

March 13th, 2022

Genesis 15: 1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians: 3: 17-1:4; Luke 13: 31-35

Lent, 2, c

There is a verse in today's gospel that when most of us read it, we cannot help but have an almost visceral response. And I bet you already know the verse to which I am referring.

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings...”

It's active, isn't it. The hen scurries, stretches out her wings, gathering her chicks. “Come on. Come on” we can almost hear that from her. Jesus is the hen, the only time, by the way that he is reference in a feminine characteristic. He is speaking of himself. He is not passively waiting for people to follow Him. He is gathering. He is aggressive. He is as a hen, almost frantically gathering her chicks.

There is a short essay that I read taken from **The Saviors of God: Spiritual Exercises** by Nikos Kaz-ant-zak-is. It depicts this active Jesus, this aggressive, impatient Jesus and it depicts Kaz-ant-zak-is, the writer of the essay, as a soldier of Jesus' war on sin.

Listen to what Kaz-ant-zak-is wrote:

“My prayer is not the whimpering of a beggar nor a confession of love. Nor is it the trivial reckoning of: ‘Give me and I shall give you.’

“My prayer” Kaz-ant-zak-is wrote, “is as the report of a soldier to his general: ‘This is what I did today, this is how I fought to save the entire battle in my own sector, these are the obstacles I found, this is how I plan to fight tomorrow.’

Then he goes on, “My God and I are horsemen galloping in the burning sun or under drizzling rain. Pale, starving, but unsubdued, we ride and converse.

“Leader!’ I cry. He turns his face towards me, and I shudder to confront his anguish.

“Our love for each other is *rough and ready*, we sit at the same table, we drink the same wine-- in this low tavern of life.”

Very often we seek Jesus for comfort, companionship. I know I do. But today’s gospel is active, scurrying about, gathering the chicks not only for protection for the chicks, but preparing to face what is confronting them.

Is this not what we need today? What confronts those chicks? What confronts us? Evil. Kaz-ant-zak-is was fighting the evil.

Today, we are confronted with the news of Russia's incursion into Ukraine. Wednesday, he bombed a maternity and children's hospital. We saw videos of women having their babies on stretchers as they were being rolled out of the bombed-out hospital. We are confronted with a pandemic and high gas prices and what is our President begging our merchants not to do? Do not gouge the people by jacking up prices of needed goods. There is evil, evil within ourselves and evil around us.

Yes, indeed, we need a Jesus who comforts, but do we not need as well, a Jesus, who is tough and realistic, sleeves rolled up. We need someone who will fight for and with us, fight the evil that is within us and the evil that is without. We need a Jesus as depicted in Kaz-ant-zak-is' prayer, "Our love, (that is Kaz=ant=zak=is and Jesus love for each other), our love for each other is rough and ready, we sit at the same table, we drink the same wine, --in this low tavern of life."

Amen,

Pastor Scales