

I've never visited the hen house the night after a fox or weasel has come to visit. But I have talked to those who have. Dead chickens, killed for sport, not for hunger. Maybe one or two dragged away, but mostly senseless death. Even those who had raised chickens for decades never got used to it.

Get away from here. Herod wants to kill you.

If Herod had already killed your cousin, what would you do next? John had been preaching God's word, just like Jesus. Herod arrested him, at a whim killed him. John was just another insignificant chicken.

Get away from here. Jesus. Herod wants to kill you.

But Jesus said, Go and tell that fox: Listen. I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow and the next day I must be on my way for it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.

Though the fox is loose, Jesus knows his life is not in the hands of the fox. Threats will not turn Jesus away from the path set before him by his Father.

Is your life in the hands of the fox? Are you afraid in life, running here, running there, pursued by what you fear will be a senseless death? Random violence, cancer, a careless driver, do these foxes rob you of peace? Does fear of the foxes possess you, own you?

Jesus knew that his life was not in the hands of the fox, but in the hands of God. Your life is in those same hands. At least that is God's intention for you. God wants you to know and believe you are in the hands of God. Just as God wanted that for Jerusalem. But hear Jesus' words:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children

together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you are not willing! Bible sense

The little chicks are running everywhere. The fox is coming. The mother hen wants her chicks under her wing.

And we think, "A lot of good that will do." Gather those chicks all together and the fox will come and slaughter the hen and her chicks in no time at all. Yes, Jerusalem knew all about trusting in God. But they had also seen swords and spears, the sharp pointed teeth of the fox. They wanted to be sheltered by a hen no more. They wanted a lion for their protection.

And Jesus' words, "See, your house is left to you."

As God so often does with us. God lets us have what we want. They wanted a lion and when Jesus would only be a mother hen, they slaughtered him. They found their own claws and teeth, until a larger predator still came along and they were devoured. Rome came with a bigger army and destroyed them.

We gather today seeking refuge under a hen that was slaughtered and made alive once more. All the foxes and lions are sneaking and roaring, and faith in Jesus seems so small and weak. But God invites: under the wing of this mother hen you will be safe. -

Foxes will come and go, but my care will remain. God says to you, "Even if you should end in the jaws of the fox, do not be afraid, you are mine for all eternity. I raised Jesus from the dead. I will raise you."

You have been chosen by God to be gathered under the wing of the mother hen. You are safe there in the care of Jesus.