

# Coffee to Go | Second Sunday of Lent | Year C

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Lent, Jesus, Jerusalem, repentance, injustice, oppression, tenderness, peacemaking.

## SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

### **Karin Peter** 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. Lent is the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter, and we are in the second week of Lent. And during Lent, we don't count Sundays. Sundays are reserved for celebrating God's imminent presence in our lives that cannot be denied, so we don't count that, but we count the other 40 days. And during Lent we center our attention on Jesus as we remember his life and ministry. So, during Lent it also provides a means for us to kind of sharpen our focus on our own lives in relationship to Jesus and to following Jesus. And the Lenten season encourages us to turn away from whatever distracts us or blocks us in our commitment to be a disciple of Jesus. So, during this season of Lent, may it help us walk with Jesus as he turns his face towards Jerusalem and the cross. So, this week, that's where we are with Jesus. We are on the road towards Jerusalem. He's been teaching and speaking and healing as he goes. And this is an encounter on the way.

### **Blake Smith** 01:56

And it comes from the Gospel of Luke the 13th chapter. It is the 31, [laugh] 31th. It is the 31st through the 35th verse.

At that very hour, some Pharisees came and said to him, Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you. He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me. 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 because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem. 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. See, your house is left to you, and I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

So why does this matter? Well, first of all, let's note that these Pharisees warned Jesus it wouldn't be the reaction that we might expect, seeing that most of Jesus interactions with the Pharisees are pretty controversial and filled with conflict. So, we're not sure exactly what's going on here, but we ought to note at least that the Pharisees are the ones warning him here. So, we have this image that might be easy to pass over because it's just kind of touched on, but we have these images of foxes and hens. The fox being the deceitful, dangerous, conniving ones and the hens that are protective of the chicks,

which in this case might represent those who are most vulnerable. And I won't go so far as to say that we all have times when we are the foxes, but it is probably safe to say that there are times when we are a little less hen-like than we ought.

**Karin Peter** 04:07

That was a gentle way to bring that up Blake.

**Blake Smith** 04:09

Isn't it? Well, I don't want to judge, but now, during Lent, of course, we repent for our participation in injustices, and we have an opportunity to remember our participation in those things. Now, our participation can be active, what we might call sins of commission, or passive, what we might call sins of omission. It's not, you know, we often might say, 'Well, I didn't, I didn't do that,' or 'I didn't do that on purpose,' or 'I didn't participate in that.' Sometimes our lack of participation can be just as harmful. So, we repent of our participation in these injustices and we recommit to God's justice and peace (shalom), healing and wholeness for all. So. In that way, we become hen-like, which is in stark contrast to the aims of the fox, which in this instance, symbolizes the corruption of Jerusalem by the powers of Rome, and the decadent, Hellenistic influences that existed then. What was meant to be a place in which people entered into God's presence, Jerusalem, into God's presence and purposes, has instead been weaponized as the seat of oppression and violence, which is absolutely opposite of God's way. One commentator said that, 'Jesus bereavement over Jerusalem,' and we hear him lamenting in this passage, that 'Jesus bereavement over Jerusalem was not merely that it had lost its way, but that it had proven to be the place that rejected and killed the very people who could have pioneered the way to the recovery of its holy destiny.' So, it was getting into a very corrupt and evil place. So the text serves as a reminder to us the way we're going to look at it, at least this time, it reminder of a choice that we have before us, Will we be hens, or will we be foxes?

**Karin Peter** 06:21

Okay, that's complicated. In today's world of Blake, we sit in the US, and there's a lot swirling around us, and I don't want to be too heavy handed in this, but the reality is, we have our own cities and places of power that have become deceitful and dangerous, and we have choices to make about commission and omission as well. We all do, each one of us, so it's a very challenging time to figure out if we will be a hymn or a fox.

**Blake Smith** 06:58

Yeah, and we can't dismiss the reality that it can be very anxiety producing to be a hen, at least in a vocal, active way. Because not only do foxes have power, they tend to strike fear of consequences if the hens don't follow along. So it is a it's a hard thing, but it is what we're called to. So, some questions that we might ask ourselves are, do I ever become a fox using coercion or force to get my own way?

**Karin Peter** 07:41

Yeah, so let's clarify force. So, some people would say, Well, I never physically force anybody to do anything. But force happens in a lot of different ways. It happens by verbal intimidation. It happens by how we vote. It happens by the choices we make in a community, yeah.

**Blake Smith** 07:59

withholding our care and affection, our you know, those kinds of things are our ways of forcing as well. They're very gentle but also forceful. Another question might be, when have I witnessed oppression and turned away? Oh, that one that as I read that I'm like, I don't even want to answer that one, right?

**Karin Peter** 08:25

Yeah, absolutely. And we see it, you know, we see it happening all over the world right now, where the foxes seem to be having their heyday right now, and, and it's like, when, when am I not witnessing it [right] in so many different levels and so many different ways? Yeah, so growing up out here in Washington State, the indigenous tribes had to physically overtake public buildings that had been that were on their reservation but had been co-opted by the government. For other use, they had to physically go in and sit down. Sit-ins were a big deal in the 60s and early 70s, and refused to leave the premises until their voices were allowed to be heard. And it's really interesting, because all of us who grew up in the area who were not indigenous, we had not even thought about how the tribes were treated in Washington State. We just were clueless to it. We didn't even teach about it in school, and so we witnessed that oppression, and didn't do much about it. So, it happens in lots of different ways.

**Blake Smith** 09:48

It does. In our my local jurisdiction, here in Chicago, we have been, we have been using some projects, Zion podcast episodes, to to study, using it in our adult Christian education. And we have been doing the Theo history series that you did with Tony and Lach. And we just finished the introduction episode and had an very interesting conversation about the Andrew Jackson era and the church's kind of silent walking along, basically, in a way, giving in or supporting by not being against. You know?

**Karin Peter** 10:30

Yeah, yeah, absolutely, we forget that the political context has a lot to do and social context with how we are making choices. Fox like our hand, like, yeah.

**Blake Smith** 10:41

So it's not new for us. It's been ongoing battle forever that, we're not pointing fingers here. This is something new that we're engaging in. It is, it is an ongoing human issue, so. the third and final question that we might ask is, what aspects of being a comforter and tender respite place appeal to me, and how does this inform my perspective of justice and peacemaking?

**Karin Peter** 11:10

So this is interesting to me, Blake, because, you know, in the gospels, we hear that Jesus said, Stay here. I'm going to send you a comforter. I'm going to send someone to walk with you. And it's that tenderness, it's that hen-like behavior, it's that place of respite that we talk about a lot when we study the Gospels. It's transferring that to our life and discipleship and ministry on our own, where we we sometimes struggle with that. But yeah, the respite and comfort and safety are aspects of Christ's mission.

**Blake Smith** 11:48

Part of that hen-like action that we're called to.

**Karin Peter 11:52**

So, when I think about that and how we can, like live in this scripture this week, how can experience it, maybe more deeply, Jesus used images from daily life to kind of make his point, as he explained to people, just as we do, and a hand gathering her chicks, invoking that kind of care and tenderness is such a contrast to the fox , or Herod, and oppression and tyranny that people suffered. So this week, I think maybe it's our practice this week could be seek to be the hen, not the fox, this week. So each night before you go to sleep, kind of review in your mind when you shared tenderness and care, as well as when you were harsh, or deceitful, or even oppressive. We all have those moments. And then each day, try to do better, try to try to make the majority of what happens in your day hen like and less Fox like through the week. And let's see how we do at the end of it,

**Blake Smith 13:02**

Right. Well, our blessing today comes from Elizabeth Ashman, and it's called, "Weaponized Faith," out of resource *Rage Prayers*.

For each verse of holy words that we sharpened into daggers, we repent.

For the blood they've drawn, for the scars they've left, we repent.

For the rituals under the guise of belonging that we used to exclude, we repent.

For Sacred Spaces used to coerce obedience, we repent.

For the irrevocable harm between people and God at the hands of those false prophets who abused the name of the Divine, we repent.

Amen.

Well, thanks for joining us here today at Coffee to Go. We invite you to join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.