

“God’s Plan Will Be Accomplished”
Luke 13:31-33
Second Sunday in Lent 2019
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Rifle, Colorado
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For our meditation on God’s Word this morning, I invite you to turn to the first three verses of the Gospel of Luke, chapter 13, where we read:

³¹ In that hour, some of the Pharisees came to [Jesus], saying, “Depart and get away from here, because Herod wants to kill you.” ³² Jesus said to them, “Go and tell that fox. Behold! I cast out demons and heal people today and tomorrow and on the third day I finish my work.” ³³ Nevertheless, I must continue on today, tomorrow, and the next day because it is not possible that a prophet should be killed outside of Jerusalem.”

In Jesus’s Name. Amen.

Jesus is in Galilee. Herod wants to kill Him. Some Pharisees must have had connections to Herod’s court to be able to learn about this. They tell Jesus.

Herod was one of the sons of King Herod the Great. King Herod was the “Herod” in the narrative of Jesus’s birth. He tried to kill Jesus when He was born. Now Herod, his son, wants to kill Jesus.

Herod had executed John the Baptist. The threat Herod poses to Jesus is real. But whose purpose and plan will be accomplished and prevail? Herod’s or God’s?

By calling Herod a fox, Jesus seems to be suggesting that Herod is cunning and ruthless, preying on the innocent and defenseless. Jesus is no threat to Herod. Jesus has other objectives. Yet, Herod wants to do away with Jesus.

In response, Jesus says to tell Herod, “Today and tomorrow I cast out demons and heal the sick. On the third day, I finish my work.”

The phrase “on the third day” should stand out for us. It takes us back to Luke 9, vv. 21-22 where Jesus is telling His disciples that He must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders of the people. He will also be rejected by the chief priests in Jerusalem and the scribes, and be killed, and *on the third day*, rise again.

In response to Herod’s threat, Jesus tells us that His work is not complete in casting out demons and healing the sick. It is complete on the third day, when He rises from the dead. On that day, our redemption from sin, death, and the Devil, is complete.

Then Jesus says that He must continue on today, tomorrow, and the next day in getting to Jerusalem, because it is not possible that a prophet should die outside of Jerusalem.

When Jesus says that He must continue on, He is stating that Herod can want what He wants and threaten what he threatens, but Jesus will get to Jerusalem to finish His work.

It is the Father’s will that Jesus get to Jerusalem to finish His work. So, it shall be. Herod will not be able to prevent that.

Here we see Jesus’s faith. Herod’s threats cannot divert Jesus from His mission.

We also see this. Jesus's work is all about God's plan for the redemption of all people. It began at the beginning in Genesis 3:15, where God promised that a Son of Eve would destroy the work and ruin the Devil had brought to Adam and Eve and to all of us through them.

We could trace this plan from Genesis 3:15 throughout the Old Testament. We could spend time with Abraham being called by God to sacrifice Isaac, his only beloved son. At the last moment, God stopped Abraham from following through with that sacrifice. This prefigures God giving His only Son as the sacrifice that takes away the sin of the world.

We could stop at Isaiah 53. It is the song of the suffering servant on whom the Lord laid the iniquity of us all.

There are many other places we could look at, as well.

Now Jesus, the promised Son of Eve is on the scene. He knows His mission. He knows how He is the fulfillment of God's plan of redemption.

He is on the verge of entering Jerusalem for the final showdown, for the final conquest. Whatever power Herod may have had to back up his threats do not impress Jesus and do not deter Him.

We know how the story goes. Jesus is killed at Jerusalem. Jesus's saying about how Jerusalem kills the prophets is fulfilled. Jesus rises again on the third day at Jerusalem. Jesus's saying about finishing His work "on the third day" is fulfilled.

God's plan of redemption is accomplished. Redemption has been won. Forgiveness with God is now proclaimed and delivered to anyone who will hear and believe free of charge, with no guilt.

The promise of life arising out of death is established for those who hope in Christ.

We are also encouraged with this hope.

We are in God's hands. Whatever plans and purposes God has for us will be accomplished. There may be obstacles in the way, and it may seem otherwise at times, but God's good plan for us will prevail.

What does it look like and feel like when Jesus is being killed at Jerusalem? Does it not look like complete and utter failure of God's plan?

The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem in that day thought they were doing one thing and accomplishing a certain purpose, namely, condemning a blasphemer, though they were quite wrong about that.

It appears that their wrong purposes prevailed.

Yet, God was working in all that to accomplish His purposes, His plan.

In God's plan, Jesus's death atones for all sins. In God's plan, He raises Jesus on the third day.

We could think of the story of Joseph (see Genesis chapters 37-46). He was sold by his brothers into slavery because they hated him. Yet, God raised Joseph to supreme power in Egypt and saved the lives of Joseph's brothers and their families through Joseph. Joseph's brothers intended things one way, for no good purpose. God worked in and through that His way for His good purpose.

What we see, what we feel, what we experience can seem so contrary to God having a plan and being in control of our destiny. We know how willfully people can act in doing harm. We know how we so often go our own willful way.

Yet, Jesus inspires us today to believe that through all of this, God knows how to accomplish His good and eternal purpose in our lives. It may seem like defeat at times. But Jesus completed His work on the third day. God accomplished His plan. He will accomplish His plan

for you.

This inspires a faith that sticks doggedly, stubbornly, to the belief that God has a purpose and plan for us despite appearances and despite our own weakness and failures. So, we entrust ourselves to God's care.

Since God accomplished His plan of redemption in Jesus, it is fitting to conclude our meditation this morning with the Apostle Paul's words from Philippians 1:6 (ESV): "I am sure of this, that God who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

Amen.