

Series : Lent
Luke 13:1-9
2/28/2016
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Sermon: One more season Repent Now!

Heavenly Father, thank you for all of the examples that show we must repent now, today, this very minute. Amen.

This is the day the Lord has made. GOD HAS SPARED YOU ANOTHER day– God has left you here another day for a divine purpose. God has given you more time. The fact of the matter is simple: God has something for you to do. What you must do IS GET INTO WHAT GOD IS UP TO. God did not make you, create you -- so that you could OCCUPY UNTIL YOU DIE. Then we all will miss out on it and not benefit from it.

But, GOD HAS SPARED YOU ANOTHER day! We live with the certainty of death every day. That what Jesus is referring to in the opening verses. He then refers to the fig tree to teach the nearness of final judgment and the need for prompt repentance. In verse two, “He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?” By no means: Jesus denies that they died because God was punishing them for their sins.

In verse three, “No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.” Death comes to all, whether by calamities, accidents, or natural causes. It is not how we die that is important, but how we live. Since the length of life is unpredictable, it is best to repent change now before it is too late.

In verse four and five, Jesus reinforces his point by adding a second example of his own: eighteen men had been killed when a tower at Siloam fell on them.

Do you think they were more guilty: The punch-line is repeated: repent before it is too late. TEXT: Today, we find ourselves in a vineyard – this owner planted a tree and expected the tree to progress, to grow – He expected to find some fruit on the tree.

In verse six, “Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none.” The owner of the tree and orchard is, of course, God- at the time of judgment.

In verse seven, “So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’” The gardener is, of course, Jesus, the owner’s servant and son.

For three years now: Once a fruit tree or vine was planted it took three years before it would bear edible fruit. So, the time of grace is over. It is judgment day. Jesus’ audience would be able to connect the two examples of death given above with the point he is making by this parable.

Cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil:

In verse eight, “He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it.’” The gardener, Jesus, is begging for mercy, a year of favor from the owner, God.

In effect, he is saying, “Give me a crack at it. I’ll shower it with water, give it tender, loving care,

fertilizer, everything I've got.”

In verse nine, “If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.” Despite all the gardener does, the tree has to want to bear fruit. If the tree has no will to be fruitful, all the conditions and conditioning will be to no avail. Jesus is describing repentance. If the will is there on the part of the sinner, Jesus will do the rest.

Jesus teaches by this parable that there is such a thing as “too late,” even with God. So, the message is: change now. Jesus warns that the people need to begin producing works that are consistent with the Gospel. God wants us to live our lives according to His will not our own. God gives us His spirit and cleansing to produce fruit that flows from His salvation.

Jesus teaches us that even the horrible experiences of life that happen can be opportunities for us to think twice, to think in the light of eternity, and to change our ways and our lives. No matter the circumstances of our deaths, our deaths are inevitable. If we interpret in the light of eternity they will motivate us to change our lives rather than fear our deaths or the manner of our deaths. In scripture it tells us to number our days....

Everything that happens is not God's will. God tolerates evil, for a greater long-term good, but he does not will evil or send evil upon humans. Sin happens all the time and sin, by definition, is not God's will.

So, yes, there is evil in this world, a lot of it, not because God wills it, but because he lets it be so for a greater and eternal good. If we lose sight of eternity we can be lulled into thinking that we have plenty of time, that we can change later, and that for now we can do as we please. We certainly are prone to procrastinate and to justify it by saying to ourselves that we can do later what we could just as well do now.

Let me highlight the Gospel in this text! Where do they notice God at work? Where do we notice God? In this text, it's the gardener that catches us by surprise and gets our attention. In this text, Jesus is the gardener. It is Jesus as the gardener who says to the owner, “Sir, wait a year. I will care for this tree.” It is the gardener who is patient and faithful. It is God who graciously meets the needs of the fig tree. And it is the gardener – it is God - who at the end of the day will have dirty hands. In this text, God is there getting God's hands dirty. In season of Lent, God is here getting God's hands dirty – very dirty. We see him going to the cross for us.

Isn't this the true power of Lent? Isn't it about the need to repent -- where we meet God in the watering of baptism, in the enrichment of community and in the nourishment of bread and wine.

The time to get serious about the future is not in the future, not tomorrow, but today. Amen. What can I do in my life to live for Jesus.

Intentionally the Lord left the parable incomplete. Did the tree finally bear fruit or was it cut down? We do not know. Our life's story is not yet complete either. God has showered all His grace on us and is looking for fruit. Thank God for the Savior who has covered up our sin! Thank God if there has been some fruit in our life. But we must confess that there should be more. As we meditate on this parable may the justice of God warn us away from Carelessness and indifference; and may the grace of God and His patient love win us wholly to live our lives in Him.