

**The Parables**  
**Luke 13:1-9**  
**March 13, 2016**

**NEIGHBORHOOD UNDERGROUND!**

- THIS Friday, 7 pm – Midnight HERE
- Come as early as 6:30
- Invite friends!
- Share the website's page on FB
- NO childcare on site – but we can put you in touch with some of our young ladies who may be available to watch your children in your home

Turn to **Luke 13:1-9**

- Jesus is still speaking at the same place he was in chapter 12.
- Crowds pressing in, some got up the courage to interject questions while He was teaching
- In Luke 12, the only two questions asked of Jesus were the one about a brother's inheritance ("who made me judge?") and Peter's about to whom Jesus was actually speaking to (which Jesus doesn't answer).
  - So this is kind of Jesus' version of the "open mic nights" I used to have as a youth pastor (explain)
- Pray

Picking it up in Luke 13:1...

**Luk 13:1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.**

**Luk 13:2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?"**

**Luk 13:3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**

**Luk 13:4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?"**

**Luk 13:5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."**

**Luk 13:6 And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.**

**Luk 13:7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?'**

**Luk 13:8 And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure.**

**Luk 13:9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"**

Today's parable is about **repentance**.

- Notice how Jesus repeats himself in v3 and v5. Same exact words for both tragedies that happened.
- **Repentance = metanoēō = to think differently or afterwards, that is, reconsider (morally to feel compunction): - repent.**
  - From two Greek words, meta and noieo:
    - Meta = afterwards
    - Noieo = to think

- The kind of repentance Jesus is **primarily** referring to here is one sometimes called Repentance with a capital R
  - Repentance unto salvation
  - A one-time deal, according to scripture.
  - Romans 10:9 – confess your sins and believe in Jesus, and you will be saved.
    - And Jesus’ keeps that promise.
- But there is also a Biblical principle of continued repentance – a repentant heart – that is also taught in scripture.
  - Rev. 2:5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent.
    - Even in our Christian walk, we still sin.
      - Sometimes it is in our thoughts, what we choose to look at, laziness, selfishness, disobedience when convicted, harsh words, etc.
- ***A repentant heart – and the act of repentance for sin – is a characteristic the Lord desires from His children.***
  - Metanoeo = the afterthought of a sinful act
  - It is a conviction that my actions were wrong
  - It is the notion that had I the opportunity to go back in time and do that scene again, I would have done it differently – I’d have avoided sin.
    - Nobody owned a time machine in Jesus’ day.
    - And as far as we know, nobody owns one today.
    - If we did, we could go back and have a do-over!
  - ***Repentance is basically, “I wish I had a do over but I don’t – will you forgive me? Will you treat me as though when that situation happens again, I won’t make the same mistake twice? I’m sorry I hurt you – I have no desire to hurt you in that way ever again.”***
    - **Repentance is the main ingredient for a healthy relationship.**
      - Jesus is really big on repentance.
      - In fact, of the 7 letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, 6 of them were steeped in sin.
        - And the first thing Jesus commands all 6 churches to do is repent. The same word used here in this parable.

Before I get into the Galileans, the tower in Siloam, and more about repentance,

***I want to help you grasp God’s frustration with His chosen people at the time of Christ.***

- Doing so will greatly aid you in comprehending this parable and applying it to your life.
- I encourage you to try to eliminate any distractions right now, and focus...
- **Imagine you had a front row seat at creation...**
  - Creator God working the miracle of forming all that there is out of nothing.
  - God forming man from the earth, and you can’t help but see He’s reserved his greatest love for mankind
  - He creates woman from man and is delighted to present her to him and see man’s reaction
  - Mankind was created in His image – so much so that the animals looked upon Adam and Even in awe – knowing they were subject to the image bearers of their Creator

- For a time, Adam and Eve literally “walked with God” and nothing was hidden – love was pure and indescribable
- But of course, rebellion happens, and that perfect connection with God is severed
- But His love doesn’t allow any time to go by before He has a plan to win back the heart of man
- But in His perfect timing – a timing you don’t quite understand but trust in His perfect wisdom – that plan doesn’t unfold for many, many generations.
- God would call the descendants of Adam His “chosen people” – for the purpose of reflecting His glory to the fallen world around them.
- His chosen people would draw an otherwise unknowing, ignorant people to see God, know His power, reverently fear Him, live accordingly, and even their lives would draw others to see the One True God.
- And yet, throughout those generations, you witness God’s people constantly turning from Him to other gods, other powers, other false promises that NEVER come to fruition
- The very cultures God sends His chosen people to, to reflect Him as the One True God would influence God’s people more than God’s people influenced the culture.
- But God’s people, time and again, after undergoing great trials and crises, would return to the perfect love of God, and remain for a time, only to inevitably stray away again,
- As you watch this unfold, you’re amazed as this cycle would be repeated generation after generation...
- Until finally, in the darkest hour of time since the Fall, God would deliver His own people into the hands of the enemy, into captivity, giving up their land and even being subjected to laws that outlaw simple prayer to their God.
- Masterfully, God reserves for Himself a remnant, and a man named Daniel and 3 others would be used to show the world and all her kings that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was indeed – and always will be – the One True God.
- His people would be restored, and the name of the Lord would be revered once more.
- Then, just several generations before God’s perfect plan of salvation makes it’s resounding entrance, His people go off the rails in the OTHER direction –
  - No longer is the main issue following other gods, but now it’s making new, freedom-restricting laws
  - adding more and more constricting rules – an attempt at forced obedience totally absent of love, relationship, and dependence.
- The leaders of God’s chosen people have created an impossible religion – one that no longer reflects His character
- It is so distant from God’s design, that it has become totally fruitless
- While they still believe themselves to be God’s chosen people, God Himself is being constantly rejected in favor of a strict adherence to the law
- Law has replaced love
- Division has replaced compassion
- Disease is now seen as a sign of great individual sin and the consequence of it, rather than it being a result of the Fall
  - As if God was purposely cursing sinners with ill health based on their level of sin
  - This false understanding – based on strict adherence to impossible laws becoming equal with the law itself – led to more division
  - Diseased people are ostracized and cut off, rather than lovingly attended to and included.
  - They are judged as “sinners,” as if others were NOT sinners.

- And God's heart is heavy
- Consumed with themselves, those whom God blessed with riches no longer have compassion and benevolence toward their own people.
- And the rich begin to take the place of power within His own temple, and the poor are cast out into the outer courts.
- As you look at Creator God, you see His face sullen at the reality that His chosen people are reflecting a very angry God to the rest of the known world
- You see God's sadness as the fruit of His love through His people has dried up to producing nothing at all.
- God's chosen people – the very people to whom His first two commandments were given – Love God, and love others – had become unrecognizable to Him – the God who created them.
  - There was no fruit left.
  - No light, no love, no grace, no freedom, no peace.
  - And you began to think, this God – He has every right to just walk away and leave them to their own devices.
  - But...
- Then, just when you thought God had enough...
  - God deploys His angels
  - God announces His master plan – to a poor, insignificant, unmarried young woman
  - He was coming to earth Himself.
  - He would redeem all that was lost.
  - He would do for man what man could not do for himself.
  - He would come THROUGH his chosen people, lovingly revealing Himself to them, if they would only open their eyes.
  - He would die for His chosen, and all mankind, even while we were steeped in sin, rejecting Him
  - He would then rise from the tomb, and be seen by 500 people – ALIVE!
  - And He would glorify Himself – that all the world would know Him, His love, and his plan to offer an eternal relationship to all who put their faith in Him.
  - And you – with your front row seat, would watch in wonder at such love, and total shock as His chosen people were led astray once more by their corrupt leaders, rejecting Him once more.
- Coming back now to Luke 13...
  - *"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"*

**This parable expresses God's frustration with His chosen people.**

- God is the owner of the vineyard.
- He kept looking for fruit on His tree, but kept finding none.
- Time to cut it down.
- But the vinedresser – which is God's Son, the Savior, Jesus Christ – says let me do what needs to be done: care for them and provide good soil one last time.

- If they choose to remain dead in their sins after that, so be it.

### **This is not a finality of judgment upon the Jews and upon their leaders.**

- But it IS a finality regarding a race of people being the only “chosen” of God
- Notice the parable doesn’t have an ending.
- It ends with the vinedresser convincing the owner to give Him one last chance.
- **The cross is that one last chance.**
- And 12 disciples of Christ believed on Him
  - And this remnant – this small band of Jewish disciples – would take to the streets one singular message:
    - God has chosen all mankind to lavish His grace upon
    - Believe in Him!
    - Repent and believe!
    - And as you walk through life, don’t place yourselves higher than other sinners just because you are chosen of God.
    - A repentant heart is a soft heart – one moldable by the Lord.
    - One that bears fruit.
- That’s the meaning of the parable.
  - That the Savior’s work makes all the difference
  - The Savior’s work produces the fruit of salvation, and continual fruit that honors the Lord

### **So Let’s talk about repentance, and “levels” of sin...**

- Before the parable is told, Jesus is made aware of a couple recent tragedies
- The first: Galileans who were slaughtered by Pilate’s men in the temple.
- The Second: 18 Jews crushed by a tower in Siloam.

Again, to set the scene, this is somewhat like a press conference, where people just start peppering Jesus with questions, unrelated one to another.

- Theologians mostly agree that Jesus probably hadn’t heard about the Galilean massacre, and was just being told about it.
- But knowing their purpose behind the question, cut to the chase once they were finished informing him.
- “Do you think these Galileans were worse sinners than others?”

### **The Galileans**

- The Galileans had a reputation of being jerks, basically
- Josephus, a secular historian in the first century, said everybody – not just the Jews in Jerusalem, but Roman citizens as well – could spot a Galilean, just by observing their countenance, their hatred toward secular society, and their passion to have things their way or nothing at all.
- We know nothing more about this story than what we see here, except that this wasn’t the only time Pilate invaded a Jewish temple and killed worshippers.
- Josephus records other similar events – Pilate and the Roman guard had various altercations with the Galileans, so this was nothing new.

### **The tower that fell on 18 Jews...**

- We don’t know anything about this among other historical writings.

- I'm sure it happened, but it didn't survive any manuscripts outside the gospel of Luke from that time.
- Jesus uses it as a second illustration – same as the first.
- **“Do you think these 18 were worse sinners than others?”**

See, the culture – through poor leadership with ulterior motives – had been teaching that blatant sinners would simply die or be severely punished BECAUSE they sinned greater than others who only sinned “mildly”.

- Repentance was a lost art among the Pharisees, because they believed they didn't sin.
- In other words, if you sinned big, you better beg like nobody's business for your soul.
- But if you didn't sin big – or if nobody was really all that affected by your little sin – no worries, you're good.
- What naturally follows a false belief like that is a complete lack of, and teaching on, repentance.
- **There's no need to repent if you don't sin.**
- And therefore, no need (in your mind) for a Savior.

So Jesus asks the same question twice, and I'll paraphrase it: **“Do you believe their 'level' of sin coincides with the way they died?”**

- And then He answers His own question:
  - “No, I tell you” (v3 and v5)
  - It's an emphatic NO.

And then He shocks the whole crowd by saying, **“But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”**

- I bet Jesus got a bunch of **tilted heads staring back at him**, mouths, half open, eyes looking a bit confused.
  - You mean, me?
  - Wait, I was asking about those stupid Galileans.
  - What do you mean me? Repent?
  - But I follow the law!
  - How can you compare me to those stinking Galileans?
  - I've spent my whole life following the letter of the law so I don't HAVE to repent!
  - I am righteous!
- **(next)** Also, this sentence by Jesus was somewhat prophetic.
  - 37 years later, 3,000 Jews would be slaughtered in the temple by the Romans one last time, at the destruction of the temple.
- But more to Jesus' point:
  - Death is the consequence of sin.
  - All have sinned and fallen short.

And then He tells the parable of the fruitless tree, the Master's desire to cut it down, and the Vinedresser's last ditch effort to save it.

**(next)** Today, repentance is STILL lacking in God's people.

Parents – especially in our culture – have totally failed their children when it comes to a habit of repentance.

- What I mean is parents tend to shrug off their children’s shortcomings, saying, **“That’s just how kids are these days.”**
- And if you’re not a parent, don’t tune out right now.
  - Because most of us grew up in homes where parents didn’t do a great job cultivating a repentance culture.
- Now, Parents don’t usually start out this way.
  - But children – just like us with God – don’t make it easy for their parents to discipline them.
  - Because nobody likes discipline.
  - But parents who love Jesus, you **MUST** endure and do your job well.
- Children often know they misbehaved, but there’s a great hope that they’ll get away with it.
- Even when mom or dad notice, the reaction is, “Hey, don’t do that again,” offering no teaching as to asking forgiveness, or seeking genuine sorrow in the eyes of their kids.
- This lazy approach leads to our children having no experience in genuine repentance for the mistakes they make.
- ***And as they grow up, they learn to either hide from consequence, or expect parents to sweep it under the rug, all the while being told Jesus loves them, and surely He sees their sin, and surely forgives them – no repentance necessary.***
- They grow up, and as adults – just like all because of the Fall – sin every day.
  - But we’ve learned how to say things like, “Yes I sin, but God knows it, and has forgiven me already.”
  - And we keep on with our lack of repentance.
  - ***And this leads to a very cold faith.***
  - We rarely experience being forgiven, because we rarely ask for it from God.
- Parents, I implore you, don’t let those moments pass.
  - The secular world wants you to ignore your child’s sins – goes so far as to call it abuse if you linger on them too long.
  - Rather, God’s way is to properly teach your child **WHY** what they did is sinful, for several reasons:
    - 1) It shows them their need for a Savior – Jesus
    - 2) It teaches them humility
    - 3) It teaches the dependence upon their Creator who sustains them with His strength
    - 4) The proper dealing of sin (acknowledge it, seek genuine sorrow, encourage them to ask forgiveness, grant it, and celebrate the freedom that comes with repentance) produces godly fruit for future generations

If you are like most people, and you didn’t have a home where repentance was encouraged, **What can we do now to change our culture?**

- **1) Model Repentance**
  - Repentance isn’t easy.
  - If it were easy, everybody would do it.
  - Repentance is hard, in large part because it’s an acknowledgment that I **LIKE** participating in certain things God hates.
    - I’ve said before that we tend to say “I struggle with such-and-such,” when the reality is we don’t “struggle.” We like it.
    - Rarely are we honest enough to say

- “I really like pornography.” We say “I struggle with pornography.” It’s so much more spiritual sounding.
    - “I really like eating food that makes me fat, and I hate the judgment when it feels like everybody thinks I’m fat.”
      - It’s so much more spiritual to say “I struggle with overeating, will you pray for me?”
      - But in both sets of examples, repentance hasn’t happened yet.
      - Spiritual phrases have dotted the atmosphere, but repentance hasn’t been touched.
  - Our culture – even our Christian culture – does not like the idea of moving toward a more repentance-based normality.
    - Why? Because the enemy has done a masterful job in teaching us how to “deal” with the feelings of judgment, discouragement, failure, unworthiness, - to the point where we’ve learned to just live in the shame of it all.
    - We’ve done so well in wallowing in such things for so long, we’re almost too ashamed to repent.
  - Church, model repentance.
    - Before others judge you, Before you are discouraged, Before you start beating yourself up as a failure...
      - Just REPENT.
      - Ask God’s forgiveness for you sin. Immediately.
      - Experience His immediate forgiveness.
      - And when He challenges you to go and sin no more – which He’ll do – tell Him it’s only in His strength that you can possibly do that.
      - And He’ll say, “I know. Walk with me.”
      - And you’ll sin again.
      - Repent.
      - And this pattern will repeat itself, but you will grow, and the pattern will slow.
      - That’s a promise in the entirety of scripture. It’s called maturity.
  - Model repentance.
- **2) Grant forgiveness by saying the words to those who hurt you**
  - Sometimes others hurt you without knowing it.
  - Or at worst, they hurt you, know it, and don’t care.
    - Luk 17:3 Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,
    - Luk 17:4 and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."
    - Luk 17:5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"
      - They – like most of us today – have a sense of justice built in that says, “If I keep forgiving, how will they ever learn??”
  - If you want to see God move in their lives as well, then you will likely be put in the position to say something like, “I need you to know I was hurt by that.”
    - And sometimes, kindness will not be immediately returned.
    - But if Christ is living within that person, trust that He will move their heart to ask forgiveness.

- And you, always stand ready to extend it.
- **3) Pass this understanding on to future generations.**
  - Just about everyone in this room is old enough to have others younger than you – either physically, or just “younger in their faith”
  - Modeling it repentance and extending immediate forgiveness will make you an influencer for those around you.
  - They’ll see it, they’ll give you the tilt every now and then, and they’ll eventually ask you how you do it.
  - Don’t shy away from the moment.
  - No false humility.
  - Tell them it’s hard.
  - But tell them Jesus requires it.
  - Tell them it leads to maturity.
  - Read them this passage, and others about repentance.
  - Be part of the movement that changes entire cultures toward the Love of God.

Finally, **Jesus ties spiritual fruit to the act of repentance.**

- We really need to NOT miss this.
- We live in a culture that ties spiritual fruit to all kinds of things:
  - Obedience
  - Listening to and following the Spirit
  - God moving in us
  - Church purity
    - All good things!
    - But here, Jesus says the Spiritual culture was so dried up due to a lack of repentance, that fruit had been gone for years.
    - And the Spiritual leaders didn’t even notice.
    - They were so tied up in their own set of laws, they had all but abandoned the one thing that bears fruit: Repentance.
    - Let us never go that way again, church.

PRAY