

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on March 13, 2022:**

**"Death or Destiny?
(Luke 13:31-35)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman, at church in the Y, shows us from Luke that as we face death, we need to seek the face of the Lord because God is our destiny.]

Introduction:

- Who knows what today is?
- Answers:
 - Spring Forward Day.
 - The Lord's Day, which is every Sunday.
 - Now, today is the second Day of Lent in the liturgical calendar.
 - And Lent is preparation for Easter.
 - Today is Pastor Craig's 5 year anniversary here as our pastor.

- Now, in preparation for Easter, this passage here in Luke will help us reflect on a couple of things.
- First, Jesus begins to think about His final days of His time here on earth, when He set His face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).
- What we're going to see here in Luke 13, that this isn't just a passage about death, but it's also really about destiny.

- Jesus will show us that we shouldn't focus just on His death but the resurrection, which is what Easter Sunday is all about.
- Now, death is more than just a sting because scripture tells us that the death of God's saints is precious in the eyes of the Lord.
- Yet, for us, death is not an easy thing to accept.
- Now, it's often said that we come to church for hope and so the message today is not just being reminded of death, but moreover it's the hope of destiny.

- Pastor Craig did a quick search of the words "death, dying, and perishing" in the Bible and these words come up about 1500 times.
- Now, the term "God" comes up about 3000 times.
- Now, do we know how many times the word "destiny" comes up in scripture?
- It's just one time, but it doesn't mean that our destiny is not important.

Luke 13:31 (NASB), At that very time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, "Go away and leave this place, because Herod wants to kill You."

- Now, we know that in the Gospels, the Pharisees were not always depicted as good guys.
- Now, interestingly, Luke writes the most positive things about the Pharisees.
- So, the Pharisees had both good and bad characteristics.
- Mm

- Now, here, we're not sure if the Pharisees are being concerned for Jesus or if they were a little bit duplicitous.

32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I am casting out demons and performing healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I reach My goal.'

- We kind of get the sense from Jesus' response here about Herod, who is the same Herod who was responsible for beheading John.
- Now, Herod was kind of tricked into it by his wife, when they were at a gathering with others.
- Jesus called Herod "a fox", which in the Greek was a diminishing term.
- When Jesus said, "and on the third day I reach My goal", some believe that He maybe referring to His resurrection and accomplishing His mission to the earth.
- And if so, Jesus is de-emphasizing His death, but placing emphasis on His resurrection.
- Jesus was placed on earth to bring about salvation, which was consummated in the resurrection.
- Jesus is also talking about His ministry, "casting out demons and performing healings".
- Now, healing was always just physical healing, but also healing spiritually.
- So, Jesus continued His ministry for another 30 days as he went to Jerusalem.

33) Nevertheless I must go on My journey today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside Jerusalem.

- Now, at that time, Jerusalem, even though it was called the city of God, was also known as a place that killed the prophets.
- So, Jerusalem also had a reputation as a city of murder.

34) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her!

- Is Jesus being somewhat judgmental here?
- No, because of what He says next, which shows His love for those from Jerusalem.

How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her young under her wings, and you were unwilling!

- So, from Jesus' side of the table, there's not a negative judgmental tone, even though He knows what's going to happen to Him there.
- Jesus is extending compassion; He's extending love even to His enemies, in this case.
- And, we can take encouragement in that, because we're not always at our best, so to speak, and Jesus still loves us.
- Now, we have to reflect and participate in wanting to receive Jesus' love, who is always extending His love to believers and not-yet-believers.

35) Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

- This is a reference for both Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but can also refer to His second Coming.
- So, when we focus on death, we also have to focus on destiny, because we know that was the purpose Jesus spent His years here in ministry.
- And Jesus is telling us, in this passage, that He's not going to let death stop what He came for.
- And, we need to let others know just how much God loves us and certainly during this Easter season we need to focus more on the empty tomb than on the cross.
- And so, destiny is a term that can embolden us and strengthen us, especially during this Easter season.

[Psalm 27: A Psalm of Fearless Trust in God (A Psalm of David)]

- Now, we know that David dealt with a lot of fear and anxiety and tough times in his life.
- David was put to the test many times.
- And as we face death or destiny, fear can sometimes come with that.
- Psalm 27 is going to give us real strength to face our fears.
- In David's case, it wasn't just the fear of death he faced, but he had had other fears as well.
- These verses help us focus on that fearless state when we're being put to the test.
- And, it's in Jesus that our confidence comes.

Psalm 27:1 (NASB), The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom should I fear?

- And, we might also say, "What shall I fear? What test should I fear?"
- The point is that when we are settled in our relationship with Jesus, the reality is that there doesn't have to be fear.
- There needn't be fear because God Himself gives us that hope, gives us that strength and tells us what our destiny is.

1b) The Lord is the defense of my life; Whom should I dread?

- So David, even while facing his enemies who wanted to kill him, he found comfort in the Lord.
- Now, some still believe that Jesus, facing the Devil, was the biggest risk humanity ever faced.
- If Jesus had succumbed to that temptation, then where would that have left humanity?
- Now, in reality we know that wasn't the case because even though Jesus was human, He was also God.
- Thus, there was no chance that God was going to be put to the test and fail.
- As David is writing this Psalm, he's speaking of Jesus with complete confidence.
- Now, we can gather strength and confidence from Psalm 27, as David did, not only defending his life but establishing his destiny.

2) When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, My adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell.

- It's been said that evil is one of Christianity's biggest oppositions, because atheists tell us that because there is evil, God doesn't exist.
- Now, the Christian answer to that is free will, because free will allows for evil to happen.
- We also know that God will not allow evil to exist forever and in His plan someday He will be abolishing evil.
- Yet, our free will and our character and personality will continue to reside in our creation.

3) If an army encamps against me, My heart will not fear; If war arises against me, In spite of this I am confident.

- Even in this horrible setting, David said he's not going to fear death.

4) One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord And to meditate in His temple.

- We see that David had this joy and confidence and was emboldened by this relationship he had with God.

5) For on the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; He will hide me in the secret place of His tent; He will lift me up on a rock. 6) And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, And I will offer sacrifices in His tent with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.

- Here we're commanded to shout for joy and sing praises.
- David found strength in his worship of God.

7) Hear, Lord, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me.

8) When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "I shall seek Your face, Lord."

- So, God is telling us today, through David, that when we seek the face of the Lord, we find strength, we find encouragement.
- And so, if we're challenged today concerning those tests, what's our answer to that? It's seeking the face of the Lord.
- We don't do this on our own, but encouraged to rely on God, because He's our destiny, even when we face death, as Jesus did.

9) Do not hide Your face from me, Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not abandon me nor forsake me, God of my salvation! 10) For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the Lord will take me up.

- David tells us that when we don't even have that family support, we always have the support from our Father, Son and Spirit.

11) Teach me Your way, Lord, And lead me on a level path Because of my enemies.

12) Do not turn me over to the desire of my enemies, For false witnesses have risen against me, And the violent witness.

13) I certainly believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord In the land of the living. 14) Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord.

- So, as we face life's tests, as we face death, as we face what Jesus went through during this season, let's be reminded to seek the face of the Lord.
- And let's be reminded that God is our destiny and that death is just a detail of this life.
- And finally, let's be reminded that destiny is our purpose and let's be reminded also to wait on the Lord upon whom we find our trust and our confidence and our hope.

Closing prayer