

The Barren Fig Tree

Introduction

If you have your Bibles... If you are new with us... We are a young church with an old heart. We believe in the 5 Solas of the Reformation. Back in the 16th century.

- (Scripture alone), (Christ alone), (faith alone), (grace alone), (glory to God alone).

There are 1151 verses in the book of Luke. Over the last 10 months or so, we have walked through the first 630 of those verses. This morning we will be looking at verses 631-634. Parables are about a third of Jesus' teaching. Luke is filled with parables from Jesus. In fact, two-thirds of all of Jesus' parables are in Luke. Eighteen parables of Jesus are unique to Luke, meaning they're not recorded anywhere else in the Bible. They're not recorded anywhere else in the world. This morning we will take a look at a parable only found in the book of Luke.

Luke 13:6-9

And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' 8 And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. 9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Context/Story

And this man owns a vineyard in the parable and apparently he's got all of his trees numbered and he keeps coming back, three years in a row, to the same tree. He says, "That tree is three years fig-free. What a worthless tree." and he says, "Cut it down! It's worthless, throw it in the fire."

But the vinedresser said, "let's wait a little longer, I want to try to help it grow and produce figs. If it doesn't work, fine. But I would like to do everything I can to make sure it has every opportunity to grow. Let's try some fertilizer and see what happens!"

Short story, simple story, but there is a lot we can unpack here.

God is Patient

1. Explain
 - a. This world is God's vineyard. On a global scale, All of us are trees. You are a tree, I am a tree, Joe Biden is a tree, Donald Trump is a tree, Tom Brady is a tree. And what this parable is telling us, is that all mankind has a God who is watching over it and seeing its fruit. The trees that produce no fruit. God will eventually dig up and throw into the fire. The trees that do produce fruit will remain. But God is not in a hurry it seems. Instead He is extremely patient.
 - i. Far more patient than me. I get impatient when a website doesn't load in 5 seconds. I am impatient when a fast food order isn't ready by the time I roll up to the window.
 - ii. God is far more patient than I am.
 - b. Examples of Patience

- i. I see God's patience in dealing with Adam and Eve as they fall into sin and as He grants the initial revelation of His covenant of grace.
- ii. I see the patience of God with the patriarchs and Israel, even with their grumbling in the wilderness.
- iii. I see His patience throughout the Gospels as Jesus, the Son of God, is being rejected and forsaken.
- iv. I see His patience in dealing with me in my own sins. (father, Husband, Pastor, Ultimately His child)

2. Prove

- a. 2nd Peter 3:8-10 - But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

3. Apply

- a. Now some of you are like that. Some of you have been sitting in Christianity, no figs. There's no fruit at all.
 - i. Figless fig tree. You produce alot of leaves, you might look good, but you have no usefulness to the Lord.
- b. Some of you are here today and you wonder, "Is God angry at me? Is God mad at me? Is God done with me?"
 - i. Some of our pictures of God, is that he has an ax and a clipboard. And he is walking around his vineyard seeking trees to cut down and send to hell. But that is not what God is like at all! No, you're still breathing, God's not done with you. He loves you, there's hope for you!
 - 1. This goes against prevailing business wisdom
 - a. Businesses say to cut the fat, Prune the workforce, be efficient. Fire the least fruitful 10%, Give the most fruitful 10% raises. Put your resources toward what's working
 - 2. But the Kingdom of God works upside down.
 - a. God says, "If they're not working, be more gracious to them. They are going to need extra help, extra love, extra attention, extra affection, extra patience."
 - ii. While God does have a long wick, his patience does not last forever
 - 1. God has a warning for those who think they can get away with sin presuming God's patience.
 - 2. Matthew Henry - "Sinners herein deceive themselves, for, though the sentence be not executed speedily, it will be executed the more severely at last. Vengeance comes slowly, but it comes surely, and wrath is in the mean time stored up against the day of wrath."

Christ Is Interceding

1. Explain
 - a. Christ is the vinedresser
 - b. I want us to remember last week, The few verses before this that Jesus was talking about repenting or perishing.
 - i. It is in the context of this reality that people are hearing this parable of the Figless tree
 - c. How does this relate to salvation? Well for the christian, Christ goes far further than He does in this parable. Unlike in the parable, Christ is more than just a vinedresser. Christ is the vine - We know that not only would Jesus never leave us, but that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Our victory is His victory, Our works are His works, Our fruit is His fruit. He has a deeply vested interest in our fruitfulness!
 - i. And so when we fall short of that expectation. We have Christ who is at this very moment sitting at the right hand of God, Interceding for us, advocating for us, mediating for us.
 1. "I paid for that sin. I bore the transgression for that one too. I suffered for that one, He does not need to. She is holy, and righteous and pure, because I have made her so! My payment was enough!"
 2. Past, Present, Future
2. Prove
 - a. Hebrews 7:25 - Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.
 - b. 1st John 2:1 - My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
 - c. 1st Timothy 2:5-6 - For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.
 - i. It is important to understand that Jesus is the only human mediator between God and man. No one else...not Mary, not any previous Christian saint...has the power to intercede for us before the throne of the Almighty. No angel has that position. Christ alone is the God-man, and He mediates and intercedes between God and man.
3. Apply
 - a. Manure - God works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure! (phil 2:13)
 - i. Don't waste your manure
 1. Fig Newtons (sometimes it takes manure to get the fruit)
 2. Difficulties are often what grow us the most.
 - a. John Newton - Trials are medicines which our gracious and wise physician prescribes because we need them; and he

proportions the frequency and weight of them to what the case requires.

- ii. What difficulties are in your life that God is using to grow you?
- b. But why? Why is God so patient? Why does Christ continually intercede for us? So that we may bear fruit.

Bear Fruit

1. Explain
 - a. Does God care about Results? Yes or No?
 - i. Yes God cares about results, he cares about effectiveness. He cares about performance. The word that Jesus uses to express all this is “fruit”
 - ii. you’re a tree, I’m a tree, we’re all trees. This is God’s vineyard.
 - b. We are not saved by our fruit. Fruit is the evidence of what type of tree it is.
 - i. There was a fruit tree in our yard. That bore no fruit last year. We were not really sure what kind of tree it was.
 - ii. The same is true for you and I. Our fruit is the evidence of the type of tree that it is.
2. Prove
 - a. John 15:4-5 - Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.
3. Apply
 - a. So now is a good time to look at our own lives and ask, “How many figs were on my tree last year? Was I fruitful? Did I bear good fruit?” Some of you were very fruitful, praise God! Some of you would say, “Well, there were areas of my life that were very fruitful.” AMEN! Rejoice in those, praise God for every fig. But my assumption is, because we’re all sinners in a fallen world, there are at least a few branches on our tree that were not very fruitful last year.
 - b. And I’ve been praying that the Holy Spirit would highlight for you one particular part of your life that really needs to become more fruitful this year.
 - i. Examples
 1. Marriage, Family, Ministry, Bible Reading, Wellness/Health, Difficult Relationships.
 2. For this to be helpful for you, you need to determine where fruitfulness should be increasing
 - c. How to be fruitful
 - i. Cultivate your relationship with the Holy Spirit
 1. If you want to bear fruit, you must be close to the one who produces the fruit in you!
 - a. Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23

gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

2. God is not a middle manager with a clipboard, he is a friend who is there to help! He is a gardener who is willing to prune and serve and aid in your growth.
 3. Read your Bible to draw close to God (this is how God talks to us!)
 4. Pray to God (This is how we talk to God!)
 5. Submit to Him and His will.
- ii. Repent of Sin
1. Commission (Things you shouldn't have done but did)
 2. Omission (Things you should have done but didn't)
- iii. Simplify your life
1. Busyness and fruitfulness are two different things. Are there things in your life that are taking all your attention away from fruitfulness?
 2. Be wise with your time, learn to say no. To simplify your life around the things that truly matter. Cut the parts of your tree that are taking all the resources away from producing fruit!
 - a. Television, Video Games, Social Media (Time)
 - b. Starbucks, Big Vacations, Newest Gadgets (Treasures)
 - c. Work, Pastimes, Life Goals (Talents)
 - d. Level them all toward producing fruit!

We were all once fruitless (Conclusion)

Without a vinedresser, no tree would produce fruit. We have been loved by God. We have been given mercy, grace, and pruning. We have been grafted onto the vine of God. We have been saved, redeemed and made fruitful. I for one am so grateful that God was patient with me. Out of that gratitude I want to produce as much fruit as possible. I want to worship and praise and make much of my God. For He who saves has saved ME.

Pray



Luke 13:6-9 The Barren Fig Tree

INTRODUCTION Jesus tells a parable of a fig tree running out of time to produce fruit. This is a warning for Israel and for us all that a time of judgment is coming and that we must repent, placing our trust in Jesus, before that day arrives.

DISCUSSION

- What does conventional wisdom tell us to do with the things that are not producing?

EXPLANATION

- What is the purpose of a fig tree?
- How does a vinedresser help a tree live according to its purpose?
 - What would happen to the tree if not for the vinedresser?
- What can we learn from the timeframe set for the tree to produce fruit?

APPLICATION

- What does fruit look like in your life?
- Are there areas of your life that are not producing fruit? Explain.
- What parts of your life is God covering in manure so that they might grow fruit?
- How can we show our gratitude to the vinedresser for his work in us?

THE 5 W's (broken up into gendered groups)

- Word (How have you gotten into the word this week?)
- Wife/Husband/Family (How are you doing with your spouse/family?)
- Wellness (What are you doing to take care of yourself?)
- Work (How are you handling the work God has given you?)
- Witness (Who have you witnessed to, or prayed for this week?)