

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

Always beware of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees don't have the things of God in mind—  
they're only covetous and deceitful—  
worse even than Herod, *that fox*.

And as a general rule,  
beware of delighting in good fruit from a bad tree.  
Looks are sometimes deceiving.

So it is today.

*“At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to Jesus,  
‘Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.’”* (Lk 13:31)

That sounds nice—how kind of those Pharisees to look after Jesus!  
(If that were the case, this would be the only time in Scripture that happens.)

So, were they lying?

Perhaps.

But more likely, to keep within their legalistic game of self-justification,  
they were probably just *stretching the truth*.

Herod was vicious; everyone knew it.

He already had John the Baptizer's head on a platter  
just because he made some silly dinner vow to his niece.

Matthew's Gospel tells us that with Jesus' fame spreading throughout the region,  
Herod declared, *“This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead.”* (Mt 14:2)

So even though Herod didn't call for the head of Jesus,  
what the Pharisees said was at least believable.  
That is, it wasn't an outright lie, but liberty with the truth.

But as we find out toward the end of the story, Herod in fact *didn't* want to kill Jesus—  
he didn't want to kill John either, but there was that whole vow to his niece.

Luke tells us that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, since Jesus was a Galilean.

*And, when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him,  
because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him.”*

(Lk 23:8)

And sent back, Pilate told the chief priests that neither he nor Herod found any guilt in this Man.

So with all that, we know the Pharisees are at it again—lying, deceiving, plotting.  
Why do they want Jesus out of the district of Galilee?

Well it's not so much Galilee they're concerned about, but Jerusalem.  
The Pharisees want more than anything else to get Jesus on their turf, in their city, with their law.

Jerusalem is the capital, the place of the Temple, the center of life for Israel.  
And there, on account of an agreement by the Romans, the Jewish Law was binding.

So, while Jesus couldn't be brought up on charges of blasphemy out in Galilee—  
He certainly could in Jerusalem.

So the Pharisees will do whatever they can—come from whatever angle might work—  
anything to get this Jesus to Jerusalem.

But what the Pharisees haven't got a clue about,  
is that Jesus also has His face set towards Jerusalem.

Ever since He came down from the mountain of Transfiguration, as Luke says,  
*“When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem.”*  
(Lk 9:51)

So the Pharisees can go and tell that fox, Herod, that Jesus is here to do His work:  
casting out demons, healing the sick, and performing cures.

And yet, nevertheless, Jesus will go.

It's as if He walks straight into the Pharisees trap.  
They think their plan has worked; they've deceived Him into pressing towards Jerusalem.

But what He says falls on very deaf ears.  
The work He's doing—healing, curing, casting out demons—is the work for today and tomorrow.  
But, He says, *“the third day I finish My course”* (Lk 13:32).

The Third Day should ring loud and clear in your ears.  
You the baptized have heard of this Third Day over and over again.  
Each Sunday is another 3<sup>rd</sup> Day, another finish of His course, another perfection, completion, end!  
That's what that word means in Greek.

Our text could read:

*“The third day I complete all things.”*

Or, *“The third day I am perfected.”*

Or, *“The third day it is all finished.”*

As far as the Pharisees get it, Jesus is saying something along the lines of,  
*“Yes, I'll be on my way shortly.”*

But Jesus goes on,  
*“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.”* (Lk 13:33)

There you have another 3 day sequence: today, tomorrow, the third day.

But this time, the focus and end of the work is the cross.

Here we find what Jerusalem is really all about:

the place where the prophets die and the apostles, *the sent ones*, are stoned.

What should be the place where the Word of Truth is given and bestowed,  
is the place where the Truth will die.

He must die there, with Jerusalem, to show that He is the true Jerusalem.

He's the real Temple.

The place of worship and the giving out of the gifts of God are located *in Him!*

But Jerusalem doesn't get it.

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to it!  
How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood  
under her wings, and you would not!*

*Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see Me until you say,  
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!''* (Lk 13:34-35)

Here we see what kind of Lord this Jesus is.

He's on His way to Jerusalem, not as a conquering, blood-thirsty warrior—

seeking to force His way to the top and coerce obedience by any means necessary—  
but rather we see Him lamenting the city He loves.

He's longed to have them as His own, as His beloved.

As a mother hen gathers her chicks for protection and care and devotion,  
so would Jesus have Jerusalem, Pharisees and all!

But then the clincher: "*and you would not!*"

Our Lord forces no one into the faith.

He doesn't come by power or coercion.

He'll let you have it your way if that's what you want.

But He'll do so in great sadness.

Jesus weeps.

He weeps for Jerusalem.

He weeps for the Pharisees who pat themselves on the back for their successful deception.

He weeps for you.

He weeps for all who would rather have their way of doing and being God.

He weeps for those who cut themselves off from His mercy, who reject His love and compassion.

He weeps for us in our sin.

For we are the Jerusalem who *would not*.

We are the Jerusalem that Jesus will enter on Palm Sunday,  
amid shouts of “*Hosanna!*” and “*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*”

We will see Him then.  
And again He’ll weep for us.

For we are the Jerusalem that will catch Him by night,  
bind Him, beat Him, scourge Him, and crucify Him.

We are the Jerusalem that will kill the Prophet, the Chosen One sent to us.

But remember, it’s toward Jerusalem that Jesus has His face set.

It’s toward you and me, the Pharisees and all who seek to have life on their terms in their way.  
It’s toward us that Jesus is bent on coming.

Nothing will stop Him, nothing will get in His way—  
not your sin, not your anger, not your rejection—  
the Lord has His face set toward you;  
because it’s for you He has Himself a third day.

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