

The Gospel According to Luke- Part 6

TITLE: BEARING FRUIT

PART 3

The last chance

READ LUKE 13:6-9

INTRODUCTION

Jesus gives a parable here where a tree that is not producing (and hasn't produced) fruit is in danger of being cut down and thrown into the fire. The servant steps in and asks the master to give it one more year of opportunity to grow something. He commits to tending to the tree personally and to try and save it from the destruction that is coming its way. This parable is fascinating in its simplicity and sober in its warning. As with many parables we see two different meanings on the surface that we can interact with.

First, we see the nation of Israel. Fig trees in Scripture are often used as a symbolic reference to the nation of Israel. Jesus, interacting with the people and nation at the time, was giving them a warning that they needed to be cautious because the tree (the nation) was in danger of being cut down. They had not produced fruit for years and they had been given chance after chance of trying to come back to God and to see His plan and now they were presently rejecting the help that the Father had sent to them (the Son). The Old Testament is filled with chance after chance for the nation of Israel and God's patience is on full display but Jesus was there to warn them that they had to come back to God in order to avoid destruction.

In this warning we find the second meaning to this parable: God is a God of many second chances but, eventually the day will come when we all run out of those chances. God is patient and He tends to us as a faithful gardener but, on the day we breathe our last breath and enter into judgement, there will be no more chances for us to bear fruit. (Hebrews 9:27-28) This is why it is important to bear fruit now while we know that we have the chance. The day will come when we no longer will be provided with the opportunity to bear that fruit and we will be in the presence of our Master.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to “bear fruit”? How do we bear fruit in our lives? What is the difference between good fruit and bad fruit?
2. What was the purpose God had for the people of Israel? How was He going to use them for His purpose?
3. Why was Jesus concerned with the fruit of the nation? Why does God give us multiple chances?
4. How many chances do you think God will give us? Do we ever run out of chances before our death? Why or why not?
5. Read Hebrews 9:27-28. What does this verse have to say about second chances? How can we be encouraged by this verse? What warning do we need to heed in this verse?

WRAP UP

How many times do we fail to bear fruit and yet Jesus gives us another chance? We need to be aware that our last chance will come. We can't afford to assume that we will keep getting more chances. His mercy and grace are everlasting but He also is a righteous Judge and we must remember that when we look at our opportunity to serve Him and bear fruit today.