what he has done for them. They know and trust he has liberated them from sin and guilt. They know and trust Jesus' boundless love means he is their savior. Jesus isn't their example who makes them feel guilty when they don't measure up to his perfect standard. He forgives their failures. He removes their guilt.

This is why we call Jesus blessed. We call him blessed because he has blessed us with his boundless love which removes our sin and guilt. We can't come to this conclusion on our own. We need someone to guide us to this conclusion and God has provided someone to lead us to this conclusion. He sends the Holy Spirit to work this faith into our hearts. He is the one who leads us to trust in Jesus and call him our blessed savior.

This faith leads us to look forward to the day we will see Jesus again. "**I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'**" Jesus promises those who trust in him will one day rejoice when they see him coming in the name of the Lord. Why will we rejoice and call him blessed? We will rejoice and call him blessed because we know Jesus is coming back to take us to be with him in heaven.

Humans have limits. We are limited physically, mentally and emotionally. Our lesson today shows us our savior's love is not like ours because it knows no bounds. This boundless love led him to a certain death, it led him to grieve over those who rejected him, but most importantly of all it extends hope to those who call him savior. I pray this boundless love continues to give us hope until we say, "**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**" Amen.