

LUKE 13: THE TIME IS NOW!

- **STRUCTURE OF THE PASSAGE**

Jesus' Warning: Repent or perish! (vs. 1-5)

The Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree (vs. 6-9)

An Incident Revealing the Glory of the KING (vs. 10-17)

2 Parables on the Mystery of the KINGDOM (vs. 18-21)

Jesus' Warning: The Narrow Door (vs. 22-30)

Jesus' Lament Over Jerusalem (vs. 31-35)

- **AN INCIDENT REVEALING THE GLORY OF THE KING:**

- **The Woman with the Disabling Spirit (vs. 10-17)**

18 years: 3 references to "18" in Luke, and all in this chapter.

This 13th woman with whom Jesus has interacted in 13 chapters.

We see two things about Jesus here:

- (a) His compassion, attesting to his noble character
- (b) His power, attesting to the truth of his word & mission

We also get a lesson on the true meaning of the Sabbath:

- (a) Is Jesus opposed to Sabbath observance? No!
- (b) It's the Fourth Commandment (= binding moral law!)
- (c) Three reasons for Sabbath observance:
 - The WISDOM principle (it is good for us)
 - The JUSTICE principle (it is the basis of a just society)
 - The FAITH principle (it is the mark of faith in practice)

So the Pharisees weren't wrong to sanctify the Sabbath.

They were wrong in the application – missing the point!

Jesus reveals the weightier matter at stake here:

- (a) Not just works of *necessity*, but works of *mercy* are permitted.
Indeed, mercy sanctifies the day!
- (b) The heart of Sabbath observance is not a fastidious concern to rest for oneself, but a loving concern to bring rest to others, to share that rest with us!

To summarize:

- (a) Our glorious Savior brings rest and restoration NOW!
- (b) NOW is the time to receive rest and bring rest.
NOW is the time to worship the Living and True God!

- **TWO PARABLES OF THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM:**

- **The Parables of the Mustard Seed & Leaven (vs. 18-21)**

The Parable of the Mustard Seed:

- (a) The kingdom is living, growing; it comes small, unnoticed, but grows to enormous extent.
- (b) For us, the new life is NOW! Grow!
- (c) For the church: it grows inexorably from smallness and seeming insignificance to become the fullness of him who fills all in all! (See Dan. 2:34-35; 44.)

The Parable of the Leaven:

- (a) Leaven usually = sin! Here the kingdom of God!
- (b) A picture of its gradual, hidden, inexorable growth.
- (c) The kingdom is here NOW, at work in our midst!

To summarize:

- (a) The KING brings life and rest NOW!
The new life he brings is already begun!
- (b) The KINGDOM he brings is present and growing in our midst NOW!
- (c) What comfort this is for those who love the King and pray for his Kingdom!
Come, Lord Jesus!

- **JESUS' WARNING:**

- **Repent or Perish! (vs. 1-5)**

Is suffering the result of sin?

Sometimes! But sometimes not!

Don't be like Job's friends, blaming the sufferer.

Don't imagine that you're always as innocent as Job.

But Jesus knows the deeper intent of their question:

"Did they deserve it and what does that mean for me?"

"As long as we're not *that* bad, we'll be okay, right?"

But Jesus says (2x!) that ALL need to repent:

"Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

There is none who do good! (See Psalm 14:1-3.)

We compare ourselves to one another, but miss the point!

The holiness of God! ALL have fallen short of his glory.

ALL must repent to enter into life.

To summarize:

- (a) The KING brings life and rest NOW!
The new life he brings is already begun!
- (b) The KINGDOM he brings is present and growing in our midst NOW!
- (c) But there is a strong warning that comes with this good news:
The time to repent to enter this kingdom is NOW!

- **JESUS' INTERCEDES ON OUR BEHALF**

- **The Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree (vs. 6-9):**

The unfruitful fig tree is Israel, and the owner is God.

The vinedresser (like Moses) intercedes for the tree.

Good news: There is still time while we live and breathe.

God is long suffering and slow to anger.

Bad news: God's patience isn't forever.

Judgment is coming.

But ... am I fruitful enough...? How fruitful must I be...?

Are we to be like the Pharisees? “Do more! Try harder!”
No! (See Psalm 13:1-3; Matthew 5:20)
Confronted by the truth, we feel Denial or Despondency!
What to do? Remember the fig tree! (See Matt. 21:18-19.)

The fig tree’s leaves were concealing its fruitlessness.
Hypocrisy! (Any other examples of fig leaves in the Bible?)
Figs are a picture of God’s blessing (see Num. 13; Deut. 8:9; Song 2:10-13; 1 Kings 4:25).
The removal of figs is a picture of God’s judgment (see Ps. 105:33; Amos 4:9).
The fig tree is also a picture of Israel (see Jer. 24:1-10).

Jesus cursing the fig tree is a SIGN on entering Jerusalem.
He sees the fruitless fig tree (= Israel) and curses it.
It is a sign of the coming judgment on the nation.
But Jesus had come to bear that curse, to be that curse! (See Gal. 3:13-14)
Here is the mystery and the glory of God’s great grace!

To summarize:

- (a) The KING brings life and rest NOW!
- (b) The KINGDOM he brings is here NOW, and growing!
- (d) The time to repent is NOW.
- (e) Good news: Jesus has borne the curse!
NOW is the time of grace.
- (f) Bad news: But judgment is coming.
Let us avail ourselves of grace NOW!

• **The Narrow Door (vs. 22-30):**

His patience will not last forever. And when once you’ve passed the event horizon, it is done...
See Matt. 7:13-14: The wide gate and easy way for the many people
vs. the narrow gate and hard way for the few people.

Again, does this mean “Do more, try harder”? No!
CHRIST IS THE DOOR! (See John 10:7, 9.)
And that door is so narrow, it will admit only one at a time!
(a) No slipping in with the crowd!
(b) The only in is through Christ, your Judge ... and Savior!

To summarize:

- (a) The KING brings life and rest NOW!
- (b) The KINGDOM he brings is here NOW!
- (c) Bad news: You are more sinful and flawed than you had ever dared imagine.
Judgment is coming!
- (d) Good news: You can be more loved and accepted than you had ever dared hope.
Jesus has borne our curse.
NOW is the time of grace. Avail of it!
Come, let us rest in the presence of our Savior, and bring rest to others.
Come, Lord Jesus! Amen!