

Sermon: *Jesus, the Jilted Lover*
Text: *Luke 13:31-35*
Date: *February 28, 2010 AM*
Place: *Jesup First UMC*

Rejection is difficult, isn't it? When I was a student at Asbury College, I met an incredible, Christian girl and we became friends. Soon, we were spending a lot of time together, meeting on campus and talking on the phone. And I was smitten down to my socks. I remember thinking: "*Now, this is the kind of girl I want to marry.*" So, one day, I asked her to join me on a ministry team to my home church and she said yes. And I was so excited, until ... the phone rang and she said: "*Tucker, we need to talk. Would you meet me out by the soccer field?*" So, I went out there and I was leaning against a tree when she came walking by so fast that it almost blew me down. I mean, I had to run to catch up with her. And then, she said: "*Tucker, it's pretty obvious to me that you like me, but when I think of you, I think of you as a good friend, and that's all we'll ever be.*"

Now, friends, I've felt a lot of pain before, but listen, it felt like somebody reached into my chest, grabbed my heart, threw it on the ground and stomped that sucker flat. I was devastated; oh, I tried to pretend it didn't hurt, but I was crushed. Oh the pain of rejection! Some of you have experienced that along the way; and it doesn't matter if you're 14 or 74, rejection hurts!

Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem, knowing that when He got there, He would be arrested, persecuted, and eventually killed. And even though the common people loved Him, the opposition from

the religious leaders was growing stronger every day. And as He travelled toward Jerusalem, some Pharisees came out and said: *“It’d be better if you stayed away, because Herod wants to kill you,”* but Jesus said: *“You go tell Herod, I’m on my way, because no prophet can die outside of Jerusalem.”* And as He continued on His journey, He reached to top of one of the mountains outside the city and looks out over Jerusalem and says, **“Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, how often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”**

Listen friends, there are very few places in the Bible where we see the heart of God more clearly than in these verses. You see, Jesus is more than a great teacher; He is more than just a miracle worker; Jesus is a lover.

First, Jesus is a fearless lover! The Pharisees came out to warn Him; so, He knew what was going to happen. This is the same man who beheaded John the Baptist. Herod was a murderer and Jesus would have been wise to turn around and run, but because He loved you and me so passionately, He kept going. He said: **“You go tell that fox, I’m coming, because no prophet can die outside Jerusalem.”** Jesus was a man on a mission. One day, He said: **“The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but I have come that you might have life.”** On another occasion, He said: **“The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.”**

This is the reason He came ... Jesus is an expression of the Love of God. *“For God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life.”* Jesus is a fearless lover.

Second, Jesus is a Protective Lover! Jesus said: *“How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks.”* Now, there are several images that the Bible gives us of God: God is the Rock; God is Love; God is Holy; and God is a Shepherd! And here: we see God as a mother hen. What an interesting picture of God!

Now, I don't know much about chickens expect how to eat one, but most preachers do. Once upon a time, there was a Methodist preacher that didn't like chicken. And he was preaching a revival and for 3 straight nights, they fed him fried chicken. So, on the last night, when they brought his supper and asked him to pray, he bowed his head and said: *“Lord, I've had it hot; I've had it cold; I've had it young and I've had it old; I've had it tender and I've had it tough, but thank you Lord, I've had enough.”*

That's all I know about chicken, but they tell me that a hen calls to her chicks with a distinctive sound. ***She calls them to food!*** Now, little chicks are pretty far down the pecking order and they'd get left out if mama didn't find food for them. It's the same with you and me, but we have one who has *“Prepared a table before us,”* and who invites us to *“come and dine.”* He calls us to feed on His goodness, to feast at His table, and to feed on His Word.

She calls them to protection! Whenever trouble is near, she calls them to come near and then, she spread her wings over them. How interesting that the Psalmist describes God's protection of His people in the same way. The Psalmist said: **"He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge."** Jesus is a protective lover.

But friends, here's the saddest thing of all ...

Third, Jesus is a rejected lover! Some of the saddest words in scripture are recorded in these verses: **"But you were not willing."** We don't have enough time this morning to list all of the people who rejected His love. He loved them, showered them with blessing upon blessing, called them by name, sought to protect them and shelter them, but they were not willing! They rejected God's Son; in fact, John 1 says: **"He came unto His own, and His own did not receive Him."**

But you know, there are consequences for those who reject God's love. In verse 35, Jesus said: **"Your house is left to you desolate."** He said: **"You won't see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"** Just a few days later, as He and the disciples were leaving the Temple, He said: **"There is coming a day when not one stone will be found upon another in this place for they will all be thrown down."**

So, in 70 AD, just 37 years after Jesus' death, a Roman General named Titus lead the total destruction of Jerusalem. The walls of the city were torn down; the Temple was destroyed and burned; and the city was set ablaze. Many scholars have

seen this as the final punishment for a nation who rejected the love of God.

Now, we don't like to talk very much about the wrath of God; we'd rather focus on His love; but friends, God is a jealous God and He will not sit by while we reject His love and fill our lives with all kinds of other lovers. There are consequences for those who reject God's Word.

But hear the Good News: the rest of the story is yet to be written for you and me. We, who have been showered with His love, can still find shelter and provision in the loving arms of our Lord. Even if up until now, "you have not been willing," there is still a chance for you, because God is a God of second chances.

You know, that young lady came down to Georgia with me. And we worked hard together that weekend. And when we went back to Asbury, the very next weekend, we went out on our first date, a trip to Baskin Robins and a few days later, we went out on our second date, and six months later, I asked her to marry me and on June 4th, we will celebrate our 19th Anniversary. O the pain of love rejected, but O the bliss of love received and returned!

Hear the call of our Lord: "Jesup, O Jesup, how I have longed to gather you unto myself like a mother hen gathers her chicks but you were not willing." Oh, friends, don't reject God's love! *"Jesus, O Jesus, do you know Him today? Please don't turn Him away. O Jesus, O Jesus, without Him, how lost we would be."*