

**Rev. George Miller**  
**March 16, 2025**  
**Luke 13:1-9, 31-35**

Since August, we've explored different images of God.

The one who wants to walk with us in the cool afternoon breeze or stroll with us under the stars when we can't sleep.

We've explored the body-ness of Jesus who stands, sits, sees.

We discussed that in Greek "compassion" means to have a visceral feeling in your gut; in Hebrew it means to feel deep love within your womb.

Scripture is so rich, so sweetly ripe with images of God and Jesus that have often been overlooked or mistranslated.

An example is Hosea 11:4. God says "I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them."

This image is of God as Mom. And it is about breastfeeding.

BUT, this statement was too radical, too maternal that many Bibles changed it.

Example- King James says- "I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat upon them."

An example of what happens when scripture becomes nationalized, and authorities do not want you to think of God as *motherly*, but as *owner*.

The Good News is this- even as different Bibles, preachers try to suppress images of God or Jesus as Mom- they exist.

Today is a perfect example. Luke thrusts us into a world that is so real, so political.

Infrastructure that has fallen apart, killing local citizens. Roman invaders killing people of faith, mixing their blood with an unholy sacrifice.

Synagogue leaders come to Jesus, warning that the head of the Roman government is out to kill him.

Listen to what Jesus says.

"Go and tell that fox that I am too busy casting out evil and offering healing. I'm on my way to my final destination. My desire's been to gather the people as a mother hen gathers her chicks."

Wow- how strong, sly, and strategic Jesus is.

The Religious Leaders come telling him that the Head of Government is coming to get him, and his response is “Shoo! You have no power here. Worry about yourself.”

BAM! Another hammer into the hands and feet of Jesus.

Notice just how subversive Jesus is. He stays calm. He states facts; what he is doing.

He does a play on words, referring to Herod as a fox.

In different cultures, foxes had different meanings.

For the Greeks, foxes symbolized sly, smart, cunning. Being called a fox could be a compliment.

For the Jews, foxes were no good- destructive, damaging. Calling someone a fox could be an insult.

Jesus could be playing a mind game- is he complimenting Herod or is he ridiculing him?

Jesus is being sly as a fox by referring to Herod as a fox!

Then, the Piece de resistance- Jesus speaks wanting to gather the people of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her brood.

Hens are protective of their babies.

A hen gathers her chicks under her wings to keep them warm when it is cold.

A hen gathers her children for comfort and bonding, teaching and guidance, imprinting herself upon them so they're less afraid, know to whom they belong, and are guided on how to live.

A hen gathers her clan so they can find rest, nestling under her wings to drift off to sleep.

Finally, a mother hen will gather her chicks to shield them from predators, threats, storms and anyone or anything that tries to harm them.

Jesus, who is a man, God embodied in human flesh, holy and divine, states how he's always desired to gather the people as a Mother, a Mom.

Jesus, human and divine articulates his desire to gather the people as a mother hen- to keep them warm, to bond and guide, to find rest, protect.

Realizing how subversive Jesus is, his use of “fox” to reference Herod is brilliant.

He knew Herod was a threat to the people- a predator who preyed upon the helpless, who could not be trusted, who was untrustworthy in their power.

This is a perfect example of just how political our faith is and how political is the time that Jesus was born, baptized, crucified and resurrected.

Jesus could be saying “Herod is a fox; a threat. I am the hen, loving and protecting you.”

Without saying it specifically, Jesus is saying “There are two different Kingdoms at play.”

“There is the Kingdom of Rome in which innocent people are slaughtered and buildings fall. And there is the Kingdom of God in which people gather under God’s wings to be loved, nurtured, kept safe, and find rest.”

Which Kingdom do you want to belong to? Which Kingdom do you believe leads to the greater healing, the greater comfort, the greater care?

Today we have a reading that reminds us of the woes of the world, but it also reminds us of how much God loves.

Today’s reading reminds us how humans may want to hurt us, but the Lord- the Lord wants to love on us just like a Mother, just like a Mom.

How cool, how wonderful that we have Scripture that shows us so many ways to think about God, view God and relate to God.

How cool, how wonderful that Jesus continues to show us the way, to offer us rest.

Amen and amen.