

Luke 13: 31-35

**31** At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.”

**32** He replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ **33** In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

**34** “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. **35** Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Who lives in you? That's the question that comes to mind as we read those words of Jesus this morning when he tells the Pharisees, "Go tell that fox (Herod) that I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow and on the third day until I reach my goal." I will do what I must. For God lives in me. I am a citizen of heaven. Let him do what he must!

Let your imagination run free for a moment and picture yourself, your personality, who you are really, as a house. Any kind of house will do -- just so it's yours. For some it may be a huge castle, with lofty turrets and banners waving in the breeze, a place that is safe and secure. For others it may be a rustic cabin, tucked away in the woods, a peaceful and quiet refuge up North. For others still, it might be a nice little retirement home, with a rocking chair on the front porch, a shade tree in front and a nice warm breeze stirring flowers blooming in front.

Now, move in closer and imagine the front door of that house. Picture someone pushing the doorbell or rapping on the door. If someone came to the door of your house, who would they find inside? Who lives in you? Who guides your heart?

I'm not sure about you, but I've met people who gave me the distinct impression that if I went inside the "houses" of their lives, I wouldn't find anyone home. Or if I went inside their spiritual houses, they would be so cluttered with junk that there wouldn't be any room for anyone. Or some whose houses are great and impressive on the outside, but once I entered everything would be artificial.

Who lives in you? That's the question for us to address this Second Sunday in Lent. Who lives in you? What guides your decisions? What sets the course of your life? What determines the way you think and treat others around you? Most of us would like to say that it is our Christian faith that determines who we are. But is that so? For there are two kinds of people who can be home according to Our Lord Jesus-- citizens of the world and citizens of heaven.

Who lives in you? Think back over the decisions you've made this past week. Who made them -- a citizen of this world or a citizen of heaven? Recall the way you spoke to those around you and the way you treated others. Who was present then?

What about what you bring this our church family this morning, what kind of relationship with God does it reflect? Is it a citizen of heaven, the child of God, who is present in us? Is that we see in you? Or is it a stranger of this world, one who cares little about others, who thinks first of him or herself, whose actions fail to give witness to the allegiance we claim to have with God?

Who lives in you? What stirs you each day of your life? We'd like to answer that it is our Christian faith, but can we? For the Christian faith is more than just a set of doctrines, more than some creed that we recite every Sunday, more than assertions we study. Our Christian faith is the lives we live -- the set of moral principles that guide our decisions and are reflected in the words we use. It is our response to the poor around us. It is our record of worship, our interest in Scripture reading, our attention to prayer.

For the reality of our Christian faith is our relationship with Christ, the same kind of response that Jesus gave those Pharisees. "Look and see how I act," he said. "See, I go about my business.

One Day, the Pope is working in his office one day when a very excited priest comes rushing down the hall, robes flying.

Holy Father, Holy Father, I have news!" the priest pants as he skids into the room. The Pope looks up patiently from his work and asks, "What is your news, Father?" "Jesus is back! He's coming here right now! What should we do?!

What should we do?!" [L] [SEP] [L] [SEP]

The Pope smiles and picks up his papers and a pen and answers, "Until I think of something tell everyone to Look busy." Yes Jesus is saying, while all these Pharisee are standing around looking busy, I will continue to care for the sick and proclaim God's Word." Who lives in you? The answer must always be "Christ lives in me."

And because Christ lives in me.... the same love, the same compassion that Jesus had is present in me. The same life, the same power of God that was present in Jesus is alive in all of you. You are a citizen of heaven. God is your Father. And it is up to us to live according to that citizenship.

We cannot say we are a citizen of heaven, a child of God, and make ourselves a stranger to the house of God. I cannot say I am a citizen of heaven and live as an "undercover agent," afraid someone during the week will discover my true identity.

This Season of Lent calls us to look within ourselves and ask the question: "Who lives in me?" It calls us to be honest with ourselves and admit that even though we claim to be citizens of heaven, we often live as strangers before God.

A researcher for a publishing company recently interviewed a number of people to determine what kind of books they liked to read. Among the most common answers were: the Bible, Romance novels, and a number of classic works such as *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, and others.

In return for their cooperation, the company offered each person a choice of a free book from a list of titles published by the company. There was a large variety of books to choose from, ranging from Christian devotional books to classical titles, romance etc. and some of more recent authors.

It was interesting to note that the most popular choice of this supposedly high-minded group of readers was, *50 Shades of Gray* a book of sexual practices involving bondage, dominance / submission, and sadism, by E.L. James.

Sometimes we claim to be citizens of heaven and yet live as strangers to God because we think no one will notice the difference. After all, we are not as bad as others around us, are we? How often we live as strangers to God and try to claim we are citizens of heaven and hope no one notices the difference.

But the Season of Lent reminds all Christians to take the time and ask Jesus to draw near. Lent is the time to be in prayer more often and open your door, let down the draw bridge and allow Jesus into the innermost part of your very being.

There is a story of a burly, old lineman from a professional football team who thought that he knew all the tricks so he could stay out late and party on road trips despite the team's curfew.

Over the years he'd gotten it all down to a science. He'd pile certain things up under the blankets of the bed to make it appear that he was asleep when the coach checked curfew.

And it worked fairly well until one evening when he was in a hurry and couldn't find the right items to put under the covers, so he just decided to slip a floor lamp under the blankets instead. Imagine what happened when a suspicious coach peeked in at 1 a.m. and snapped on the poor guy's light.

The cross of Jesus is like that. It lays bare the thoughts of the human heart and reveals the inner person.

Who lives in you? If you want to know the answer to that question, review your thoughts and actions in the light of the cross.

How does your life reflect the love of Jesus? How do your actions make God's compassion more visible? Who lives in you?

Jesus tells us that two kinds of people cannot live in peace with each other. "No one can serve two masters," he says. Either we live as people who strive to find our peace and joy in Christ, or we put Christ aside and worry more of the earthly and material things around us. Both kinds of people cannot live under the same roof.

Dwight Moody an American evangelist tells a story about two inebriated men who found their way back to the dock one night after a long night of partying. They were relieved to find the boat still there. They decided to try to make it home. So they got in and began to row. They rowed hard in what was left of the night, but when the sun came up, they were dismayed to discover that they were in exactly the same spot where they had started. For in their drunken state they had forgotten to untie the mooring line and raise the anchor.

We cannot live with our hopes and dreams, our aspirations and goals for life tied to the material possessions of this world and yet claim to be citizens of heaven. We cannot live dividing our priorities between self-serving ourselves and serving God. We cannot live as citizens of heaven and be strangers to God. Jesus says, "Either you will hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. No one can serve two masters." It is impossible to hold dual citizenship.

To be a child of God is to allow God to be our Father. To live as a citizen of heaven is to allow Christ into our hearts. Lent is a reminder that we must allow Christ in! We must allow the love of God to rule our lives, direct our thoughts, and guide our actions.

Who lives in you? May we all be able to say, "Christ lives in me for I live in him. Amen.