

Under the Wings of God

Text: Luke 13:34

Readings: Psalm 91; Luke 13:31-35

PowerPoint of punctuation

An English professor wrote the words "Woman without her man is a savage" on the blackboard and directed his students to punctuate it correctly.

The men wrote: "Woman, without her man, is a savage."

The women wrote: "Woman! Without her, man is a savage."

Why I start with this PowerPoint is because I think it is funny...but also interesting.

Our perspective on things are different...depending on who you are and what you're thinking.

In this case...whether you are male or female.

With the story that Fiona read, 'The Meanest Mother' again it depends on who you are depending on age.

The mother loved her daughter and did what she thought was best.

From the child's perspective...she thought things should be different.

We can all relate to that!

I love my mum...she has done heaps for me over the years...

But there are always things that you wish she hadn't said or done.

I did not always appreciate/want/accept the things about her instructing me.

But she always did what was best for me.

And she will always be my mum...

Still likes to tell me what to do and think.

It all has to do with perspective.

Mums will always be mums and try and guide you.

Sometimes we need to listen to them.

Children (young and old) will always think they know best.

Our perspective of life is different.

I think the same thing can be said of God and our relationship with him.

God loves us...even when we are unlovable...when we stuff up.

From our perspective sometimes God seems cruel and indifferent,

Uncaring and even mean in the expectations he has of us.

But the verses we have read together throw a very different picture of God...

Read together Luke 13:34

'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.'

Can you hear the depth of passion and the heartache in the cry?

Jesus is expressing that yearning of God.

Jesus was apparently in Herod's territory.

Some Pharisees came and threatened him, "Leave and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."

Herod (Antipas) was the ruler of Galilee and Perea.

He was the son of Herod the Great. (v.31)

Jesus was not moved by the threat.

He replied, “You go tell that fox this message: I still have work to do... (V32)

Jesus was simply saying, nothing would stop Him from doing what He came to accomplish.
His life and ministry had a predetermined plan.
He had his own timetable.
No power on earth can harm Him until the appointed time.

Then Jesus looked in the direction of Jerusalem and He wept over their wicked ways.
God sent them **prophets** but what did they do? They killed them.
God sent them **servants** but what did they do? They stoned them.
And now He who is God came down to be with them and what did they do?
They rejected Him.

They rejected His miracles, miracles that God alone can perform:
the blind received sight, the paralyzed walked, the dead was risen, the lepers were healed.
He also drove out demons but they attributed it to Satan.(Luke 11:15)

They rejected His message of truth, His teachings.
They nullified the commands of God by observing their own traditions. (Luke 11:28)

They rejected His Messiahship; the promised Messiah, the Christ, the Savior that all Israel had been waiting for and they plotted to kill Him. (Mark 3:6)

Despite His people’s rejection of Him,
He turned to Jerusalem and with deep sincere passion, wept over the city.

There are many pictures in the Bible that describe God’s nature and character:
He is a rock, the door, a shepherd, the light...and many others.

God’s character is so multi-faceted that none of these images,
in themselves, fully communicate the richness of His nature.
Each one gives a small insight into how he relates to us.

This image is an unusual one...have you ever thought of God as a mother hen?

Of course, God isn’t literally a hen with wings and feathers.
The point is God wants to shelter and protect us from harm.

We can learn something about God by understanding a mother hen.

When we lived in Geelong we had a number of young chickens, but we never had a mother hen...
So there are lessons from the chicken we never learned.

Recently at Asher’s Kinder they watched chickens hatch from the shells...
They got to hold them and see the chicks cuddle down in their hands,
looking for protection from their mother.

In Pilgrim’s Progress, John Bunyan’s character Christian is on a journey.
In a part of his journey he learns a lesson from a hen.
What Bunyan observed about the hen can teach us something about God.

1. A hen constantly calls her chicks.

Bunyan says that each hen has a distinctive cluck...
so the baby chicks can easily find her in the yard.

Her chicks recognize her call...and come running.
Jesus is constantly calling us to himself (Matt 11:28)

God's voice come to us in the maze of life and he calls to us.
He calls to us to come to Him, to believe in his promises for our lives.
He calls us to believe He has given us salvation.
He calls us to be in a right relationship with him again.
He calls us to be his people, to worship and praise him as our God.
He calls us in grace. He calls us in Love.
He calls us to be His.

God's heart longed for his people.
He longed for them to trust, to believe in Him...but they would not.
So God came to live among them, to walk with his people, to talk with his people.

God is like the ruler in the following:

Long ago, there ruled in Persia a wise and good king. He loved his people. He wanted to know how they lived and about their hardships. He dressed in the clothes of a working man or a beggar, and went to the homes of the poor. No one whom he visited thought that he was their ruler. One time he visited a very poor man who lived in a cellar. He ate the coarse food the poor man ate. He spoke cheerful, kind words to him. Then he left. Later he visited the poor man again and disclosed his identity by saying, "I am your king!"

The king thought the man would surely ask for some gift or favor, but he didn't.

Instead he said, "You left your palace and your glory to visit me in this dark, dreary place. You ate the course food I ate. You brought gladness to my heart! To others you have given your rich gifts. To me you have given yourself!"

This is the way in which Jesus came to us.
He came disguised as a lowly man, but brought to us so much.
He met our every need.

God yearns for you to accept this gift of salvation.
God yearns for this relationship with Him be right again.

An unknown author wrote,
Longfellow could take a sheet of paper, write a poem on it and make it worth sixty thousand dollars.
That is talent.
Rockefeller could sign a piece of paper and make it worth millions.
That is capital.
A mechanic can take material worth \$5 and make it into an article worth \$50.
That is skill.
A merchant can buy an article for eighty cents, put it on his counter and sell it for a dollar.
That is business.

But God can take a worthless, sinful life, wash it, cleanse it, put his Holy Spirit within it and make it a blessing to all humanity.
That is salvation.

So Bunyan learned that the chicken has a distinctive cluck to call her young...and so God calls us.
He also learned:

2. A hen shelters the chicks from harm.

When danger comes the mother hen squawks furiously to call the chicks to herself and settles them under her wings till the danger has passed.

I heard and read this story that comes in many different versions, and seems to date from the 19th C.

During a long, dry summer a fire suddenly sprang up in an area where there were many settlers. It raged through the country burning in its path several farmyards and houses. After the fire had passed over, a relief party came from a neighboring town, to see if they could offer help. Riding past a charred cottage one of the men saw what appeared to be a black hen sitting on the ground. On going up to it, he found that it evidently had been a hen, but was quite dead, the head and back being burned almost to a cinder, but the bird sat in such a striking way, with her wings partly spread out, that he gave her a kick with his foot, when three little chickens ran out—alive.

Bravely the poor mother hen had covered them, in face of the roaring fire; and bravely she had sat still in the midst of the scorching flames choosing rather to be burned to death than that one of her chicks should perish. She saved her chicks from the fire. (<http://www.caterhamchristiancentre.org.uk/messages/20030504.htm>)

This story shows us how the Lord, who planted this instinct in the heart of the timid hen, to defend her chicks in the hour of danger would be an image of Jesus reaching out in compassion to the people.

We talk about mothers giving up the last piece of pie...so everyone gets more.

Here is the hen giving up her lives for her chicks.

And we have Jesus giving up his life for us...on the cross.

His arms like wings, spread out on the cross to cover your sins saving you from the fires of hell.

As I said at the start...life is about perspective.

The people of Jesus day viewed God as a wrathful God...

Who demanded sacrifices for their sins.

He was distant and unapproachable...except through the priest.

But here is Jesus, God in the flesh, appealing to the people through parables, teaching and miracles.

He was showing a new and different side to a loving God.

You see Jesus' message was one of hope, rather than of repentance.

It was one that was meant to bring them into a much closer relationship with God.

Of course, Jesus was not only speaking of the people of his time.

He was definitely speaking of our time as well.

Today, God is still gathering us in each and every day.

He is there to protect us, even when we are not aware of it.

God is still calling to his people.

He still reaches out to us at every opportunity.

Whether it be through prayer, the Word, or ways that are personal to you.

He wants us to know He is there to protect each and everyone of us.

Unfortunately, like the Jews of Jesus' time, people in our time also run from God.

They too look to silence His prophets.

We live in a time when self-esteem and individualism are more important than the truth.

Some people do not want hear what is wrong in their lives.

They only want to know they are doing all right.

Jesus came to where we are, in order to lift us up to where He is.

He longs to gather us in to Him and to give us the hope, love and peace
that can ONLY come through knowing and believing in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Listen to the call to come and believe his promises.

Listen to the call of grace...your sins are forgiven.

Listen to the call of Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus weeps because the Jews didn't seek shelter under his love.

Are you hiding under the wings of God?

Do you feel safe in the love of God?

Some of you have wandered away from that protection and love of God.

Today Jesus invites you to run under His wings of safety and warmth

Smart chickens stay close to the mother hen because of the danger in the yard.

We need to stay close to the protection of God.