

4 March 2007  
Lent 2

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church  
Vienna, VA

## Jesu Juva

“Little Fuzzy Yellow Christians”

Text: Luke 13:31-35 (Philippians 3:17-4:1; Jeremiah 26:8-15)

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . .”

If you're a parent, you've said those words.  
And if you are a child (or *when* you were a child!), you heard them.

They are words of exasperation. Words that you say when the words that you say aren't sinking in! Words that express frustration, and at the same time love.

What am I gonna do with you?

That's Jesus' lament today. His frustration with His people. He preaches but they do not listen. He teaches but they do not learn. He rebukes but they do not repent.

What's He gonna do with them?

They are His little fuzzy yellow chicks! He loves them so, in spite of their opposition; in spite of their rebellion; in spite of their misunderstanding. He just wants to take them all under His wings, His protective wings, His Gospel wings, and forgive them, heal them, and give them all good things!

*But they would not.* How sad those words. Chicks rejecting their protecting mother, running all around the barnyard, exposed to the dangerous predators around them . . . instead of safe and secure under her wings.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!

But they just don't get it. The danger.

Who is Jerusalem today?

First, I suppose, *we would point to our world* – as cosmopolitan today as Jerusalem was back then. Filled with many who have no use for Jesus, thinking Him irrelevant (at best) and an enemy (at worst). Folks today who are as St. Paul described in the Epistle: “*their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*” And how many are destroying themselves? In all kinds of ways? Overworking, overindulging, not realizing the danger? Not realizing that the prince of this world does not want to befriend them, but consume them? That beneath the good-looking bait is a sharp hook and powerful poison!

But Jerusalem today is not just *the world*. No, it hits closer to home than that. *For what about what we see in the church today?* The church all around the world – what is being preached and taught? Earthly things or heavenly things? Worldly wisdom of heavenly wisdom? Self-acceptance or repentance? Would Jeremiah (or any of the other prophets, for that matter!) ever had made it as a televangelist? Is Jerusalem the church because the church is becoming like the world? Why? Money and numbers? Popularity and success? Yet what lies beneath that good-looking bait? Do we not see the danger?

*And then what about you and me?* Yes, we're Jerusalem too. When we hear the Word of God and then live as if we didn't. When the wisdom of the world influences and shapes us more than the wisdom of God. When for us too, *our god is our belly, and we glory in our shame, with minds set on earthly things.* And chasing after . . . *what?* What good-looking bait? What good-sounding theory? What tempting morsel of self-satisfying sin?

O Michael, Michael! O Sarah, Sarah! O little fuzzy yellow Christians! *Why?*

You could not blame Jesus if He just gave up. If He had said: “*Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me again!*”

But He didn't. He will not leave you. He will not abandon you. So instead He says:

“And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”

Or in other words, **His wings are always there.** For His love is always there. And so He will never turn away a chick who comes running back in repentance; who comes running back in faith for forgiveness; who comes running back, harassed and helpless, for protection. And He doesn’t make you prove your worth before lifting His wings. No. You are worth it simply because you are one of His little fuzzy yellow chicks.

*Which is why Jesus was there in the first place.* Because of the danger Adam and Eve could not see, and we cannot see. The danger of sin, eternal death, and the devil. And so Jesus came to move Himself out from underneath the protective wings of His Father, and expose Himself for us – that He might be devoured in our place. Taking all the punishment for our sins; all the vengeance; all the wrath. Letting the devil has his way with him – the prowling lion, the venomous serpent, biting and poisoning.

Until on the cross *He was* swallowed up in death . . . or as the early church fathers would say, *becoming Himself the bait the devil could not refuse!* That the one who baits us into sin would himself be baited into his own destruction. Or that as one of our Lenten collects says: **that he who by a tree once overcame, likewise by a tree might be overcome!**

And overcome He was! Overcome were all our enemies! For after His Sabbath rest in the grave, Jesus triumphantly *descended* into hell, to tear down its gates and proclaim His victory. He *rose* from the dead and stripped the grave of its power. And He then *ascended* into heaven, having reconciled God and man, having atoned for our sin, and having reunited what had been torn asunder.

And as once He came, so still He comes, with wings spread, calling, inviting, imploring us to repent and return. To take refuge in Him. To receive His forgiveness and life in Holy Baptism, Holy Gospel, and Holy Communion – where in that last it is no coincidence that we sing those words that Jesus said we would say when we see Him again: “*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*” Yes, for here He is for us. Here He comes for us. Here is His forgiveness and life for us. Wash,

hear, eat, drink, little fuzzy yellow chicks. In these there is no danger. In these you need fear no foe.

For *on the third day your Saviour finished His course*, just as He said. To make it your course. That *your citizenship be in heaven*, from whence our Saviour who comes even now, will come once more in glory. And take you home.

Until then, there is work to be done. Lives to live. Children to raise. People to care for. Prayers to offer. It is no time to be idle, but also not to live in fear of whatever “foxes” threaten or come our way. No, for all we do we do under the wings of our Saviour. Under His forgiveness. Secure in His life and love. Always repenting, always returning, always refuging . . . until He comes again, when the song that we practice now here, becomes our unending hymn of praise in Heaven!

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.