

## Scripture Reading:

Luke 12:54 "Then [Jesus] also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. 55 And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. 56 Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time? 57 "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? 58 When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. 59 I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite." 13:1 "There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." 6 He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' 8 But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' ""

# *"True Repentance: Jesus Presents the Gospel"*

This morning we continue our journey through the Gospel of Luke: I am sure that you have no problem seeing from the text why we are going to discuss repentance this morning, but it may not be as clear to our modern ears that Jesus is here presenting the Gospel: BUT that is exactly what He does and there is much we can learn from His example

- Luke first tells us that Jesus has shifted from addressing His Disciples to those in the crowds who have been following Him

Jesus has given instructions for His disciples, telling them not to be anxious, that life is more than food, and last week's teaching that Jesus has come to bring division in the world where we will more clearly see the sheep and the goats:

**Verse 54 says that Jesus now turns to the multitudes and addresses them...**

- **Jesus reaches out to the 'lost' as we are commanded to do as well!**
- **Biblical Evangelism is NOT going around telling people "I am a sheep & you are probably a goat!"**
- **On the other hand we don't see Jesus saying, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life"**
- **Jesus calls on them to repent: To repent with a REAL repentance that will result in real fruit being seen in their lives!**

**Our reading today continued through verse nine of chapter 13 because this is one of those places where the chapter division was not as helpful as they should be... The chapters and verses are VERY helpful in our modern age, but they are not inspired... The Text is!**

- **The Text indicates that what we read this morning IS a unit and we should study it as such.**

**Jesus turns to 'the multitude' and challenges them to believe the Gospel: From His example we learn three important lessons to help us share the Good News with those God brings into our lives:**

- **We should challenge people to think about the claims of Christ**
- **We should use every day events to help share the Gospel**
- **We are to be long-suffering and have compassion for the lost**

**These folks that Jesus now addresses did not just show up, but have been following and listening to much of what Jesus has taught:**

- **Today your audience should be the people who see your faith in how you live your daily life!**

**It is good to remember William Wilberforce's challenge: "If they put you on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"**

**Jesus challenges them to think about life's BIG questions by comparing them to everyday things they do: Jesus starts by saying they can read obvious weather signs around them, but then ignore the teaching and warnings of the Law & Prophets!**

**"Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. 55 And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is."**

**In the middle east rain ONLY comes from the Mediterranean Sea so clouds coming from the west are a clear sign that rain was coming. There is only desert to the south, so when that south wind kicked up you know it is going to get hot!**

**We can relate to this here in Northern California: It takes a strong south wind to bring in a major Pacific storm and during the spring and summer months the north wind brings in high pressure and so we know some HOT days lie ahead.”**

- **Obviously , Jesus is not primarily interested in their skills in predicting the weather, but wants to use this example to spark a real discussion...**

**In verse 56 He says, “Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?”**

- **Jesus is headed to Jerusalem to be THE sacrifice for sin!**

**Jesus has turned to the crowds, to those who mostly have followed Jesus to see the show: They are listening to much of what Jesus is saying, but not taking it seriously or acting as if they do not understand what He is doing**

- **Jesus now wants them to focus on the seriousness of how THEY should respond:**

**57 "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?"**

*[the Gospel ALWAYS gets personal]*

**Jesus has challenged them by saying they read the signs about the weather but not these signs about the Messiah that are right in from of them... Let’s consider a couple of modern examples of where people are being hypocritical, that we might be able use to nudge folks into thinking more seriously about the claims of Christ and where they will spend eternity:**

**The sight of a young person smoking is horrifying... Even someone smoking in the presence of a child is condemned with some wanting to make it illegal!**

**BUT at the same time, Planned Parenthood is invited into the schools to teach the same kids that having “safe-sex” can be a good thing!**

**We are reading through those early chapters of Proverbs this week, and it should be pretty clear which action has the graver eternal consequences. Christ is presented as Wisdom personified and this can be an ideal place to start a discussion!**

**Another place to cry “hypocrite” today is with the priority of life itself:**

- **Put a “save the whales” bumper sticker on your car and you will be hailed as a compassionate hero**
- **Put “abortion kills children” on a sign and people will lecture you for upsetting their young children.**
- **Bringing up how man is made in the image of God takes you right to the Book of Beginnings!**

**These are just a few of the examples that we should learn to use, as Jesus did the weather on this day, to challenge people to consider the claims of Jesus and His Word!**

- **Jesus now shows how serious what He is presenting is by using another familiar example: Someone going to court with a case that is NOT very strong.**

**“58 When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. 59 I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite.”**

**Jesus is making His final journey to Jerusalem to die for the sins of His people: The day of decision is coming for the City of Jerusalem and for all of God’s people.**

- **Jesus uses the example of going before a human judge with a poor case to get them to think about whether they want to face the judge of the universe with that load of sin on their backs.**

**Jesus brings the Gospel, the good news: IF they discern the times and see that HE is the Messiah, the Lamb of God that has come to take away the sin of the world, then they can be forgiven and can stand before the judgment seat of God being seen as fully righteous in Christ!**

- **IF they refuse this offer of grace and go before the judge pleading their own case, they will be cast into hell for all eternity.**

**As Jesus is challenging these folks to think about eternal things, He is once again interrupted, and here Jesus gives us our second lesson about taking opportunities to share the Good News... This is where the chapter break is not helpful, because Jesus IS interrupted BUT does not allow it to take Him off message... In fact He uses the incoming report to make the point that calling for repentance is a VERY important part of sharing the Gospel, the Good News!**

**13:1 “There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.”**

**This was likely the BIG news of the day, but it also provided those convicted by what Jesus was saying an excuse to say that Jesus was certainly NOT referring to them!**

- **They are shifting the discussion to the death of others rather than thinking about their own deaths as Jesus was suggesting.**

**A modern example of this Galilean story could be the mass suicide at the Jim Jones compound years ago.**

**That story was on EVERYONE’s mind, and Jesus is teaching us that we should use such times to personalize the discussions people might have about current events**

Just as these folks in the crowd were doing that day, people wanted to think, “boy those folks have problems” or “how could they believe someone like Jim Jones.” They do not connect the dots and think about where they stand. *Give example of my own conversion*

This is exactly what Jesus does: Again He makes it VERY personal:

“2 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

- Jesus then brings up another example from their current events and repeats the call for repentance.

“4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

- Jesus clearly demonstrates that preaching the Gospel requires the call for repentance
- And as we shall see in the parable, real repentance will result in REAL fruit!

Now, we come to the third important lesson that Jesus has to teach us: We must be long-suffering and show compassion for the lost. Evangelizing is NOT about winning an argument: Obviously, Jesus has done this, even overcoming interruptions that could have taken Him off message.

- Some might say here that Jesus has called them to repentance and if they don't respond He could just walk away.
- Jesus had really ‘made the case’ and now they are without excuse if they refuse to believe!

It is at this point that Jesus tells one of His parables about fig trees:

“6 He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' 8 But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' ”

We need to see two VERY important things here and they are reflected in the title of today's sermon:

- Jesus does not compromise the truth of the Gospel: True repentance, which He has called these people too, will bring REAL fruit.
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**Being in the garden and being a pretty tree is NOT enough.**

- **Being baptized or having a signed decision card and sitting in Church every week will NOT gain you eternal life which Jesus offers!**

**The master of the vineyard is looking for fruit and this is an important lesson to learn for today: As James so aptly puts it: “Faith without works is dead.”**

- **We can NEVER earn God’s favor by doing ‘good’ works: That is what the folks who will spend eternity in hell paying for their own sins thought...**

**BUT when we repent and put our faith in Jesus, that same faith WILL produce fruit in our lives**

- **Those ‘good works’ that Paul in Ephesians two says we are created in Christ Jesus to perform in this life!**
- **Or as we see here, the fruit that the master was looking for on that fig tree!**

**The Gospel demands repentance: Real repentance, a turning from sin and a turning to righteousness. However, the second point is our third lesson, and why I think Jesus shared this parable here... We must learn we are to show GREAT compassion for the lost.**

**The gardener in this parable is the evangelist who is seeking one of the lost sheep: He has cared for this tree for three years and still there is NO fruit: Yet the gardener asked for yet another year and shows a willingness to dig about the tree yet again and give it yet more fertilizer in the hope that it will begin to bear fruit... To ‘dig it and dung it’ as the KJV puts it so aptly!**

- **This has an obvious direct application to the nation of Israel at that time where Jesus has been teaching them for almost three years and still He is not yet ready to cut them off:**

**Over the next year these skeptics will see Jesus go to the cross, see the power His resurrection, see the Holy Spirit poured out upon His followers & witness thousands being converted.**

- **And yet, there would come a time when the tree must be cut down: With Jerusalem that time came in AD 70.**
- **As we learned last week that time comes for all of us either at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus or on the day that the Father has appointed for each person’s death.**

**So the lessons we should learn this morning are three:**

- **Jesus wants us to challenge people with the truth of the Gospel, calling them to repentance and salvation**

- **Jesus wants us to learn to take the many opportunities which life presents for us to do so each day**
- **Jesus wants us to be very patient with the lost, willing to take that extra year of digging and dunging, sharing and praying that they might come to Jesus.**

**Yes Jesus reminded the Disciples that He would bring division to the earth, but this does not remove our responsibility to evangelize nor the joy of sharing God's good news. We join with the Apostle Paul as he shared the trials and joys of his mission to the gentiles in chapter two of his second letter to the Corinthians... A mission which we are called upon to continue:**

**Beginning in verse 12 Paul says: "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia." *[where the Spirit was leading him to go!]***

**"Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.**

**For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing." *[we are to share Christ and Christ alone with NO compromises!]***

**"To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. "And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ."**

- **Let us be those gardeners who diligently, clearly and sincerely share the Good News of Jesus Christ!**
- **We must pray that God would open our eyes to see those fruitless trees that Jesus would have us minister too so that next year the master might see them bearing much fruit!**

### **Communion Meditation:**

**Romans 12: 33: " 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."**