

Jesus Told Us:
Parable of the Barren Fig Tree
September 16, 2018
Luke 13:1-9

Repent or Perish

*1*At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. *2*He asked them, **'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? *3*No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. *4*Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? *5*No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'**

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

6 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. *7*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?"** *8*He replied, **"Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. *9*If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."**'

Jesus Told Us! (How many ways can Jesus Tell us?)

Jesus often spoke in Parables.

PARABLES...

Often when Jesus speaks ... we hear a piercing word ... a challenging word...
A word that can transform our lives!

Let's take a closer look at what Jesus was about with this parable of the Barren Fig Tree.

Remember Chapter 13 begins with Jesus dealing with current events:

Repent or Perish

*1*At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. *2*He asked them, **'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? *3*No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. *4*Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? *5*No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'**

ONE explanation of verses 1-5:
Jesus is speaking of two current events in the moment:

One commentator reflects this way:

Every day we hear news reports of accidents, natural catastrophes and attacks that take innocent lives. People suffer loss of property, lands and rights because of actions taken by others with little thought about what's right or wrong or just.

The world is often this way, and we need to understand the implications. Jesus was being blunt—realistically blunt—with His audience. Events happen in this world over which you have no control, and sometimes good and well-meaning people—people just like you and me—get hurt. His point was that we understand this and do what we can and should do, realizing that time and chance could unexpectedly strike at any time.

Twice Jesus says:

'*5*No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

Unless you repent .. you will perish just as they did!

WOW Any of us listeners exempt from Jesus observations?

Current events ... Hurricane Florence ... fires in the west ... Earthquakes ... mud slides ... Flooding Almost feels like the end times as there are natural disasters all around ... and then there is the communities in Massachusetts, Boston Suburbs that gas explosions happened all in one day!

Jesus might just say, **"Do you think that just because these people in these tragic circumstances are suffering that they are worse sinners than you and all others? *No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'***

In this moments of awakening to the circumstances of life that we observe and question as spectators... Jesus tells the parable:

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

6 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. *7*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?"** *8*He replied, **"Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. *9*If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."**'

One commentator offers a Simple explanation of the Parable:

The three entities in the story all have clear symbolic significance. The **vineyard owner represents God**, the one who rightly expects to see fruit on His tree and who justly decides to destroy it when He finds none. **The gardener, or vineyard keeper** who cares for the trees, watering and fertilizing them to bring them to their peak of fruitfulness, **represents Jesus**, who feeds His people and gives them living water. **The tree** itself has **two symbolic meanings: the nation of Israel and the individual.**

A fig tree in a vineyard ... not producing ...
Get rid of it!

Of course, get rid of it! My vineyard, my rules, my needs for production! Cut it down.

Vineyard keeper ... one more season... a little cultivation ... some nurture ... and manure!
REALITY THERAPY / self-reflection / honest confession ... and who knows what can happen? IF nothing changes after all that ...
Then cut it down.

“Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”

Galatians 5:22-23 defines fruit God wants to see produced in our lives: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*

Quite a story and much patience to get to the simple point:

Are you producing fruit?
love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

We SING:

Wonderful words of life ... what are they ...
THE GOOD NEWS...

I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.’

“Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”

Wonderful Words of Life

The United Methodist Hymnal Number 600
Text: Philip P. Bliss, 1838-1876

1. Sing them over again to me,
wonderful words of life;
let me more of their beauty see,
wonderful words of life;
words of life and beauty
teach me faith and duty.

Refrain:

Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.
Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.

2. Christ, the blessed one, gives to all
wonderful words of life;
sinner, list to the loving call,
wonderful words of life;
all so freely given,
wooing us to heaven.
(Refrain)

3. Sweetly echo the gospel call,
wonderful words of life;
offer pardon and peace to all,
wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Savior,
sanctify forever.
(Refrain)