



Luke 13.31-35

Introduction

- Women's Fellowship (Men should dress up & sneak in!)
- Amazing Grace. God inspired Christians (incl Wilberforce) to lifetime's work for abolition of Slave Trade and Slavery.
- Esclavitud XXI (& Stop the Trafik) presentation.
- More slaves now than ever. Spain very bad.
- Was Wilb & co's work wasted?
- Where is God? Where is Church? Does the Gospel have anything to say?

The Unholy Alliance (against Jesus) (v31)

- J's journey to Jerusalem & the cross began at 9.51 but rooted way back in the promises and warnings to Mary and in the desert struggle against evil with which he was tested before beginning his ministry.
- Luke records J's journey to Jerusalem in ch 10-19 and today's verses sum it all up in just a few words.
- First, in verse 31, we have the Pharisees' warning. Throughout J's journey to the cross there's kind of an unholy alliance of religious and political leaders to knock him off course and prevent him getting there. To distract & destroy him.
- Jewish religious leaders, especially Pharisees, hated Herod but they were allied with him in seeing Jesus as a threat who needed to be eliminated.
- He was a threat to their power, their position, their status. Their love of these things hardened and blinded them, resulting in them actually selling out to evil (which Jesus had refused to do during desert test), so they ended up fighting against God. This is clear throughout gospels, especially passages like Luke 11.37-54. Not surprising in Herod's case but shocking and tragic in case of Pharisees/Scribes/Sadducees.

The Holy War (against evil) (v32-33)

- Jesus would not be distracted from his journey and replied dismissively. But his reply also shows that his interest is not just in reaching the destination:-
- *Go and tell that fox, "I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal. In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day – for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!"* (Luke 13.32-33)

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- Some versions of the Christian gospel focus so much on the death of Jesus that the rest of his life seems almost irrelevant. But the gospels show his **WHOLE LIFE** was about defeating evil (including sin, death, disease etc) and setting people free from its grip.
- For example the controversial healing of the crippled woman on the Sabbath earlier in our chapter, which offended the synagogue leader, ended with Jesus saying:- *You hypocrites! ... should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?* (Luke 13.15-16)
- Jesus did not, as you may have been told, live a life of perfect obedience to the Jewish Law. In fact he made a point of breaking the Law whenever it hindered his struggle to liberate people from evil!
- The cross, or more accurately the resurrection, was the decisive moment but it should be seen as the culmination of a lifelong war against evil. A war which continues today through the work of the Holy Spirit in believers, in the Church, in organizations like Esclavitud XXI / Stop the Traffik.
- I want to come back to this point but first, having seen Jesus's resolve and determination in vv32-33, we now get a glimpse of his heart.

The Grace of God (to all, including his enemies) (v34-35)

- *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. 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."* (Luke 13.34-35)
- How can these words make sense? How can Jesus, on his first adult journey to Jerusalem, have "often longed to gather" the people of Jerusalem together but they had not been willing? How can he say that they will not see him again until they say "Blessed is he..."?
- There is only one way that this can make sense. That is when we realize that it is **GOD speaking IN CHRIST**. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5.19, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself*.
- The words of Luke 13.34-35 are the words of God. The tears of verse 34-35 are the tears of God. Verse 34 sums up most of the Old Testament, the tragic history of the Israelites.
- Verse 35 diagnoses the condition of God's people and offers hope of a way out:- *Look, your house* (the Temple, where God is supposed to reside in the midst of His



- people) *is left to you desolate* (it has become an empty shell with no life, no heart). *I tell you, you will not see me* (that is, God) *again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."* God's people will not see him again until they recognize God in Jesus and worship him. Notice that word *until...*

Grace in us

- God's words through Jesus are a lament, but also a message of hope, even to his enemies, to those who stoned the prophets.
- Those who do recognize Jesus and worship him WILL see God and will experience his love, his forgiveness, his freedom.
- This new life, new freedom also brings responsibilities. God's intention is that the followers of Jesus will be *conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.* (Romans 8.29)
- Believers are called to be brothers and sisters of Jesus, filled with the same Spirit, living with the same values and priorities, continuing the same war against evil. Living out the consequences of his victory in the places where we live.
- Remember what Jesus said in his first sermon:- *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*
- If this is his mission, how offensive is the continuation of the slave trade in our day, 200 years after Wilberforce? What are we doing about it?
- What CAN we do, when, just as in Wilberforce's day the evil trade is protected by powerful people, government ministers who pass planning applications for brothels, mafia bosses who use drugs, threats and brutality to control their victims.
- Evil also keeps its grip because of the thousands of ordinary men who use prostitutes or the millions who smile at degrading images of women as if it were harmless fun? And because of the religious people who collaborate by doing nothing...
- As Christians we don't use the weapons of the world but we do have the weapons Wilberforce and co had – prayer and influence. Don't underestimate the power of prayer or the influence that we can have by living differently amongst our neighbours, demonstrating Christian love and ethical standards in the way we treat others and conduct ourselves.
- We can also support organizations like Esclavitud XXI and Stop the Traffik in their efforts to raise awareness and influence governments to change the laws which allow evil to flourish.



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- Let's end by reminding ourselves of Jesus's answer to those who tried to stop his work:- *I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal... 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."*