

- **Parables** are common, culturally relevant stories that reveal a moral, spiritual or kingdom truth.
- **Why parables?** Jesus had a clear and powerful message to deliver in an interesting, compelling way that challenged His listeners.

CONTEXT:

PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

Luke 13:6-9 (NIV) ⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. ⁷So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ ⁸‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

1. _____ IS ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION.

- *Metanoia*: to have another mind, to change one's mind or purpose¹

Matthew 3:8-10 (NIV) ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹And do not think you can say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father.” I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

- Jesus says, unless you repent, you will be no different than those who perished in the story.
- It is not "faith plus repentance" that saves, but rather a repentant faith.

TRUE REPENTANCE IS MORE THAN JUST CHANGING OUR MINDS; TRUE REPENTANCE IS DRIVEN BY HATING SIN.

2. GOD EXPECTS _____.

Matthew 7:15-20 (NLT) ¹⁵Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. ¹⁶You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. ¹⁹So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

- We are not just supposed to produce fruit *but the right kind of fruit*.

BAD FRUIT / GOOD FRUIT

- Good fruit comes through the Holy Spirit motivating our hearts.
- The test of a tree is its fruitfulness.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV) ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

3. GOD IS _____.

HE HAS TREMENDOUS PATIENCE WITH US!

Luke 13:7 (NIV) So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, “For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any.”

2 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV) ⁸But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

IN HIS PATIENCE, HE OFFERS US SPECIAL CARE SO WE CAN PRODUCE GOOD FRUIT.

Luke 13:8 (NIV) "Sir, the man replied, "leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it."

GOD'S PATIENCE HAS LIMITS.

Luke 13:9 (NIV) "If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down."

- Not saved _____ works but saved _____ good works. Good works testify to the fact that we have been saved, so that our lives might reflect the craftsmanship and character of God. (See **Ephesians 2:8-10**)
- God didn't create us without _____ to bear healthy fruit. Just like the vineyard owner, it's reasonable for Him to expect us to produce His fruit in our lives.

See **James 2:14-18**

FAITH ALONE SAVES, BUT FAITH THAT SAVES IS NOT ALONE; IT HAS GOOD WORKS WITH IT.²

Important to remember: We are not saved *by* works but saved *for* good works! (See **Ephesians 2:8-10**)

4. HELP OTHERS GROW; DON'T BE A CRITICAL FRUIT INSPECTOR!

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

Matthew 7:3 (NIV) Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV) ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

APPLICATION:

1. Do you need to repent today? Receive Christ?
2. Do you need to recommit to a regular practice of repentance? What will this look like?
3. How will you receive consistent nutrients to be a healthy, fruit-bearing Christian?
4. Who will you encourage in their growth and maturity? How will you talk to them?

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

¹Find Greek and Hebrew definitions of words in the Bible using the Concordances at BibleHub.com

²This phrase has been attributed to Martin Luther, but the concept can be traced back to both Martin Luther and John Calvin in response to Orthodox Catholicism. Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004, 2007. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.