**SUNDAY, 3/13/22**

**SERMON ON LUKE 13:31-35**

One Saturday afternoon Jeffrey came inside after spending

 most of the day with his friend Mikey.

He found Dad in the living room and asked him

 the question all parents dread to hear.

“Dad, where did I come from?”

Dad, in his great wisdom answered:

“Good question. Go ask your mother!”

So Jeffrey went off to find his mother;

When he found her in the kitchen, he asked:

“Mom, where did I come from?”

She replied; "Good question. Go ask your father!"

Jeffrey said: "I did ask him. He sent me to you."

With a slightly frustrated sigh,

 Mom pulled out a chair at the kitchen table for Jeffrey.

She poured two glasses of milk and opened a package of cookies.

After they were settled she began

 to explain the story of the birds and the bees.

As she explained the facts of life to Jimmy,

 his eyes got bigger and bigger,

 and his mouth open in surprise.

When she was finished she asked him: "Does that help?"

Jeffrey was lost in thought for a moment and then answered:

 "Not really.

 My friend Mikey says he is from Reading, Pa.

“Where did I come from?”

Often, in order to provide a helpful answer to a comment or a question,

 we need to know more about the circumstances.

Sometimes you have to know what is behind

 the comment or the question being asked,

 in order to respond meaningfully.

Some of the Pharisees had a similar problem.

They came to Jesus and warned Him:

 "Get away from here.

 Run away and hide because Herod wants to kill you."

But Jesus wasn't going to run away.

Because of His great love for us, He wasn't going to avoid the cross.

He said to them, "I am casting out demons

 and performing cures today and tomorrow,

 and on the third day I finish my work."

But His explanation was beyond their understanding.

They were as confused by His words

 as Jeffrey was by Mom's explanation of where he came from.

Jesus knew where He was going – to His death at Calvary,

He knew why He was going – because He loved each one of us.

Often we are as confused as the Pharisees and young Jeffrey.

We don't always follow in His footsteps,

 we don't always do the task He gives us.

 A humorous poet expressed it this way:

I think my soul is a tame old duck,

Dabbling around in barnyard muck.

Fat and lazy, with useless wings.

But sometimes when the north wind sings,

And the wild ducks hurtle overhead,

It remembers something lost and dead.

And cocks a wary, bewildered eye,

And makes a feeble attempt to fly.

It's fairly content with the state it is in,

But it isn't the duck it might have been.

Most of us are not the ducks we might have been.

We are not the ducks we could have been.

We have to battle the spirit of laziness, and apathy, and contentment.

It makes a difference when we allow Jesus to continue to change us,

 when we do not simply settle for good,

 but reach for the best,

 and follow the One who can make us much more.

Then we do God's work's in amazing ways.

It was six year old Cindy's birthday,

 and Mom and Dad took her to the amusement park to celebrate.

They all had a good time exploring all the activities, and enjoying ice cream cones.

Cindy wandered away from her parents for only a moment

 and entered the mirrored maze.

Quickly Mom and Dad searched for her.

Dad finally saw her in the maze, frantically searching for the way out.

She was becoming increasingly confused, and beginning to cry,

 as she struggled to find her way out.

Dad quickly went to the maze and called out:

 "Don't cry, honey.

 Put your hands out and reach all around.

 You will find the way out.

 Just follow my voice."

Knowing Dad was nearby and would stay close, and help her,

 she calmed down and followed Dad's directions.

Before long, with Dad's help, she found her way out,

 and ran to the safety of her father's outstretched arms.

Our lives often become entangled and confusing.

It is easy for us to become frightened and worried as we struggle to find a way out.

But Jesus is always nearby, watching over us.

His voice is calling us from the confusion of the maze of life.

He is waiting for us to reach out to Him.

When we get lost, Jesus seeks us out.

His voice comes to us in the maze of life.

Knowing He is close by,

 we can take a deep breath, calm down, and keep on going..

He calls to us to come to Him, to believe in his promises.

A merchant can buy an article for eighty cents,

 put it on his counter, and sell it for a dollar.

 That is business.

A mechanic can take material worth $5 and make it into an article worth $50.

 That is skill.

Longfellow could take a sheet of paper,

 write a poem on it and make it worth sixty thousand dollars.

 That is talent.

Rockefeller could sign a piece of paper and make it worth millions.

 That is capital.

But God can take a confused, worthless, sinful life,

 wash it, and cleanse it, and put his Holy Spirit within it,

 and make it a blessing to all humanity.

 That is salvation.

That is God's love.

AMEN