

The Gospel According to  
**Luke**

**“What Love’s Got to Do With It”**

Chapter 13:31-35

Introduction

I want to begin today by reciting an epic poem. In the 1960’s it was put to music. It has in it a few vocalizations, which I will do my best to reproduce. Here it is:

When you find yourself in danger,  
When you're threatened by a stranger,  
When it looks like you will take a lickin',  
(puk, puk, puk, puk)

There is someone waiting,  
Who will hurry up and rescue you,  
Just call for *Super Chicken!*  
(puk, ack!)

He will drink his super sauce  
And throw the bad guys for a loss  
And he will bring them in alive and kickin'  
(puk, puk, puk, puk)

There is one thing you should learn  
When there is no one else to turn to  
Call for *Super Chicken!*  
(puk, puk, puk, puk)

You remember *Super Chicken*: He was Henry Cabot Henhaus III, the richest chicken in the world, and an amateur scientist. He would drink the *Super Sauce* that his trusty side-kick and butler, Fred, would mix up. (Fred, by the way, was a lion). The Super Sauce would transform Henry into *Super Chicken* (although it gave him no discernable powers).

Jesus compared Himself to a hen. Given the number of animals available, it is curious that Jesus chose a hen. What about the

mighty eagle of Exodus, soaring over danger? What about the proud lion of Judah, mowing down his enemies with a roar? Compared to either of those, a mother hen does not inspire much confidence.

Get any thoughts of Super Chicken out of your head. An ordinary hen is what Jesus chose. What He will be is a mother hen, who stands between the chicks and those who mean to do them harm. She has no fangs, no claws; all she has is her willingness to shield her babies with her own body. If foxes want them, they will have to kill her first.

Which is exactly what happened, as it turns out. One night in the garden, while all the babies were asleep, the foxes came. The babies were scattered. Jesus died the next day - wings spread, breast exposed.

The actions of a hen may simply be instinct. It was much more than instinct that motivated Jesus to spread His arms on the Cross. His lament over Jerusalem reveals His true motive: **Love**. It was God's love for lost sinners that sent Jesus into the world; it was Jesus' love for them that brought Him to the Cross.

We're going to look at what love's got to do with it. We'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 Jesus' Love For You Could Not Be Restrained, but #2 Jesus' Love For You Can Be Refused.

#### #1 Jesus' Love For You Could Not Be Restrained (v31-33)

Jesus was busy with His ministry when He was warned of a death threat against Him:

[Luke 13:31](#) On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."

This is the same Herod who had been responsible for beheading Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist. He certainly was capable of murder.

We don't know, however, if this was a genuine threat, or just a ploy on the part of some Pharisees to get Jesus back into territory where they had more political power.

1. If it was a ploy on the part of the Pharisees, it teaches us to be focused on God's will for our lives and to not be swayed by fear. Danger or discouragement are not reasons for altering your course.
2. On the other hand, this may have been a sincere warning by sympathetic Pharisees. We tend to forget that there were a few believers among the Pharisees; Nicodemus is one who comes to mind.

We sometimes think in terms of groups, rather than individuals, when it comes to salvation. You can find believers in the strangest groups – including cults. However, if they are believers, they won't stay in those groups! They either leave on their own; or they get asked to leave.

Jesus was not going to alter God's course for His life because of a little thing like a death threat:

Luke 13:32 And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.'  
Luke 13:33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the *day* following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

If you read Bible commentaries, there is a lot of discussion about Jesus calling Herod **that fox**. It seems that calling someone a **fox** was derogatory, and the commentators feel they must defend Jesus' sarcasm.

*Jesus doesn't need defending!* If this was sarcasm, then it seems there can be a proper sarcasm. It's more likely that Jesus called Herod a **fox** because He was about to compare Himself to a mother **hen**. Herod, and all those opposed to the kingdom of God, were foxes; Jesus was the mother hen; the people were chicks who could come to Jesus and be saved, rather than scattered.

Jesus twice mentioned the concept of the **third day**. In common, everyday language, it meant nothing more than our phrase, “for the next several days.” But it had a deeper meaning as well:

1. First, it means that He was on a definite path in the will of God. His steps were being ordered by His Father in heaven. We, too, should have the understanding that God has both a plan and a path for our lives. We’re told in the Bible that God has before ordained good works for us, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10). We don’t so much decide our life’s path as we should discover it.
2. Second, on a literal **third day** Jesus would be **perfected**. It’s a reference to His resurrection from the dead on the **third day**. Of course, He would be killed; but not by Herod, or by any plan of man. He would lay down His own life, and then take it up again, according to a plan devised before the earth was even created.

Then Jesus said, **for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem**. *That hurt!* It was a reminder to the Jewish leaders that God’s prophets through the centuries had been rejected and many even martyred. While some were killed outside of the city of Jerusalem, the thought here is that Jerusalem was the center of Jewish authority and power; so, even if a prophet were killed somewhere else, it was with the approval of Jerusalem.

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, where He would be crucified, rise from the dead, and complete the work He was sent into the world to perform. No power on the earth, or under the earth, or in the supernatural realm, could alter His resolve to die on the Cross for the sins of the human race.

We’re not left in the dark as to His motive. It was love:

**John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

**Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Ephesians 5:2 ...Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

1 John 3:16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us...

Jesus came to save you. He wasn't motivated by instinct; or a sense of duty. He loved you before you were born; He loves you still. Nothing could restrain His love for you.

Some Pharisees warned Jesus He was in danger. He wasn't in danger; *but they were!* They were as helpless as chicks. Their only protection would be to come under the wings of the hen. Sadly, many would not.

## #2 Jesus' Love For You Can Be Refused (v34-35)

These next words are referred to as Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. You find them again in the Gospel of Matthew. They reveal the compassion of the Lord, and put His love into perspective.

They also reveal a mystery that has bothered theologians for centuries. Although God is the Almighty, sovereign Lord, His love can be resisted and refused by an act of human will.

Luke 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen *gathers* her brood under *her* wings, but you were not willing!

The opening words are a history lesson. **Jerusalem** is the city; but it also represents the seat of authority and power. The authorities among the Jews often used their power to persecute God's prophets. The religious and political leaders of Israel killed them, they stoned them.

The children of Israel were as helpless in the world as baby chicks. Everywhere were foxes seeking to destroy and devour them. Their only hope was to gather under the protection of the mother – who would give her life to satisfy the hunger of the fox, letting her chicks survive.

The Jews were dumber than baby chicks! They ignored the centuries of prophetic ‘clucking.’ They would ignore Jesus. As a result, Jesus made the following prophecy:

**Luke 13:35** See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until *the time* comes when you say, ‘*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!*’”

Looking into their future, Jesus saw their **house** left **desolate**. **House** refers both to the Temple in Jerusalem, and to the people themselves – who were the household of God on earth.

We’ve referred many times to the Roman siege of Jerusalem, from 68–70AD. The Temple was burned; the Jews were scattered all over the world for over nineteen hundred years. I’d say they were definitely **desolate!**

It won’t always be so. Jesus promised to return a second time. He will come, and the Jews alive on planet earth at His Second Coming will say, *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!*

We understand, from Scripture, that Jesus Second Coming will be at the end of a seven-year Tribulation on the earth. Jews especially will be hated and hunted down; but God will protect them. As all the armies of the world are gathered together in the Valley of Megiddo, for the Battle of Armageddon, Jesus will suddenly appear in the heavens, returning to rule and reign upon the earth. Then the Jews will see Him as their Savior, and receive Him as their Lord.

In the mean time, the Gospel is being taken to everyone in all the world – Jew and non-Jew. The love of God is calling to men and women and children everywhere to repent and be saved.

Jesus told you plainly, in verse thirty-four, that the Jews **were not willing** to come and be saved. I’m told by Greek scholars that the sense of His words are to say, *I willed, and you willed not*. This is the mystery that has perplexed scholars. What is the relationship between God’s will and my will? Or, to put it another way, What is the relationship between God’s sovereignty and my responsibility?

Or, to put it another way, What is the relationship between divine election and my freedom to choose?

Let me get right to the solution. **There is no problem between God's will and my will; between God's sovereignty and my responsibility; between divine election and my freedom to choose!**

I say there is no problem because the Bible clearly teaches both God's sovereignty and my responsibility as being simultaneously true. The problems occur only when we try to fathom how two seemingly contradictory truths can be simultaneously true. In other words, we create the problem because of our own desire to fully and completely understand the mind of God.

Here is what happens: Men read the Bible and want to develop a system of theology, within which everything fits nicely together and 'works' in ways that the human mind can easily understand.

Systematic theology sounds good; but, in the area of God's will and my willingness, it leads to unbiblical conclusions. Trying to reconcile God's will and my willingness, whole systems of theology come to the conclusion that I have no will; that I have no freedom to choose. They say that everyone who is going to be saved was chosen before they are ever even born. They are the elect of God. But they also must conclude that anyone not saved during their life on earth was never chosen; they could not be saved. In truth, they were chosen by God to be damned to Hell.

A lot of Christians sincerely believe what I've just stated; and many others are in Churches that teach it, although they may not know it. It makes sense only if your goal is to have a system of theology that you can bring down to a human level.

J.C. Ryle wrote, "we must not be more systematic than Scripture." *What a great caution for us to remember! We will never, in this life on earth, fully understand the relationship between God's will and my will; between God's sovereignty and my responsibility; between divine election and my freedom to choose. We should be content with our limitations, rather than suggest ways of thinking that ultimately*

reduced God to our own understanding. Especially when we come to conclusions that make God appear to be some kind of unloving monster Who could have saved everyone, but chose instead to damn most of the human race.

I say this reverently, using Jesus' own image: **He is clucking for you to come and be saved under the shadow of His wings.** God's love cannot be restrained; but God's love can be refused.

### Applying God's Word

Many of you are believers. In trying to fully understand the mind of God, don't overlook the heart of God. Let's live as though the Gospel were a real offer of salvation to every man, woman, and child. Let's not get sidetracked with any system that restrains the love of God.

If you are not yet a believer... You're a chick among foxes. You have no chance of survival unless you come to the hen. If you come, heeding the call, you'll find that Jesus died for you to satisfy the foxes. If you do not come, you are refusing God's love, and you will be lost forever.