

THE FIG TREE

This study is based on *Luke 13:1-9*, “1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”

The first half of the passage is an introduction and the other half is the parable.

- From verses 1-5, it gives us the background of why Jesus speaks this parable.

1. What is taking place in the story? What thinking and philosophy is Jesus dealing with?

- There were some Galilaeans that had gone through some sort of trial. Eighteen of them had perished because this tower fell on them.
- So Jesus asked them what? Do you think they suffered these things because they were sinners about everyone else?
- People were thinking that bad things happen to bad people. That the reason why they died is because they were sinners. They deserved it.
- And good things only happen to good people.
- Jesus said NO! That expect they would repent, they would all perish!
- Keep this in mind as we now go through the parable.

2. So who or what are the main objects or characters in this parable?

- There is the fig tree.
- And the dresser of the vineyard.

3. What does the fig tree represent?

- *Isaiah 5:7*
For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his

pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

- The vineyard represents the house of Israel, the Israelites.

- *Psalms 1:3*

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

- The tree represents a good person.
- At least that what it seems like.

- So God chose Israel and He blessed them. He gave them the land of Canaan. They were blessed above all the other people on the earth.

4. **What did the man come looking for?**

- In *Luke 13:6* the man came to the fig tree looking for fruit.
- It looked like a good tree. The leaves must have all been out, otherwise the man would not come looking for fruit.
- So it's possible to LOOK like a good Christian. But looks can be deceiving. A true Christian must bear fruit.

5. **What does the fruit represent?**

- *Galatians 5:22-23*

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

- The fruit represents a good character.
- It's not enough to look like a good Christian, but you must show through how you live your life that you are one. Patience, kindness. How we talk with each other and treat each other.

- *Ephesians 5:9*

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;

- The fruit is goodness and righteousness and truth.
- If you have the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians, you are called righteous!

- *Hebrews 13:15*

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

- Fruit is also connected with our lips giving thanks to his name.
- It is thankfulness and recognising who gave us the good gift. Recognising that it is God that blessed.

- *John 15:8-10*

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. 9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my

commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

- The fruit of the true Christian is found in love.
- But what is the love connected to in John 15? Keeping the commandments of God.
- *Proverbs 11:30*
The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.
 - Love does not look inward. It looks outward in how we treat people and even sharing Jesus with others.
 - When trees bear fruit, it is for the benefit of others and to others.
- God chose this vineyard (Israelites) and blessed them. But He came looking for fruit and they didn't have any. The Israelites were so blessed by God, but they didn't act like God was the One that blessed them. They acted like all the other heathen nations around them.
- We are like that too sometimes. We go to church. We take on the name of Christian. But during the week we act nothing like a Christian.

6. So what did the man want to do with the tree?

- *Luke 13:7* - he is ready to just cut the tree down and get rid of it.
- He asks - why do we want to burden the ground with this fruitless tree? Normal right? This is not an unreasonable expectation - to expect fruit from a fruit tree.
- Likewise, God was ready to just reject the Israelite nation. He was ready to move on.

7. But before the owner was to cut it down, what did the dresser want to do?

- *Luke 13:8* - he wanted to dig about it and dung it.
- Maybe it was the problem of the ground. Maybe the soil was not loose enough or maybe there weren't enough nutrients in the soil. Maybe it was their surroundings that caused this tree not to have any fruit.
- The dresser of the vineyard wanted to try and do something with the ground before destroying the tree.

8. Who does the dresser represent?

- The dresser represents Jesus. He was the One that came to the fig tree and tried His best to revive it.
- The Israelites were the most blessed because the Son of God came Himself to live among them. Jesus' life was primarily focused on the Jews.
- Jesus did His best to save Israel. The best of the best came to this nation. That's why God can expect the best from them as well.

- *Isaiah 5:1-2*

1 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

- The dresser did so much for the vine. All he wanted back was grapes. He just wanted fruits. But there were no fruits.
- Everything in the world gives, except for the human heart. We are abnormal.
- Everything lives to give. The plants, the insects and animals. They all play a part in what they do to keep the ecosystem alive.
- Giving fruit is actually normal. To reflect good character, and treat people with love should be normal. But we don't do it.
- So God gave us a chance when He sent Jesus into this world. He was the one that dug the ground and loosened the soil and dung it, putting fertiliser on it.
- He obviously failed. The Jews ended up crucifying the Son of God.

9. How can we bear fruit? How can we make sure we don't repeat the mistakes of the Jews of old?

- *John 15:5-6*

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

- We have to abide in the main branch, Jesus Christ.
- Jesus went mainly to the Israelites. It should have been the easiest for them to bear fruit. But they didn't
- But because of what happened to the Israelites back then, we can be Christians today - God's chosen people. But God is still asking for the same thing - for fruit.
- Are we bearing fruits? God has given us the blessings, and now it is our turn to bear fruits.
 - To love - your brothers, your sisters, your friends, but also your enemies, those that don't do good to you as well.
 - To spread the gospel, tell people about Jesus.
- To be God's chosen people today, we have to fulfil what the Israelites didn't fulfil. If not, we will suffer the same fate as them.
- But why do we not bear fruit? We are not attached to the vine.

10. How to attach to the vine? How can we abide in Christ?

- *John 15:7*
If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
- To abide in Christ means to have His word abiding in us. We must spend time in His word and remember what God has said.
- A true Christian is not the one that goes to church but the one that has the word abiding in them, having their foundation as God's word.
- Without God's words we cannot abide in Him.
- The root of the problem is our heart.
- *Hebrews 4:12*
For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- If the heart of the human is the problem, then the only thing that can deal with it is the Bible because the Bible is like a sword which can cut to our heart and our mind.
- Church is not the main solution to the issue. What you have to do is spend time in the word.
- People stop coming to church or stop taking church so seriously because they are not reading the Bible.
- Are you walking with Jesus 7 days a week? If you have the word of God abiding in you, you will bear fruits because your heart is with Jesus and Jesus would then live in and through you because you would be getting the nutrients from Him.

Today we focus so much on the outward. But if we were to abide in Christ, we would never leave church. The Roman soldier nailed Jesus on the cross, but Jesus still said "Father, forgive them." If you deal with the heart, everything else outwardly becomes easy. You wouldn't have to fight so hard to keep the 10 commandments. If Jesus is with you, it becomes easy. If the problem is hatred or forgiveness, it becomes easy with Jesus because Jesus would forgive. We need the word in us to change. Focus on the word of God - get it in your head somehow. Listen, read, watch it, get the Bible into your heart. Being a Christian isn't about going to church, it's about reading the Bible - abiding in Christ and letting His Word abide in you.