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## A Mother Hen

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During the years following the depression, I lived on a farm in Manchester, Tennessee. Everyone had a job on the farm. One of the fun jobs was to watch little mother hens in the spring as they went out to find new homes for the families they were about to have.

If you were not raised on a farm, you may not know that when a hen wanted to start a family she would start clucking and raise her feathers somewhat. She would also start hunting for a quiet, safe place to hatch her brood of babies. The springtime was the time for such events. So, we kids had to follow her around and scout out her nest. She usually found a briar patch or brush pile and she would begin day by day laying eggs. After she had laid a nest full, she would begin her three weeks of sitting. Soon the eggs would begin to hatch and it wouldn't be long until the mother hen would bring out her family for everyone to see.

Now this was the thing about a mother hen. She could be dangerous! If you got too close to her babies she would spread out her wings and come after you. She would literally take a plug out of your skin if you got too close. She could sense danger. She had a high pitch scream that could be heard from a long distance. With the first clap of thunder, she sounded her alarm and the chicks would come running to get under her safe, outspread wings. If the rain came too quickly, some of the chicks would become frantic, get lost, or drown.

As I think of the mother hen, I remember the words of Jesus. He said to the Israelites, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*" (Matthew 23:37). Jesus called out to God's people many times. Some came to His shelter, but many chose to run away. Jesus still calls us, but we drift so far it is hard to find our way back to the safety of His loving wings. The only solution is to be like the little chicks. Stay near Jesus, know His voice, and recognize the warnings in His word. He continually has his wings spread out, like a mother hen, to shelter us. What will we choose?

**Today's Verse:** "*How precious is your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.*" Psalm 36:7

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