

Matthew 23:37<sup>37</sup> “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing

Jesus Longs To Gather Gods Children In. July 13, Pastor Dave Amstutz

Early introduction.

It is good to be in the house of the Lord , Yes? There are two things that you can count on when I preach. Firstly the Gospel message of our Lord., and something you aren't expecting to bring that message home.

I have a question for you what is the most unusual creature you have ever seen in church. No ladies your husbands don't count!!

I remember the Sunday morning a bat attended worship to the glee of kids and shouts of the ladies.

Then there was the Sunday the parsonage cat strolled up the back stairs entrance and came and rubbed around my ankles as I was preaching and trying to put his meow's in sideways.

I know that a church in metro Detroit would rent a donkey every Christmas to lead the processional with Mary on it's back down the center isle at the Christmas eve service.

I also know of some churches have the blessing of the pets in the sanctuary.

Well today I would like to introduce a new friend at our house, one of Elianna's new chickens, Pumpkin. Now it seemed like a few days ago she could fit in the palm of your hand, will not anymore so I am trying to finish building a coop, and run as fast as I can. Why a chicken? Well you see Jesus talked about a hen and chicks. Do you remember that ? And Jesus told the temple leaders He wanted to gather children together like a hen protects the chicks under her wings. I want all you kids to know Jesus wants to protect and love each of us just like a protective mother hen. We will let Pumpkin go now, Thanks Elianna.

Sermon Time.

Let us bow in prayer.

News paper headlines. Read off three or four.

These are not far from the conversations that Jesus had with the Pharisees and the scribes in and out side of the Temple in Jerusalem. Chapters of Matthew are devoted to this banter back and forth between them. But chapters 22-23 get down to brass tacks and include the end of the time when Jesus returns.

Jesus tells them parables, stories with the meaning underneath the story line. The kingdom of God is like a wedding banquet. Where an attendee is found without an invitation, (a wedding garment supplied by the host) and tossed out where there is gnashing of teeth. The Pharisees want to know what He thinks about taxes. Jesus sees through their sly questions to trick Him into saying something they could get Him on.

Now in this back and forth we learn of the greatest commandment, Love the Lord your God with all your soul, heart and mind. Like wise secondly love your neighbor as yourself. He says these are the basis of the Law and the prophets. Most of the Old Testament!!!

Now pastor why did you bring the chicken in? I thought you would never ask!!!!

Jesus cares about His people, the leadership of His people, the salvation of His people,. He is really ticked off because the Temple leadership would spend lavish resources to reach out to convert someone and then make them a child of hell like themselves.

There is a saying "Do as I say not as I do!" Like the parents saying to their kids, "Don't smoke, don't drink, don't swear, etc. While the parents is smoking or drinking, or swearing a blue streak.

The leadership talked a good line but didn't live it, not even close.

Jesus says that the Hebrew people's children, He wanted them to come to Him, but they wouldn't let them. They in fact did everything in their power to keep them away from Jesus.

They would say how terrible it was of their ancestors, that if they lived back then they wouldn't have killed the prophets. But they live with the same bloodied hands as they did.

Let read about the same event this time in Luke.

<sup>34</sup> "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. <sup>35</sup> Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' <sup>[a]</sup>"  
Luke 13:34-35

In this passage there are two audiences that Jesus is speaking to. First those who kill the messengers. And then those Jesus wants to protect and save.

So First let's speak to the leadership, those who know the Word, those who think they are doing a bang up job, but

are sending people the wrong direction.

I remember the Sunday morning, Ella walked into church her comfortable 5 minutes before the first hymn, steadied by her cane as she made her way down to the second pew on the south side of the sanctuary. Where she had left her cushion she had made for her personal comfort on the pew. To her dismay, a young first time visiting family of four was seating in that short pew. She stopped at the end of the pew her cane came down hard on it's point with a thud, and she let out a disgusting breath and then turned and sat down in the pew behind them. And probably to her relief never to see them again in her pew or that church. Now I would bet if she was asked if she would like to see the church grow, she would have said yes. But not infringe on her doing.

Another congregation would plan events, when ask about the attendance would say everyone was there, but a number of the church attenders were not there, and never heard a word about this event. Obvious to me and to those left out that they didn't matter. But if the planners were asked if they wanted the church to grow they would say of course! , but their actions said other wise.

Just like the Pharisees other leaders would create rules that had little or nothing to do with the Gospel but would keep people from the Kingdom. We never have done it that way! Etc.

Now before you say we don't do any of that, or that is so and so. Let's take a moment. How many folk have come into the Kingdom of God here at FCC and have grown in their faith because of .....?? Do we have more signs about what not to do than sign telling us how to live for Jesus?

Now who are the one's that Jesus was concerned about ? The ones that needed His care and protection. He referred to them as children, children of Abraham that meant they could be any age.

Life was hard then. Faith was in great need. And God's love and care was what they needed. But they were heading of in their own direction, the wrong way.

In the Old Testament we hear how one received from the Lord.

Ruth<sup>12</sup> May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

Now there are those wings again! A place of refuge. A place of protection. By one that would lay down their life for the flock. Now how do we come into the protection of Jesus? Be apart of His family and have Him with in our hearts.? The Scripture says we are like sheep who have gone astray and we need to confess our sins, and accept His forgiveness. There was another time chicken was mentioned in the Bible It said the cock crowed three

times. That's right. Peter's sin was front and center stage when Jesus' prophecy comes true at the morning crow of the Rooster. The rooster has been the symbol of repentance ever since. We need to repent of our sinful hearts and turn to him. Let us say with the Psalmist!

PS 91:1-4 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>2</sup> I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress,

<sup>3</sup> Surely he will save you  
from the fowler's snare  
and from the deadly pestilence.

<sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his feathers.

Amen.