



DOVER DAILY DEVOTIONS

In this sermon I wanted us to see the heart of Christ in Luke 13:31 to 35. Jesus does not fear Herod or any earthly power, because he knows his life and mission are governed by the Father's will. Yet this same Christ also grieves over Jerusalem and longs to gather sinners to himself as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. Do not fear the foxes of this world, and do not cling to empty refuges. Come to Christ, who alone is strong enough to save and tender enough to shelter.

Monday – The Fox and the Fear of Earthly Power

Scripture Reading

“Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.’”

Luke 13:32

Devotional

Fear has a way of magnifying the power of our enemies. When threats arise, when hostile voices grow louder, when the future feels uncertain, our minds easily begin to imagine that the forces against us are larger than they truly are. Kings and governments, cultural pressures, powerful personalities, and looming circumstances can all begin to feel overwhelming. The heart trembles before them.

But Jesus does something remarkable in Luke 13. When warned that Herod wants to kill him, he does not panic, retreat, or flatter the ruler who threatens him. Instead, he calmly replies, “Go and tell that fox.” With those few words, Jesus strips Herod of the dignity he imagines he possesses. Herod is not a lion, not a king whose power determines the fate of the world. He is a fox. Cunning perhaps, dangerous in his own way, but ultimately small in comparison with the purposes of God.

The lesson for us is not that danger is imaginary. Herod truly was dangerous. John the Baptist had already lost his life at this man's command. Yet Jesus refuses to let fear define reality. The rulers of this world do not stand above God's plan. They move within it. Even their threats cannot derail the purposes of heaven.

Christians have always needed this reminder. Our age is no different from any other. We are tempted to believe that hostile powers control the future of the church. But the kingdom of God does not advance or

retreat according to the mood of earthly rulers. It moves forward according to the will of the Father and the finished work of the Son.

The church does not belong to the foxes of this world. It belongs to Christ.

Questions for Reflection

1. What kinds of “foxes” tend to provoke fear or anxiety in your life?
2. How does Jesus’ response to Herod reshape the way we should think about earthly power?
3. What would it look like to live with greater confidence in God’s sovereignty this week?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the ways I allow fear to rule my heart. Teach me to see the powers of this world as you see them. Help me trust that my life and your church rest safely in your sovereign hands. Strengthen my faith so I may walk in courage and obedience. Amen.

Tuesday – The Steady Obedience of Christ

Scripture Reading

“Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.”
Luke 13:32

Devotional

Under the shadow of a death threat, many people would retreat. Most would slow down, reconsider their plans, or look for a safer path forward. Yet when Jesus speaks about his mission, there is not the slightest hint of hesitation. Instead, he calmly describes what he will continue doing: casting out demons, healing the sick, and completing the work the Father has given him.

The words “today and tomorrow” are not meant as a literal timetable. They express something deeper. Jesus is declaring that his life unfolds according to a divine schedule. Every step of his ministry, every act of mercy, every confrontation with evil, and even his suffering all take place according to the Father’s purpose.

Nothing will interrupt that mission. Not Herod’s threats. Not the hostility of religious leaders. Not the misunderstanding of the crowds. Christ moves steadily forward because he knows exactly why he has come.

For us, obedience often feels fragile. We begin well but grow weary. We face resistance and begin to question whether faithfulness is worth the cost. Yet when we look at Jesus, we see a Savior who never turned aside from the path set before him. He did not allow fear to distract him from doing good. He continued healing, teaching, and delivering the oppressed until his work was complete.

This steady obedience is part of the good news. Our salvation does not rest on a hesitant Savior. It rests on a faithful one. Every step Jesus took toward the cross was a step taken for us. Every act of obedience was part of the redemption he came to accomplish.

Because Christ finished his course, we can now follow him with confidence.

Questions for Reflection

1. When do you find it most difficult to remain faithful in obedience to God?
2. How does Christ's unwavering commitment to his mission encourage your faith?
3. What small acts of obedience might God be calling you to pursue faithfully this week?

Prayer

Faithful Savior, thank you that you did not turn aside from the path the Father set before you. Your obedience secured my salvation. Strengthen my heart so that I may walk in quiet faithfulness, trusting your purposes even when the road is difficult. Amen.

Wednesday – The Road to Jerusalem

Scripture Reading

“Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.”

Luke 13:33

Devotional

The little word “must” in this passage carries enormous weight. Jesus says that he must go on his way. He must continue the journey. He must go to Jerusalem.

This is not the language of accident or fate. It is the language of divine necessity. The cross was not a tragic turn of events. It was the destination toward which the entire mission of Christ had been moving from the beginning.

Jerusalem was the city of the temple, the center of Israel's worship, and the place where sacrifices were offered to God. Yet it had also become the city that rejected the prophets. Throughout Israel's history, God had sent messengers to call his people back to faithfulness. Again and again those messengers were resisted, abused, or killed.

Now the greatest prophet of all is walking toward that very city. Jesus knows what awaits him there. The cross is not hidden from his sight. Yet he walks forward willingly because the cross is the place where redemption will be accomplished.

From a human perspective, the crucifixion looked like defeat. The enemies of Jesus appeared to have triumphed. But beneath the surface, something far greater was unfolding. The Lamb of God was going to the place of sacrifice. The Son of God was bearing the sins of the world.

This means our salvation rests on something far stronger than human plans or human goodness. It rests on the sovereign purpose of God carried out through the obedient love of Christ.

When we remember that truth, even the darkest moments of our lives begin to look different. The God who planned redemption through the cross is also the God who rules every step of our story.

Questions for Reflection

1. Why is it important to understand that the cross was part of God's plan and not an accident?
2. How does Christ's willing journey to Jerusalem deepen your appreciation for the gospel?
3. In what areas of life do you need to trust God's purposes even when they are difficult to understand?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the wisdom of your saving plan. Thank you that Christ willingly walked the road that led to the cross for our redemption. Help me trust your purposes even when the path before me is unclear. Strengthen my faith in your sovereign grace. Amen.

Thursday – The Compassion of the Hen

Scripture Reading

“How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.”
Luke 13:34

Devotional

The tone of the passage shifts suddenly when Jesus begins to speak about Jerusalem. The boldness of his words toward Herod gives way to something deeply tender. “How often would I have gathered your children together,” he says, “as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.”

The image is humble and surprisingly gentle. Jesus does not compare himself to a mighty eagle or a powerful lion. He chooses the picture of a common hen protecting her chicks. It is a picture of warmth, patience, and sacrificial care.

Anyone who has watched a hen with her chicks knows how fiercely she protects them. When danger approaches, she spreads her wings and gathers them beneath her body. She places herself between the threat and the vulnerable lives she shelters.

This is how Jesus describes his own heart toward sinners. His desire is not to destroy the weak but to gather them. He longs to shelter the helpless and give refuge to those who come to him.

The Old Testament often uses the same language to describe God's care. The psalms speak of finding refuge under the shadow of God's wings. Now Jesus speaks that language about himself. He is not merely pointing people toward God's protection. He is the protection.

The heart of Christ is far more compassionate than we often imagine. Many people picture God as distant or reluctant to show mercy. But the words of Jesus reveal something different. The Savior spreads his wings wide and calls sinners to come.

Questions for Reflection

1. What does the image of the hen gathering her chicks teach us about the heart of Christ?
2. Why do people sometimes hesitate to believe that Christ truly welcomes sinners?
3. How can you personally take refuge under the shelter of Christ's care today?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for your tender mercy toward sinners. Thank you that you welcome the weak and the weary. Teach me to trust your compassion and to find my refuge in you alone. Amen.

Friday – The Tragedy of Unwilling Hearts

Scripture Reading

“How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”

Luke 13:34

Devotional

Few words in Scripture are as tragic as these: “You were not willing.”

The sorrow of Jesus is not that his mercy was insufficient. The wings were open. The invitation was real. The refuge was offered. Yet Jerusalem refused him.

These words expose the true nature of sin. Sin is not only weakness or ignorance. It is unwillingness. The human heart resists the grace of God. We want comfort, but not repentance. We want blessing, but not surrender. We want safety, but not a Savior who calls us to bow before him.

Jerusalem had every spiritual advantage. The Scriptures were read there. The temple stood there. The history of God's covenant dealings with Israel was woven into the life of the city. Yet despite all of this, many remained unwilling to come to Christ.

That warning speaks to us today. It is possible to live near holy things and still remain far from the Holy One. A person may attend church, know the language of faith, and yet keep Christ at a distance.

The tragedy of unwilling hearts is not merely ancient history. It is a danger that remains wherever the gospel is preached. Christ still calls. His mercy is still offered. The only question is whether we will come.

The most dangerous response to Christ is not open hostility but quiet refusal.

Questions for Reflection

1. What does Jesus' lament reveal about the seriousness of refusing his grace?
2. In what ways can people remain close to religion while still resisting Christ?
3. Are there areas of your life where you are reluctant to surrender fully to Christ?

Prayer

Merciful Savior, guard my heart from the hardness of unbelief. Do not allow me to resist your grace or turn away from your call. Give me a willing heart that gladly comes to you in repentance and faith. Amen.

Saturday – The Grace That Still Gathers

Scripture Reading

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Luke 13:35

Devotional

Even in the midst of warning, Jesus leaves room for hope. The passage ends not with despair but with a promise. One day the rejected Christ will be confessed. One day the people will say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

This final note reminds us that judgment is never God's last word to those who repent. The same Christ who warned Jerusalem also opened the door to future blessing. The one who lamented their unwillingness continued to extend mercy.

That mercy still stands today. The wings of Christ remain open to all who come to him. No fear, no guilt, no failure places a sinner beyond the reach of his grace. The cross proves that Christ has already borne the weight of our sin. The resurrection declares that his saving work is finished.

For those who trust in him, the story does not end with fear or abandonment. It ends with blessing. The Savior who once walked toward Jerusalem now reigns as the risen Lord, gathering his people from every nation and every generation.

So the invitation of this passage remains simple and urgent. Come to Christ. Do not remain in the open field while the shelter of grace stands before you. Do not cling to empty houses when the living Savior calls.

The heart of the King is still a gathering heart.

Questions for Reflection

1. What hope does Jesus' final promise offer to those who turn to him?
2. How does the gospel assure us that Christ's mercy is still available today?
3. What does it look like to live each day under the shelter of Christ's grace?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that your mercy is greater than my sin. Thank you that your wings remain open to all who come to you. Help me live in the joy and security of your grace, and draw many others to the refuge found in you. Amen.