



## *Pastor Hank's Blog*

*March 17, 2019*

### Foxes, Hens & Other Lenten Animals

Bible Reference: Luke 13:31-35

Last week I got to spend a couple days with my new niece, Charlotte. Charlotte has to spend some time in the NICU growing bigger and stronger. In general, the NICU is not a place any parent wants to be. Most parents desire to shield their children from suffering for as long as they can, but in the NICU parents are faced right away with the reality that their child is suffering. While visiting Charlotte, my brother-in-law noticed that there were pictures of baby animals all over the walls and asked me what baby animal I liked? Having baby animals on the walls was surprising to me until I gave it more thought. Baby animals provide a sense of comfort for NICU families, rather than a spirit of envy or sadness that pictures of healthy babies might evoke.

The baby elephant—that was the answer I gave my brother-in-law. Some of you may know I had a passion for elephants as a kid. I think when I saw an elephant I saw an animal that was large but gentle in spirit. Maybe these characteristics were ones I wanted in my life. Choosing an animal to relate that was less egocentric than saying I wanted to be like Martin Luther King Jr. or Abraham Lincoln. Animals seemed safer.

Animals are very influential in our culture as they provide characteristics that we, as humans, can relate to even though they are different than us. This is why I find it interesting that Jesus uses an animal from His creation to refer to Herod, but also to show us an example of His love. In our reading from Luke, Jesus called Herod a fox. In today's language calling someone a fox would probably not be received the same way it was received at the time of Jesus, so let me explain. A fox was well known as a hunter, as one seeking to destroy. This is exactly what we see time and time again with the Herod and his dynasty. He had made multiple attempts on Jesus' life, and it was not seen as something out of the ordinary for him. Did calling Herod a fox provide a more relatable and "safer" connection for those that heard Jesus, especially since man oversees animals in the order of creation? A couple verses later, Jesus uses the image of a hen gathering her chicks to explain how He will gather His people. Chicks desire that warmth and protection that only the mother hen can provide. It is their instinct to run to their mother. Jesus is painting another picture people could relate to.

This weekend we take time to process what the animals in our reading help us to understand about our Lenten journey. A fox speaks about how the world will reject Jesus, and the hen about Jesus coming to provide protection and safety for us. These images play into an even larger picture of chicks living in fear of foxes. On Sunday we will talk about that big picture as well, and how Jesus came to put an end to it. See you Sunday!

*God's Peace,*

*Pastor Will*