

2nd & 3rd Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST - STUDY 23

The Barren Fig Tree - Lk.13:6-9

INTRODUCTION:

1. As we were making our way through the parables of Jesus as recorded in Matthew's gospel, we noticed several that were directed toward the nation of Israel in particular...
 - a. "**The Two Sons**", which speaks of the rejection of John the Baptist - **Matt.21:28-32**
 - b. "**The Wicked Vinedressers**", which applied to how Israel rejected God's prophets, and eventually His Own Son - **Matt.21:33-46**
 - c. "**The Wedding Feast**", which provided a more vivid depiction of wickedness and rebelliousness of the religious leaders - **Matt.22:1-14**- These three parables were told during the last week of Jesus' ministry before His crucifixion
2. Earlier, Jesus taught another parable that some believe was along a similar theme...
 - a. That is, related to God's dealings with the nation of Israel as a whole
 - b. And how the nation of Israel would be destroyed if it did not receive Jesus as the Messiah- The parable is known as "**The Barren Fig Tree**", recorded in **Lk.13:6-9**
3. That may be true...
 - a. But the application has as much to do with individual repentance as national repentance
 - b. This should make the parable of particular interest to us today, as we attempt to learn from our Lord what He was teaching about the need to repent

Let's begin our study by noticing...

I. THE PARABLE IN ITS ORIGINAL SETTING:

A. Jesus Was Responding To News About A Calamity - Lk.13:1-5

1. He was told of how Pilate (the Roman governor) had...
 - a. Killed some Galileans (Jews from Galilee, the same region Jesus was from)
 - b. Mingled their blood along with their sacrifices
2. He anticipated the thinking of those who brought Him this news...
 - a. Were those who suffered such atrocities worse sinners than other Galileans?

- b. No, and unless they repented they would likewise perish!
- 3. He reinforces His point with a reference to a similar calamity
 - a. In which a tower in Siloam (in Jerusalem) collapsed and killed eighteen people
 - b. Those victims were no worse sinners than others in Jerusalem
- 4. He then repeats His warning that unless they repent, they will all likewise perish!
 - a. Some understand this to be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - b. Whether or not, it still called for individual repentance

B. The Parable Of The Barren Fig Tree - Lk.13:6-9

- 1. The basic elements of the parable...
 - a. A man is disappointed that a fig tree in his vineyard is unfruitful
 - b. He wants to cut it down, but is persuaded by the keeper of the vineyard to give it one more year
 - c. If no fruit is borne, then the tree is to be cut down
- 2. The basic point of the parable...
 - a. The central lessons of **verses 1-5** are clear: "**Repent!**"
 - b. The parable in **verses 6-9** takes the call to repentance one step further: "**Repent NOW!**" (HENDRIKSEN)
 - c. Fruitlessness will not be endured forever!

Those who heard Jesus would appreciate the point, for what farmer desires to put up with a tree that won't bear fruit? But do we today appreciate the point?

To help make it even clearer, consider what we can glean from this parable as some...

II. LESSONS FOR US TODAY:

A. Where God Has Extended Privileges, He Expects Returns...

- 1. The owner of the vineyard expected the fig tree to bear fruit
 - a. He had given it good soil
 - b. For three years it had been provided care
 - c. He was giving it an extra year, but only for the purpose of bearing fruit
- 2. God blessed Israel, and He was disappointed when it did not bear fruit - **Isa.5:1-7**
- 3. So He has blessed us through His Son Jesus, and we are to glorify God by bearing fruit - **Jn.15:8**
 - Have you utilized the privileges God has given you...?

B. The Lord Is Longsuffering, But It Doesn't Last Forever...

- 1. We see the longsuffering of the owner of the vineyard
 - a. He had given the fig tree three years to produce fruit
 - b. He was persuaded to give it another year with special care
 - c. But that last year was the final opportunity the tree would be given
- 2. We see the longsuffering of the Lord in His dealing with the nation of Israel
 - a. His longsuffering in the wilderness

- b. His longsuffering in the times of the judges
- c. His longsuffering during the reigns of the kings
- d. And yet, He did take the "kingdom of God" away from them and give it to a nation bearing the fruits of it - **Matt.21:43**
- 3. So the Lord has been longsuffering to us...
 - a. For He does not want anyone to be lost - **2Pet.3:9**
 - b. His longsuffering has been for our salvation - **2Pet.3:15**
 - c. But the longsuffering will one day end, and the "day of the Lord" will come - **2Pet.3:7,10**

C. Those Who Are Unfruitful Will Be Cut Off...

- 1. The barren fig tree, if it remained so, was to be cut down
- 2. So Jesus warned His disciples that such would happen to them if they did not bear fruit ...
 - a. **"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;" - Jn.15:2a**
 - b. **"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." - Jn.15:6**
- 3. Paul warned the Gentile Christians that they would be cut off if they did not remain faithful (which implies fruitfulness) - **Rom.11:19-23**
- 4. We read of the end of those who were saved, but fell away; despite receiving blessings from God, their end is likened to that of thorns and briars - **Heb.6:1-8**
 - a. That is, **"rejected and near to being cursed"**
 - b. **"...whose end is to be burned."**

CONCLUSION:

- 1. In light of such warnings, perhaps we can appreciate more...
 - a. The two-fold warning given by Jesus: **"...unless you repent you will all likewise perish" - Lk.13:3,5**
 - b. The basic lesson of the parable of **"The Barren Fig Tree"**: Repent NOW! - **Lk.13:6-9**
 - i) For the Lord has been longsuffering already
 - ii) And what time you have left may be short!
- 2. Don't think that people who die tragic deaths are any worse sinners than yourself...
 - a. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God - **Rom.3:23**
 - b. Even just one sin makes one guilty of all - **Jam.2:10**
 - c. And the wages of sin is death (eternal separation from God) - **Rom.6:23; Rev.21:8**
- So if we do not repent, our end will be no less tragic than the worst calamity ever to befall mankind!
- 3. But the good news of the gospel is that God offers us the gift of eternal life! - **Rom.6:23**
 - a. However, remember the warning for those who do not repent - **Rom.2:4-11**
 - b. And, unlike the barren fig tree, you may have less than a year to bear fruit!