

## Luke 13:31-35

<sup>31</sup>In that very hour, some Pharisees came to him and said, “Leave, and go away from here, because Herod wants to kill you.”

<sup>32</sup>He said to them, “Go tell that fox, ‘Look, I am going to drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal. <sup>33</sup>Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the next day, because it cannot be that a prophet would be killed outside Jerusalem!’

<sup>34</sup>“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I have wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! <sup>35</sup>Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you will say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

## Blessed is the One

### I.

It must have seemed strange to hear him say it. They were looking right at him when he uttered those words. He was right there in front of them. *Of course* they saw him! They were not blind, after all, like some of those he had supposedly healed. Was he somehow supposed to become invisible to them until they spoke the magic words? How absurd!

Still—he said it to those who were standing right there in front of him: “I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you will say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Luke 13:35, EHV).

It almost sounds like Jesus is establishing a formula. Say these words and you will see Jesus. Say them and he will come, like the proverbial genie out of the bottle to grant your wishes for some miracle.

But these self-righteous Pharisees didn’t *need* Jesus. They had the laws of Moses, passed down meticulously to them by generations of faithful Pharisees, and expounded on and expanded until there were 613 rules codified for them to follow. *That* was all they needed.

See Jesus? There was really nothing to see here. They didn’t *need* his miracles. They didn’t think they needed him for *anything*. If and/or when they needed something from Jesus, perhaps they would say the magic words: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” and direct those words at Jesus. Until then...well, they really didn’t think there would ever *be* a “then.”

### II.

The Pharisees warned Jesus: “Leave, and go away from here, because Herod wants to kill you” (Luke 13:31, EHV). Later, however, Luke gives us this information about Jesus when Pilate had sent Jesus over to Herod during his multi-stage trial: “When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad. For a long time, he had wanted to see him, because he had heard many things about him. He hoped to see some miracle performed by him” (Luke 23:8, EHV).

Herod wanted to see a miracle. He was interested in Jesus as a carnival side-show. Perhaps the Pharisees saw him that way, too. Plug in those magic words of the Psalm if and when you want something from Jesus.

There is the issue—coming right out into the open. It is far too easy to slip into paying attention to Jesus only in a way that suits *you*.

That’s the way prayer life and devotional life too often work. Your devotions are non-existent and your prayers are reduced to just the “Come, Lord Jesus...” dashed off without

much thought before your meals until disaster strikes. Then, and only then, do your prayers become deeper and more meaningful.

Jesus and his promises to be with you always are things to be set on a shelf and forgotten until there is a dire need. In case of cancer, break glass and pull the prayer book off of shelf. At time of heart attack, pull down the defibrillator and finally read the instructions. While you're at it, also see if you can't find a few passages about God answering prayer and sections of Scripture that show Jesus' power over all sorts of illness. In emergency, say the magic words and summon genie Jesus.

"You will not see me until the time comes when you will say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Luke 13:35, EHV). The day was coming...soon. People would line Jesus' parade route as he entered Jerusalem in the not-so-distant future. They would cry out these words of Psalm 118, just as Jesus said they would, but they would cry these words *after* they saw Jesus coming, not as a magic formula to summon him.

People in the Old Testament never saw Jesus with their eyes. Still, they sang these same words joyfully. They looked forward in faith-filled hope to see the One who would come in the name of the Lord to restore their relationship with God.

Now that he has come, don't be blinded to him by worldly things. Don't set him on a shelf, thinking that you'll "get around" to Jesus with the magic formula when you need him. If we wait to put our faith in him until we see him, or until we *think* we need him, it will be too late.

### III.

Seeing Jesus for who he really is happens only by faith. The writer to the Hebrews says: "Faith is being sure about what we hope for, being convinced about things we do not see. <sup>2</sup> For by this faith the ancients were commended in Scripture" (Hebrews 11:1-2, EHV). He lists a number of Old Testament believers who lived and saw Jesus for who he really is. "By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice... <sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was taken up, so that he would not experience death... <sup>7</sup> By faith Noah... built an ark... <sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed... <sup>20</sup> By faith Isaac... <sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob... <sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph... <sup>23</sup> By faith Moses..." (Hebrews 11:4, 5, 7, 8, 20, 21, 22, 23, EHV), and the list goes on still longer. Faith is the *only* way one can see Jesus for who he really is.

The Pharisees did not see Jesus for who he really is because they did not have faith—they did not believe in him. They saw him as a poser. "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins except God alone?" (Luke 5:21, EHV). They saw him as a danger to their religion. On Palm Sunday, when many people *did* see and believe in Jesus as the One who comes in the name of the Lord, "Some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!' <sup>40</sup> He replied, 'I tell you, if these people would be silent, the stones would cry out'" (Luke 19:39-40, EHV). They saw him as a threat to their political ties to Rome. Before Pilate: "They began to accuse him, saying, 'We found this fellow misleading our nation, forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king'" (Luke 23:2, EHV).

Though some of the people on Palm Sunday mere days later joined the chants of "crucify," many *did* recognize Jesus for who he really is because they *did* believe in him.

Many of those lining the parade route called Jesus blessed because they believed he had come in the name of the Lord to help them. They said it because they were thankful to the Savior-God for sending someone in his name. "In the name of the Lord" means that the One coming was coming to do what the Lord sent him to do. If the One who was sent merely does his *own* will, and not the will of God who sends him, he would no longer be acting in

the name of the Lord.

We see Jesus for who he really is because *we* believe in him.

At 12-years-old Jesus asked his parents: “Did you not know that I must be taking care of my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49, EHV). His whole life was all about taking care of his Father’s business.

Jesus is the One who came in the name of the Lord for a purpose. His purpose is what the season of Lent is all about. His purpose is really what the whole *Bible* is about, because the whole thing was written that we might know and see and believe that Jesus is the Christ who was sent to pay for the sins of the world.

[Jesus] said to them, ‘Go tell that fox, “Look, I am going to drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal. <sup>33</sup>Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the next day, because it cannot be that a prophet would be killed outside Jerusalem!”’” (Luke 13:32-33, EHV).

Jerusalem was where it would all happen. The parade into the city would happen there, followed later in the same week by some of the people from that same crowd shouting “Crucify!” over the One they had just hailed as King. Jerusalem was where his trial would end, and another parade would begin—the parade out to the hill called Calvary, where Jesus would be hung on the cross to die. Just as God’s business demanded, Jesus would hang there with the weight of all the sins of the world on his shoulders. After making the full payment of hell for all sins—he would die there.

Jerusalem was where it all happened. So many faithful prophets who had pointed to Christ had been put to death because they were faithful in their prophecies, as God directed them. Jesus was the ultimate prophet. They did not believe him, either. They *would not* believe.

The cross was *always* Jesus’ reason for coming. The cross was his goal. His reference to the third day was Jesus’ way of speaking in advance about his resurrection—*that* would demonstrate that God had accepted the payment he made on the cross for you. Jesus is the One who came in the name of the Lord to give us life from the dead.

#### IV.

In a few minutes we will begin our celebration of the Lord’s Supper. In the liturgical song “Holy, Holy, Holy,” before the Words of Institution, we will sing: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” We will join to sing the very words of the Psalmist, the words Jesus said would be sung by those who see him.

The words of the Psalmist point, of course, to Jesus, who came in the name of the Lord to bring the salvation God promised us. Now, those who believe in him come and gather around his Word and Sacraments *in the name of the Lord*. We, too, are blessed—not *because we* are the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but *by* the Lamb of God who has taken away your sin and mine.

“I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you will say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Luke 13:35, EHV).

You have been blessed to see him in faith. You have the privilege of receiving strengthening of your faith by his body and blood in, with, and under the bread and the wine of the Sacrament. He invites you, and *you* are blessed as you come in the Name of the Lord to the Supper he has given for you.

*You* are blessed with the forgiveness of sins. *You* are blessed with eternal life. *You* are blessed with salvation. Blessed are *you* who come in the Name of the Lord. May God strengthen your faith in him throughout this Lenten season and throughout your life. Amen.