

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study

“A WIDENESS IN GOD’S MERCY”

For individual study or group discussion

As we examine Luke 13:1-9, we again encounter another hard saying from Jesus: “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (vv. 3, 5). Underlying Christ’s warnings, we also discover a **wideness in God’s mercy**—mercy meant to lead us to repentance. But keep in mind that Scripture also teaches us that we must be careful not to presume upon God’s mercy (Hebrews 3:7-19). The presence of his grace in our lives is not an indication that everything is going to be okay, nor does it imply that his offer of mercy will be an open invitation. As Paul urges in 2 Corinthians 6:2, “Now is the favorable time; behold now is the day of salvation.” In today’s passage, there is a tone of urgency in Christ’s words, and he continues to remind his audience to keep the end in view.

We cannot measure human condition according to circumstances: repent (vv. 1-5)

In verse 2, we sense the crowd’s preconception of the Galileans’ guilt by Christ’s response. It is not uncommon for Christians to fall into such dichotomous thinking: misfortunes originate from moral failings, while blessings are the result of virtuous behavior. Jesus did not share this view of sin (John 9:1-3). Instead of commenting on the calamity, observe how Jesus takes the opportunity to warn his followers of future judgment. Twice he emphatically warns his listeners, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish,” encouraging them first to look within and consider their own standing before God (vv. 3, 5).

- How did the massacre of the Galileans and the falling of the Tower of Siloam mark the urgency for repentance? Read 2 Peter 3:8-13. What warning does Peter give to the church?
- What is the problem with correlating hardships with sin? (See also John 9 and Job 31:3; 42:7-9.)
- How do you react to news reports of tragic events? Do they remind you of your own mortality and your own need for repentance?

We must not assume God’s mercy has no deadline: repent (vv. 6-9)

In verses 6-9, through the *Parable of the Barren Fig Tree*, Jesus seeks to emphasize the wideness of God’s mercy as he gives us ample—but not unlimited—time to “bear fruit in keeping with repentance” (Luke 3:8). This parable expands upon Christ’s earlier warning in verses 3 and 5, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish,” by highlighting that true repentance bears fruit. If your life is not bearing fruit, it is a sign that something is wrong.

- In verses 6-9, whom does the fig tree represent? The owner? The gardener?
- Remember the *Parable of the Rich Fool* in Luke 12:13-21, who thought he had plenty of time to enjoy his abundance but failed to live through the night? Read Psalm 90. What is the psalmist reminding us to number in verse 12?
- If you only had a year to turn your life around, what fruit would you want to be producing? Read Galatians 5:22-23. Reflect and pray that the Spirit will produce these fruits in your life.



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

DATE: September 17, 2023

SPEAKER: Aaron/Wil

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 13:1-9

Family Dinner Table

Repentance

excerpt from “Jonathan Edwards on Election” by
R.C. Sproul

Some of Edwards’ parishioners asked him, “‘If I am not elect, what should I do?’ Edwards said, ‘Be in church every Sunday morning because you do not know that you are not elect, and you should do everything you can do in your fallen condition.’ Edwards said there is nothing people can do to incline themselves to the things of God. They cannot muster from their hearts true repentance unless the Holy Spirit changes their souls, but they can hear the Word of God and know that they are going to be judged at the end of their lives. Edwards recommended that people be seekers. We have to be careful here; Edwards’ doctrine of seeking has caused much consternation among Reformed people. Edwards was not advocating a salvation by seeking. False repentance—repenting to get a ticket out of hell but not really being convicted of sin—will not move God to save anybody. Such repentance is like a little child caught with his hand in the cookie jar who says, ‘Mommy, I’m sorry; please don’t spank me.’ It is a repentance not motivated by a broken and contrite heart—but by a fear of punishment. This [fear] is called attrition rather than contrition.”¹

- Read the [Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 87](#) and 2 Cor. 7:10. What does true repentance look like?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

The House: University Missions of Chattanooga, supported partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Bev and Andy Warren, supported missionary partners

¹ Sproul, R.C. *Jonathan Edwards on Election* from *And the Righteous Shall Live by Faith*. Just A Thought.... <https://mikechoate.weebly.com/edwards-on-election.html>