

➤ Read Luke 13:1-21.

➤ Reread Luke 13:1-5.

“The social tension in Israel made revolutionary activity in those days possible at any time. Pilate’s position as governor of a troubled province far distant from Rome was precarious and he was committed to protecting his position at any cost.”¹

“Pilate, notorious for his hard-hearted acts, caused a group of Galileans, while they were busy sacrificing in the temple, to be attacked and slain by his soldiers, thus, as it were, mingling their blood with their sacrifices.”²

1. During a discussion about current events, what points does Jesus make?
 - v. 2

 - v. 4

 - vv. 3, 5 (📖* Mk. 1:15; Acts 20:21)

2. People tend to believe that good behavior is a shield against suffering and that bad behavior results in tragedy or disaster.
 - a. In what ways have you believed this to be true?

 - b. How does Jesus confront this idea? (vv. 2-3; 📖 Jn. 9:1-3)

3. Jesus does not make a direct connection between sinful actions and *physical* death. What connection between sin and death does he make and why? (Ezek. 18:30-32; Rom. 6:23; Jn. 3:16)

4. Review Luke 12:54–59. In this passage, Jesus scolds his hearers for their inability to “interpret this present time” (12:56b). What was taking place at the “present time,” and what should they have done in response? (Mk. 4:16, 17; Lk. 13:1–5)

► **Read Luke 13:6–9.**

5. Israel is in a season of opportunity: the long awaited Messiah is in their midst, bringing about their long-awaited redemption. What fruit has Israel failed to bear that mirrors the failure of the fig tree? (Mt. 3:2, 8; Jn. 5:37–40)

The fig tree in the parable refers to Israel and the owner refers to God. See Micah 7:1 and Isaiah 5:1–7.

6. The fig tree’s failure to produce fruit should have resulted in it being cut down, but the man caring for the tree pleads for more time.
 - a. Although the owner plans to have the tree cut down, what does his response to the caretaker’s pleas tell us about God? (Joel 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:3–4; 2 Pet. 3:9)
 - b. Although God is patient, a day will come when he will bring judgment to the world. What will the result of this be? (Mt. 3:10; 2 Pet. 3:3–10)
 - c. In light of this, how then should we live? (2 Pet. 3:11–15)

► **Read Luke 13:10–17.**

7. Who does Jesus see as he teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath?
8. Describe what life must have been like for this woman (physically, emotionally, spiritually).

9. What does the woman do that makes Jesus reach out and heal her?

10. Jesus attributes the woman's suffering to satanic oppression. In light of this, what does Jesus' ability to heal the woman's physical infirmity reveal about him? (Mt. 8:16; 9:32-33)

11. How does the woman respond after Jesus heals her?

12. The synagogue ruler is indignant that Jesus has done "work" on the Sabbath. How does Jesus expose his hypocrisy?

13. In what ways have you valued "keeping the law" over valuing people made in God's image?

How can you respond in repentance?

14. Jesus showed himself to be a strong and compassionate deliverer to the woman. In what areas of your life do you need his healing touch?

► **Read Luke 13:18-21.**

"... the Kingdom of God was the principal theme of the teaching of Jesus. He tried to explain it to his hearers again and again, working from the known to the unknown. He took things from nature and Palestinian life that would be familiar to his contemporaries and used them as illustrations and analogies to point to the transcendent Kingdom..."³

15. What two images does Jesus use to describe his kingdom?
16. What is Jesus trying to teach about his kingdom by using these two images?
17. Sometimes we may be tempted to think that we need to do something “big” to be significant in God’s kingdom. How do the mustard seed and yeast images undermine this faulty mindset? (Mt. 10:40–42; 25:37–40; Micah 6:8)
18. Jesus uses these parables to teach about the surprising nature of God’s kingdom. We have the privilege of being a part of what God is doing in building and advancing his kingdom. Use the select verses from the hymn below as a prayer to God from your heart.

Father, I Know That All My Life
by Anna Letitia Waring (1850)

I would not have the restless will that hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child, and guided where I go.

So I ask Thee for the daily strength, to none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life while keeping at Thy side;
Content to fill a little space, if Thou be glorified.

*📖 For further study

¹ Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 8 (Matthew, Mark, Luke) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 970.

² Norvel Geldenhuys. *The Gospel of Luke: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 370.

³ Philip W. Comfort, Gen. Ed. *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 12 (The Gospel of Luke; Acts) (Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2006), 202-203.