

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE”

For individual study or group discussion

In Luke 21:29–38, Jesus continues to instruct his disciples on how to interpret the signs of the coming judgment from verses 25–28 with the *Parable of the Fig Tree* so that they are not caught unaware. Recall how Luke chapter 21 opens with the disciples anxiously questioning Christ, “*What will be the sign when these things are about to take place?*” (v. 7). Jesus again answers their question and instructs them on the importance of keeping watch for “*these things*” with an analogy of a fig tree (vv. 29–33) followed by an application and two warnings (vv. 34–38).

The Parable: a certain sign of the Kingdom’s nearness (vv. 29–33)

In today’s passage, Jesus reinforces his message by pointing to a fig tree with its budding leaves as a certain sign of the Kingdom’s nearness. Just as a blossoming fig tree is a sign that summer is near, so too when we observe world events, we know that the consummation is coming. Christ urgently underscores his words by stating, “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away*” (v. 33). According to J.C. Ryle, “*If God has said a thing, then he will certainly bring it to pass. The probability or possibility of it, are matters which need not trouble us for a moment. That Christ should come again in power to judge the world and reign is not half so improbable as it was that Christ would come to suffer and die. If he came the first time then much more may we expect that he will come the second time. If he came to be nailed to the cross then much more may we expect that he will come in glory and wear the crown. He has said it, and he will do it. ‘His words shall never pass away.’*”¹

- Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck emphasized that “*Taking notice of the signs of the times is a duty for Jesus’ disciples.*”² How can a follower of Christ cultivate a daily anticipation for Christ’s return? (2 Peter 3:1–13)
- In 2 Corinthians 1:20, Paul states that “*the promises of God find their Yes in him.*” In Luke 21:33, Jesus promises that his words will not fail. Where else in Scripture have you read these same promises? (cf. Isaiah 40:8 and 55:10–11)

The Point: vigilance as we await the King’s return (vv. 34–38)

Throughout Luke 21, Jesus warns his followers to be on the lookout for signs of impending judgment. Whether in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem or at the end of the age, Jesus would have his people live in what J.C. Ryle calls “*perpetual preparedness.*”³ Oswald Chambers wrote, “*It is easy for us to imagine that we will suddenly come to a point in our lives where we are fully prepared, but preparation is not suddenly accomplished. In fact, it is a process that must be steadily maintained. It is dangerous to become settled and complacent in our present level of experience. The Christian life requires preparation and more preparation.*”⁴ The point of the parable is to encourage vigilance as we await the King’s return. We are not to grow careless with our lives or apathetic concerning his warnings, because “*that day*” will “*come upon you suddenly like a trap*” (v. 34).

- Jesus calls us to live faithfully as we await his return. This involves correctly navigating the “*cares of this life*” along with the joys and anxieties they bring. Identify the things in your life that can distract you from even thinking about, let alone faithfully awaiting, Jesus’ return?
- In your small group, pray for each other that you would have a right and healthy perspective when it comes to the Lord’s second coming. Think practically as you wrap up this discussion in Luke 21. In what ways can you make sure you’re ready for the return of Christ? (See Titus 2:11–13, 1 John 3:2–3, and Isaiah 51:6)
- Read Psalm 39:4; 90:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:15–22, and 1 Peter 2:11–12. How do these verses encourage you to be circumspect?

DATE: November 17, 2024

SPEAKER: Aaron/Brian

SERIES: The Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 21:29–38

RENEW: 31 Days of Prayer

DAY 11: The Fruit of the Spirit- Love

PRAYER: Loving Father, we praise you that you did not just describe love to us, but clearly revealed true love to us through the sacrificial gift of Jesus. As you love us with an unbreakable bond, empower and equip us now to love one another. Mark our love with action and truth rather than just words and speech. Keep us from mere sentiment toward one another, but instead propel us to sacrifice and service. Teach us to love others when they are unlovely, since you loved us when we were dead in our sins. Direct our thoughts, words, and desires according to the love of Christ. Overrule our self-consumption, self-protection, and self-promotion so that in all our relationships we live by faith in him who gave himself up for us. May we love one another in such a way that others know that we belong to you, and in this way may behold you. For you tell us that no one has ever seen God, but that if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. Show off your glory through us when we love one another. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS
PCA Rural Church Plant
Development, supported church
plant ministry
PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS
Sarah and M*, supported
missionary partners

^{1,3} Ryle, J.C. *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Luke*. Grace Gems. <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l21.htm> November 12, 2024

² Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 4. 2008, Grand Rapids, MI. Baker Academic. 688

⁴ Chambers, Oswald. *The “Go” of Preparation: My Utmost for His Highest*. <https://utmost.org/updated/the-go-of-preparation/>. November 13, 2024