



## Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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March 4, 2007  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent  
Luke 13:31-35  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Jeremiah 26:8-15  
Psalm of the Day: Psalm 42-43  
Second Lesson: Philippians 3:17-4:1  
Gospel: Luke 13:31-35

### On the Way to Jerusalem

Many of you probably know that my parents are here visiting from Michigan. They came over to watch basketball games and now, because of the snow, they have been stuck with me longer than they planned. They are sitting right behind me. If you notice some snoring, that's my Dad.

The plan was to take them back this last Thursday and Friday—drive over Thursday and drive back Friday. So guess what I spent a lot of time doing Wednesday night and Thursday morning—sitting and looking at the television and radar screens on the internet, trying to figure out what the weather was going to be like and whether or not I could actually get on the way to Michigan and take them back. Well, because they are here, you can see what the decision was, right?

But before you make a decision like that, you look at all those different things. You weigh what you think is a good idea or a bad idea, if you can make it or if you can't and all that, and we decided this last week that it wasn't the time to get on the way to Michigan. But tomorrow morning, Lord willing, it will be the time to get on the way to Michigan.

Jesus didn't look at radar and Doppler 5000 or 6000 or whatever it was. Jesus was confronted with temptations from Satan over and over again as he was on the way to Jerusalem. He had to look at them, see them, recognize them and then react to them. That is some of what we see this morning as we look at these words from Luke 13. We see Jesus on the way to Jerusalem, and as we see him, we see that there were many that were not willing, but we also hear the comforting words of our Savior saying again and again, "I will." That is an amazing thing to think about when you just stop and consider what Jesus is saying when he says "I will" even though there are so many who would not.

When we meet Jesus here in Luke 13, he is north. He is closer to Galilee where Herod was one of the tetrarchs who was ruling in that area. He is there and had been teaching and preaching. Some Pharisees come to him and say, "Jesus, good rabbi, great teacher, nice guy—we are sure worried about you. You should get on the way and get out of this area because Herod wants to kill you." So the question you have to ask yourself of these Pharisees is, was there a genuine concern for Jesus' well being? I think probably not. Remember, these are the people that were plotting together with others against Jesus and wanting to kill Jesus. I think part of this request is "Let's get him towards Jerusalem where there are bigger groups and where you have more

influence over people and where we can then find an opportunity and seize that opportunity and kill him.”

But then again, might Herod have wanted to kill him? Sure. Remember, who did Herod think that Jesus was? I’m guessing he kind of woke up sweaty at night a few times because he had thought Jesus was John the Baptist come back to life. What did John the Baptist do that Herod wasn’t so crazy about? He looked Herod in the eye and said “You’re a sinner. That woman that you are living with; you are in sin. You are not listening to God. Repent.” That ended up getting John the Baptist’s head on a silver platter.

So, could Herod have wanted Jesus dead also? Sure. But here is Herod, a ruler that has the power to carry out this threat—if it is legitimate—and how does Jesus answer it? “You go tell that fox”—I don’t know about you, but for you kids back there, I wouldn’t suggest calling Mr. Muchka “that fox.” I don’t think that is something you say to someone in authority. You are saying they are wily, conniving and cunning. That comes from the line of Judah, right? He recognizes him as a threat, but not a threat to the line of Judah because he was there and he knew what was going to happen. He recognized that this was another one of Satan’s attacks on him. But he says, “I am still going to go. I am going to Jerusalem. I know what waits for me there. I have had this love for Jerusalem all my life, from eternity. You are my chosen people and I have always wanted to gather you like a hen gathers her chicks, but you would not. The Pharisees would not. Herod would not. The other people would not.” Jesus’ heart goes out because he knows as true God, they would not. They think they are manipulating Christ, but Christ, as true God, also knows what is in everyone’s heart.

Think about that statement for a minute—Christ knows what’s in all of our hearts. If Jesus were to walk into our gym right now and say, “Oh Zion Morrison, Zion Morrison...,” how would the rest of the sentence go? “How often I have longed to hear your praises...but you sing them half-heartedly because you don’t like the tune.” “How often I have longed to strengthen you and sustain you so you can face the miseries of living in a sin-filled world...but you had a remote control in your hand.” “Oh Zion Morrison, how often I have longed to put my arms around you and sustain you...but you embrace the things of this world. You turn to chemicals for comfort—in a bottle, in liquid, in a powder. You went in another direction. You turned to someone else for comfort instead of to me.” I don’t know how he would fill it in, but I do know some of the things that he would say about me personally. That is scary, isn’t it? He has always longed to reach out directly to me, directly to you, and we have head knowledge of this. We have stood in front of God’s altar and said, “I would rather die than fall away from you, Jesus.” But think of how often you and I have walked the other way as though we had something better to do.

It’s easy to think about, “Those Pharisees, that Herod, those people—they just didn’t know what they were missing.” It’s harder to admit at times that you and I know what we are missing and we still go the other way.

Here is the part that I can’t understand and that I can’t fathom. When I say to Jesus, “I would rather not do that right now Jesus, you should understand that.” He continually

looks me in the eyes and says, “I will. I will go to Jerusalem for you. I will show you love that is beyond imagining.” Think about that. I cannot fathom that kind of love. If someone looks me in the eye over and over and over and says to me, “Pastor, get lost. I don’t really care.” I am going to give up on them—sorry! That is just the way it is going to be. But Jesus looks at me and at you time after time and says, “I will go to Jerusalem. I know what is waiting for me there. I will go and give my life and carry your sins for all those times that you would not. I will take them to that cross. I will stay on that cross. I will pay for every last one of your sins. I will because I have longed to gather you into my arms since before time began. I don’t care how stubborn you are. I am going to keep on loving you no matter what. I am going to keep giving you my body and blood. I am going to keep washing away your sins in the waters of baptism. I am going to keep tugging at the strings of your heart with my gospel that you get in the Word, and I am going to do it over and over and over again because that is what I do as the perfect, loving Savior.”

He keeps coming to us. He keeps on loving us. He keeps forgiving us. And then that, my friends, is why we also say “I will. I will live for you Jesus. I know that I won’t do it perfectly, but I am going to work better at it. I am going to work better at knowing you better so that I am motivated by your love. I will grow in my knowledge of you. I will serve you without moaning and groaning and complaining. I will do it because I love you Jesus. Then when I fail again at doing that, I will run to your arms and say, ‘Lord, take away those sins as well.’”

And he will. He does, because he is and always will be our perfect, loving Savior.