

As we move through chapters 12-14, we see Jesus challenging hypocrisy, and there is also now a tone of warning both for individuals and the entire nation of Israel.

Kindling a fire (12:49-53)

49 “I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! 51 Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. 52 For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. 53 Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

- Jesus great desire was to send the Holy Spirit!
- He spoke of His sufferings as a baptism, sometimes as a cup he had to drink.
- Suffering for Christ’s sake is something we are appointed to. At His first coming, Jesus was going to bring not glory, but division.

Unable to discern (12:54-59)

54 Then He also said to the multitudes, “Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming’; and so it is. 55 And when you see the

south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. 56 Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time? 57 Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? 58 When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. 59 I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite."

- We can be discerning about some things but unable to discern what is spiritual.
- People were missing the significance of Jesus' ministry.
- Paul said that as much as lies within us we need to be at peace with others.

The priority of repentance (13:1-5)

1 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

- We live in a fallen world, and so we cannot say that a person who experiences tragedy is under God's judgment, or suffering the consequences of sin.

The fruitless fig tree (13:6-9)

6 He also spoke this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ 8 But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’”

- The Lord had been trying to produce fruit on this tree without success.
- There is a limit to God’s patience – He will remove what doesn’t bear fruit.

A daughter of Abraham (13:10-17)

10 Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. 12 But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.” 13 And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, “There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.”

15 The Lord then answered him and said, “Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” 17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

- Jesus continued to teach in the synagogues as well as the open air.
- We see again that demonic spirits can afflict people with sickness. Not all illness arises from demonic causes.
- Notice the lack of concern for the woman. If these men would water animals on the Sabbath, how much more should a human being be freed from illness?
- A rare occasion that the hypocrites felt ashamed. Relationship breeds concern for people, and this is one way to protect ourselves from the religious spirit.

What is the Kingdom like? (13:18-21)

18 Then He said, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.” 20 And again He said, “To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

- Jesus compares the growth of the Kingdom to the growth of two very small but powerful things.

- Both undergo rapid growth.
- Both change the element into which they are placed.
- Both produce hidden growth.
- Both seem to be insignificant.
- These principles of growth apply to the growth of the Kingdom in history, as well as the workings of God's grace in individuals.
- The Kingdom would be introduced into the Earth like a small seed, but one with great power to transform.
- Leaven is used as a symbol of sin in the Bible, but the emphasis in this passage is the growth of the Kingdom.

The narrow gate (13:22-30)

22 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in

the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. 29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”

- We don't know how many will be saved, but Jesus calls it a narrow gate. The exclusivity of the Gospel makes it offensive.
- Many believed that God's covenant with Abraham guaranteed the salvation of all Jews but neither John the Baptist nor Jesus taught that. Jesus says that people from all over will come and feast in the Kingdom.
- “But Isaiah is very bold and says: ‘I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me’” (Romans 10:20).

Jesus laments over Jerusalem (13:31-35)

31 On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, “Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.” 32 And He said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’ 33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. 34 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! 35 See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”

- Even in institutions that are deeply affected by a religious spirit, there are many fine individuals. Remember Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.
- The fox was a symbol of three things for the Jews: slyness; destructiveness; and worthlessness. Calling Herod a fox was a strong statement.
- The Lord wanted so much for the Holy City to experience the fullness of God's plan. They will not see Him again they acclaim Him as the One who comes in the Name of the LORD.

Another Sabbath healing (14:1-6)

1 Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. 2 And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" 4 But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. 5 Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" 6 And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

- Notice that Jesus was willing to accept hospitality from people.
- They were watching Him with evil intent.
- Dropsy (edema) was truly untreatable, and could be crippling.
- Jesus' question about the pit was unanswerable.

Take the lowest place! (14:7-14)

7 So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 8 “When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, ‘Give place to this man,’ and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, go up higher.’ Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

12 Then He also said to him who invited Him, “When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

- Jesus observes the things we cannot see, things to which we are blind.
- Jesus lived out this kind of humility better than any of us ever will. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and vice versa.
- Perhaps Jesus noticed that the man had tried to invite every important person he could!
- Make note of the Lord's concern for the poor and unfortunate.
- God will reward us for everything we have done in His Name!

Excuses (14:15-24)

15 Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 16 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' 22 And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' 23 Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'"

- Many who should have been the guests of honor at the feast will not be present.
- The mystery that the Gentiles will worship the God of Israel is set forth again. Think about who the characters are in this story.
- It was a great insult to refuse a feast from a ruler.
- How important it is to continue to share the Gospel message, so that God's table might be full!
