

Jesus at the Center

Luke 13:31-32

"At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' And he said to them, 'Go and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.'"

The Gospel reading for the second Sunday in Lent reminds us that Jesus was neither a stranger to nor ignorant of the schemes and deceptions of political figures. Some of Jesus' teachings—such as *"Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last"* (Luke 13:30)—along with the large crowds he attracted through healing the sick, casting out demons, and ministering to those on the margins of society, alarmed those in power who wished to maintain the status quo.

The world of Jesus' time, much like our world today, was not lacking in leaders like Herod Antipas—obsessed with status and authority. Jesus' response to the Pharisees' warning, *"Go and tell that fox..."* reflects his keen awareness of the cunning and treacherous nature of the politically powerful. In biblical times, foxes were seen as shrewd, deceitful, and often destructive to livestock—an apt description of Herod the tetrarch, who infamously ordered the beheading of John the Baptist.

Despite threats and political schemes, Jesus remained unwavering in his mission. He continued to lift-up the lowly, proclaim release to the captives, give sight to the blind, and declare freedom for the oppressed. Not even the threat of death deterred him from setting his course toward Jerusalem, where he would suffer and give his life on the cross. Like the Hebrew prophets who had gone before him, Jesus would ultimately lay down his life at the hands of the so-called powerful. Yet, his response was not one of bitterness but of deep compassion, as seen in his lament over Jerusalem and his longing to gather God's people as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings (Luke 13:33-34).

No matter what time and season, it is a privilege to serve the Lord and press on with the calling Christ has given us. Thank you for your continued care and heart for God's people, especially those on the margins of society, through your ministries. We are also grateful to those who contributed to the **Presbytery of San Gabriel's Eaton Fire Fund**, trusting that these resources will reach those who need them most. Praise God for the joyous celebration (standing room only) of the ministry and mission of Eagle Rock Presbyterian Church last week. It was a celebration of 110 years of glorious ministry which started in 1915. According to Sandy Tice, the celebration successfully pointed out "the welcoming spirit, flexibility, and creativity of the church" and that "much good was done in Christ's name, and God was glorified in the life of the

church.” We are all looking forward to seeing what God will do and is already doing through Interwoven by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ is continuing, out of his relentless love and passion, to gather his people as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

On a final but quick note, I wanted to mention a Lenten resource I failed to include last week. For those who enjoy watching Easter and Holy Week-themed films at this time of year, *The Last Supper* is a new Jesus movie that was just released in theaters last Friday. While it is not a big-budget Hollywood production, it is rated PG-13 and may be of interest to those looking for more options in faith-based films this season.

May God bless us as we journey through this season of Lent together!

Peter Tan-Gatue