

# NEW BEGINNINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Second Sunday in Lent – March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (11:11 am)

## CITIZENSHIP UNDER WINGS

Psalm 4  
Jeremiah 26:8-15  
Philippians 3:17-4:1  
**Luke 13:31-35**

### ***Jesus Rescues Us from Death and Brings Us into Heaven***

The prophet Jeremiah faithfully preached *"all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people"* (Jer. 26:8). He called the people to repentance, lest the Lord's judgment come upon them. The violence that Jeremiah suffered for this preaching foreshadowed the cross and Passion of Christ Jesus, who suffered the judgment of God for the redemption of all people. For Jesus *"comes in the name of the Lord"* (Luke 13:35) in order to lay down His life for the sins of the world. Earthly Jerusalem was blind to His gracious visitation, and it put Him to death like the prophets before Him. Yet, His sacrifice upon the cross became the cornerstone of the new Jerusalem, His Church. He visits us today in mercy with His preaching of forgiveness, to gather us to Himself within that holy city, *"as a hen gathers her brood under her wings"* (Luke 13:34), for *"our citizenship is in heaven"* (Phil. 3:20).

In this passage from Luke 13, Jesus expresses His deep sorrow over Jerusalem, lamenting its history of rejecting God's messengers. His words reveal both His grief and His unrelenting desire to gather His people under His wings, offering them refuge and salvation. This passage invites us to reflect on the tension between earthly struggles and our eternal hope in God.

### **The Rejection of God's Message**

Throughout history, people have resisted God's call to repentance. Jerusalem, the heart of religious life, had a long record of rejecting prophets, and now it was rejecting Jesus Himself. Despite God's repeated invitations, the people turned away, unwilling to embrace the truth. This rejection is still present in our world today — people often resist hearing the hard truth of sin and the need for repentance. Yet, Jesus's sorrowful words reveal His longing to gather His people, to protect and nurture them as a hen gathers her chicks.

### **Repent**

Jesus' call to repentance is not merely about outward change but about a transformation of the heart. To relent and repent means turning away from sin and returning to God's embrace. The invitation is always there, but we must be willing to

accept it. As Jeremiah called the people to repentance despite their hostility toward him, so too does Christ call us to return to Him, warning us that destruction awaits those who refuse.

### **Our True Citizenship Is in Heaven**

As Christians, we recognize that our ultimate citizenship is not of this world. Though we may have national identities—such as my Canadian citizenship—we must remember that these earthly allegiances are temporary. Philippians 3:20 reminds us: "But our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." Earthly politics, conflicts, and struggles will pass away, but our eternal home is in the New Jerusalem, where Christ reigns forever.

### **Earthly Things Lead to Destruction**

Paul warns in Philippians that earthly things are fleeting and ultimately lead to destruction. Many people focus on worldly concerns, seeking security in wealth, power, or reputation. Even the disappearance of obituaries from newspapers reflects a cultural shift—a growing disconnect from the reality of eternal life. But as believers, we know there is more to life than what we see. The temporary distractions of this world cannot offer lasting peace.

### **The World Is Fallen, But Hope Remains**

Jesus' sorrow over Jerusalem is a reminder of the brokenness of our world. The rejection of Christ reflects the fallen state of humanity. Yet, even in His grief, Jesus points us to hope. He speaks of Palm Sunday, when He will be welcomed with shouts of "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 13:35). He also foreshadows His resurrection on the third day, the ultimate victory over sin and death. The world is fallen, but Christ has overcome it, and in Him, we have hope.

### **Connection with Jeremiah: The Rejected Prophet**

Jesus' lament echoes the experiences of the prophet Jeremiah, who was also rejected by his own people. The people of Jerusalem sought to silence Jeremiah just as they would later seek to kill Jesus. This parallel highlights the tragic pattern of humanity resisting God's messengers, yet it also emphasizes the unwavering faithfulness of God's plan for redemption.

### **"How Often Would I Have Gathered Your Children Together"**

In Luke 13:34, Jesus expresses His deep love and longing for His people: "How often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" This imagery reveals God's nurturing, protective nature. He desires to bring His children into His refuge, yet many refuse His invitation. The same invitation stands for us today – Citizens of heaven under Jesus's wings.

### **Citizenship in New Jerusalem**

While Jesus laments over the earthly Jerusalem, Scripture also speaks of a New Jerusalem, the heavenly city where God's people will dwell in eternal peace. Revelation 21 describes this glorious city, where there will be no more pain, sorrow, or rejection—only the fullness of God's presence. Our citizenship in this eternal kingdom is secured through Christ's sacrifice.

### **Jesus Rescues Us from Death and Brings Us into Heaven**

Just as Jeremiah suffered for proclaiming God's truth, Jesus faced rejection and death for the sake of humanity. Yet, His crucifixion was not a defeat but a victory—the foundation of the New Jerusalem, His Church. Today, Christ continues to gather His people, offering them forgiveness and eternal life. Under His wings, we find our true home, for "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

Let us, then, turn to Him in repentance, embrace our identity as citizens of heaven, and find refuge under His loving wings. In Jesus's name. Amen.