

- Parables were stories that Jesus told that were culturally relevant and had an intentional point.

CONTEXT IS KEY:

- Who is Jesus talking to here? Crowds were regularly gathering around Jesus to hear Him talk. This means that Jews, Gentiles, and Jesus’ disciples would have been listening.

THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

Luke 13:6-9 ⁶And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷And 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?’ ⁸And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. ⁹Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”

THE CONTEXT OF THIS PARABLE IS *REPENTANCE*.

Luke 13:5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Matthew 3:8 Bear fruit in keeping with **repentance**.

1. GOD EXPECTS FRUIT THAT MATCHES THE TREE.

Luke 13:6 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.”

- The owner of the vineyard showed up expecting to see figs on the fig tree that had been planted. In the same way, when we take on the name of Jesus, we are essentially saying I am “this type of tree.” As a Christian “Tree,” we should bear Christian fruit.

Matthew 7:15-20 ¹⁵Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶**You will recognize them by their fruits.** Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

WORLDLY, BAD FRUIT

Galatians 5:19 -21 ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

GODLY, GOOD FRUIT

Galatians 5:22-24 ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

2. GOD IS PATIENT.

Luke 13:7 And he said to the vinedresser, “**Look, for three years now** I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree...”

- There is a reason that patience makes the list of “Fruit of the Spirit.” (**Galatians 5:22-23** - “...love, joy, peace, patience...”) Jesus patiently waited for His disciples to show fruit in their lives for 3 years!
- But God is not to be mocked. Notice that the issue with the owner of the fig tree isn’t the quantity or the quality of the fruit. The issue is that the fruit doesn’t exist.

James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

James 2:17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

WHILE WE *DO* SERVE A *PATIENT* GOD, HE IS ALSO A *JUST* GOD WITH EXPECTATIONS OF PEOPLE WHO TAKE ON THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST.

3. FERTILIZED TREES BEAR FRUIT.

Luke 13:8 And he answered him, “Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure.”

WHAT IS THE FERTILIZER?

John 15:4-5 ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I 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.

- This is a definitive statement! “Whoever abides in me and I in him... WILL... bear much fruit” (see NIV translation).
 - But this only happens when our eyes are focused on Jesus. Keeping our eyes on Jesus and pursuing godly relationships are the **fertilizer** that we need to bear godly fruit.
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CLOSING THOUGHTS:

1. Is there something you need to repent of that is keeping you from bearing godly fruit in your life?
2. Are you bearing fruit that matches the kind of “tree” that you claim to be?
3. What fertilizer are you applying, if any? What changes need to be made here?

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUPS OR WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Passages to consider: Luke 13:1-9; Galatians 5:1,16-26

1. What about the sermon and the parable was significant to you?
2. Read Luke 13:1-9. Who is Jesus talking to? What does He want them to understand? How does this parable help express what He is communicating?
3. What do you know about fig trees and fruit trees? (If you don’t know anything, no worries, do some research.) A) How does this knowledge help you understand how Jesus is using this parable?
4. What is your understanding of repentance? A) Where have you seen examples or experienced repentance yourself?
5. Jesus’ work on the cross is the only work that can restore a relationship between a person and God. When we step into that eternal, life-giving relationship, things in us begin to change. Read Galatians 5:16-26. What does the passage tell you about repentance and fruit? A) What does the fruit in your life look like at this time?
6. What is your response to what Jesus is saying in this week’s parable? With whom can you share the story or your response?

Passages to prepare for next week: Matthew 9:16-17, Mark 2:21-22, and Luke 5:36-39