

Barren No More

Luke 13:6-9

Jesus had just referred to the contemporary tragedies of a tower falling on eighteen people near the pool of Siloam, killing them all, as well as an unnamed number of Jews from Galilee whom Herod put to death while they were celebrating a Jewish festival. Jesus refers to these events and says twice, *“But unless you repent, you too will all perish”* (vs. 3,5). Then Jesus tells “The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.” A parable is a story that runs “parallel” to real life. Some make the mistake of hearing a parable of Jesus and missing the profundity of the meaning behind the parable. Jesus tells the story of man who owns a vineyard of fig trees. Finding a fig tree without any fruit, he tells the vineyard keeper “to cut it down.” The vineyard keeper says *“I’ll put it in fertilizer, and give it a year. If it doesn’t bear fruit, I’ll cut it down.”*

I. In the Bible trees are often used as pictures of people.

Barbara Walters asked those she interviewed: *“If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?”* The Bible says, *“The righteous will flourish like a palm tree”* (Psalm 92:12). David spoke of a person who delights in the law of God as one *“who shall be like a tree planted by streams of water”* (Ps. 1:3). The fig tree is the most productive fruit tree in Israel? It is said that when the fig tree is planted, fruit can be seen the very next harvest. The slowest fruit producing fig tree is the *white* fig, and it takes at *the most* three years for a harvest to come. They say that if after three years there is no fruit that you can say assuredly that no fruit will be produced from that fig tree because it is dead on the inside.

Application: *“Jesus said every good tree bears good fruit.”* (Matt. 7:17). The “fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23).

II. Repentance is a turning around of one’s life to bear fruit.

“But unless you repent, you too will all perish.” (13:3,5). The word repent (Gk. metanoéō) means “to change one’s mind and turn around or undo.” The people who are unloving, without joy, in turmoil, impatient, unkind, not good, faithless, harsh and without self-control are *“fig trees without fruit.”*

Application: To repent is to drop the *uns* in your life; *unloving, unkind*, etc. and to start fruit bearing.

III. God keeps an open door when it comes to repentance.

I do not understand how any Christian who believes in gracious ever portrays God delights in the “cutting off” or punishment of the uns. *“I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked”* (Ez. 18:23). I love to remind people that the door of the Ark of Noah was open for seven days (Genesis 7:1-5). God is a God of mercy; a God of second-chances; or in our parable, “a God of another year.” But what we must remember is that there is coming a time when God’s open door becomes closed.

Application: There are some who think that the owner of the vineyard represents God and the one who intercedes represents the Messiah. There are others who believe that the vineyard owner is Jesus Christ and the one who intercedes are His ministers. I’m not sure which it is. All I know is this. *There has been a decision to cut the tree down, and there is someone who stands in the gap for you.*

IV. The way fruit bearing begins is the pulling up of the roots.

If you have found your world turned upside down, you may be a fig tree being fertilized.

- A. There’s a loss of stabilization – when you expose the roots, you lose stability.
- B. There’s a lot of stink – the fertilization is manure. I could use other words, but you get it.
- C. There’s a lack of self – when a tree is uprooted, its completely in the hands of Carekeeper.

If you are here today hearing the parable of the Barren Fig Tree, maybe God is fertilizing you.

