

## AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “Repent and Bear Good Fruits” Luke 13

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 13: 1-10

### 1. Repent or perish

A. The blood of Pilate’s troops mixing of the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifice [v. 13: 1], some think, refers to the recent incident, where the soldiers of Pilate came upon certain Galileans who were of the band of Judas of Galilee [Acts 5: 37], who did not recognize the authority of the Roman emperor and refused to pay taxes to the Empire, killed them and mixed their blood with the blood of their sacrificial animals and sprinkled the mixed blood on the altar of the temple. The persons who mentioned this incident to Lord Jesus at this time perhaps had two possible motives: 1) They wanted to bring Jesus’ attention to the heinous nature of the Roman Empire’s local rule over the people of Israel; or 2) They might have wanted to warn Jesus of the political danger of entering Jerusalem where such a heinous act could be committed by the Roman troop without restraints.

B. Lord Jesus’ response shows the following three lessons:

1) **Misfortunes of life happen to all by chance mechanism:** Whereas these Judeans, most of who regarded the Galileans at low esteem and perhaps implied that the evil of mixing the Galilean blood with the animal blood could come upon Jesus, another Galilean, Lord Jesus taught that such calamities/ misfortunes happen to people regardless of their origin, nationality, moral or ethical condition [v. 13: 2]. Therefore, we must not judge people based on their physical well-being or lack thereof. In addition, we should not judge God’s goodness based on the misfortunes that come to our lives nor complain to Him when we experience them in life.

*The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong,  
Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding,  
Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all.  
For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net,  
Like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men are snared in an evil time,  
When it falls suddenly upon them. [Ecclesiastes 9: 11-12]*

2) **Let us rid ourselves of personal biases:** Lord Jesus cited another case of a misfortune – the tower of Siloam incident, where 18 people in the vicinity of the tower died when the tower fell. Perhaps these were the same kind of people, mentioned in John 9, who waited for the angel of God to stir the water of the pool of Siloam to obtain healing of their infirmities. Why would God allow these sickly people who were anxiously waiting for healing of their infirmities to be killed by the falling tower, which is usually a symbol of safety? Remember that Siloam is in Judea, close to Jerusalem. Most likely those killed in this incident were all Judeans and not Galileans based on the locality of the incident. Thus, Lord Jesus was pointing to the personal bias in those who reported the mixing blood incident and telling them that misfortunes come to people regardless of whether they are Judeans or Galileans. The lesson here is that we must rid of ourselves personal biases and not judge people based on their color, nationality, or material/ physical well-being.

3) **Unless we repent, we will perish in eternity for certain:** Unless we repent, we will likewise perish. What did He mean “perish?” Did He mean perish here on the earth or in eternity after our deaths? In the parable of the good and evil servants in Luke 12, Lord Jesus referred to the punishments and rewarded meted out to the servants “when the lord returns” [v. 12: 46]. Also, in the parable of judging times [v. 12: 54-59], He taught that they should be “discerning of the time” [v. 12: 56] based on the signs of the time. God’s final judgments and rewards will be meted out to all humanity in the last days.

Since the misfortunes of life are not related to our moral/ ethical status, and the judgments and rewards will only be relevant in the time frame of eternity. If we have done good faithfully, we should not expect the final rewards from God until after our life just as a worker gets paid at the end of his work period. On the other hand, if we have not repented of our sinful life and not accepted Lord Jesus

as the Lord and Savior yet, we must not expect to avoid God's judgment of eternal 'perishing,' i.e. eternal damnation, in a wishful thinking that God's love and kindness will somehow prevent us from having to face such a consequence of damnation. How clearly stated are the consequences of unrepentance and disobedience in these parables! Let us not be fooled into a wishful thinking and face eternal loss.

## 2. Bearing good fruits during this life

A. "Bearing fruits" is mentioned a number of times in the Bible:

*And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [Genesis 1: 12]*

*They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, 'It is a good land which the Lord our God is giving us.' [Deut. 1: 26]*

*The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers [Deut. 30: 9]*

*It was planted in good soil by many waters, To bring forth branches, bear fruit, And become a majestic vine. [Ezekiel 17:8]*

*You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. [Matt 7: 16-18]*

*And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [Matt 3: 10]*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness [Gal. 5: 22]*

- B. **Just as fruit trees bear good fruits for our pleasure, we are expected to bear good fruits to God:** God made many fruit trees that provide good fruits to the humanity. They looked 'good' to Him. God also gave a land that yielded good fruits to the people of Israel. By providing these blessings to them, He expected to see 'good fruits' from them of His goodness, faithfulness and godly justice lived out in their lives. God was often disappointed by the lack of good fruits in His people. When Christ came to His own people, He was expecting to see the same 'good fruits' in them based on the faithful nourishing work of His Father.
- C. **Let us not slight God's patient and kind nourishing of your soul in expectation of good fruits:** In this parable, He was proposing to nourish and cultivate the unfruitful fig tree for 'three years' in patience care, giving it the time and resources to bear fruits. God expects Christian lives to be fruitful beyond the faith of believing in God and in Jesus. And He is patient and kind by waiting and nourishing you during the time of waiting. But there will be a consequence waiting based on what fruits we will have for God after this life.
- D. **Let us bear good fruits and anticipate "Well Done" from God:** Again, the consequences will be either of the two – Praise and 'well done' from the Lord or eternal destruction of 'being cut down and removed' [v. 13: 9]. Rather than being afraid of the second consequence, God wants us to be thankful and appreciative of all of His gifts to us and be fruitful in our living so that we bring joy and pleasure to His heart and become a channel of His blessings to others.

*Discussion topics:*

1. *Let us discuss the process of bearing fruits in spirit and of how fruit trees bear fruits.*
2. *Let us share some of your experiences of how God has nourished your soul to be productive.*