

Time Is Running Out!!!

Sunday, March 24 – 8:00 & 10:45

Third Sunday in Lent – 2019

Wednesdays of Lent: Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: As Jesus continued to journey toward Jerusalem... *to His death, which was for us and our eternal rescue*, He had a growing urgency in His teaching – *especially about repentance!*

- ➔ Why is repentance important? Because **repentant sinners** will be forever **blessed**, while **unrepentant sinners** will be forever **tormented!**
- ➔ Who and what are involved in repentance? God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and a lost sinner.
- ➔ What is repentance? ♣It is God the Father working by *the Holy Spirit*; ♣He works through the Word of God, ♣He shows a person his lost condition, and ♣He gives that person faith to trust in Jesus as His Savior!

Now, *let's setup today's sermon text:* At the end of **Luke chapter 12**, Jesus had been talking about **interpreting**; He said, “**When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming.’ And so it happens**” (Lk. 12:54 ESV). *Jesus acknowledged their weather-predicting skills!* Then He said, “**...but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?**” (Lk. 12:54 ESV) In other words, *I'm here, I'm the Promised Messiah*, so as a cloud turns your thoughts to rain, *so I should turn your thoughts to repentance!* Now, **Luke 13...**

1. **REPENT – Example Number 1:** This first example involves certain Galileans dying at the hands of Pilate’s soldiers in a very tragic manner.
 - a. ¹ **There were some present at that very time who told [Jesus] about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.** // What happened? It was the time of Passover, *and Jews from all over had come to Jerusalem; then, when some Galileans were in the temple area slaughtering their lambs for the Passover meal, Pilate murdered those men – mixing their blood with the blood of the slain lambs, so tragic indeed!* Think today about a terrorist taking refuge in a mosque; *because of a holiness-type code, that person is normally safe there – until he tries to leave, but Pilate did not follow such a code :* (
 - b. ² **And [Jesus] answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners [ἀμαρτωλοί] than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?** ³ **No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.** // What did Jesus do? He did NOT speak of Pilate’s sin; *that was not the issue.* Instead, He said that *the amount of a person’s sin does not determine the severity of his death – for example, those who died in the twin towers on 9/11 were not exceptionally bad people. And then, getting to the main point, He basically said, “It doesn’t matter how you die – whether tragically or by natural causes; instead, what matters is whether or not you repent!”* So what is repentance? Dr. Just in the CC put it this way, **“Repentance includes sorrow for sin and trust in the one who brings forgiveness and release [namely, Jesus]” (534).** Then Jesus basically added, “For all who

DO NOT repent, *you will die IN YOUR SINS and be under the sentence of eternal condemnation!*"

2. **REPENT – Example Number 2:** ⁴ **Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders [debtors – Lord's Prayer] than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?** ⁵ **No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."** // Others told Jesus about the first example; *then Jesus went on to reference the second example.* The two are similar, *but also different:* The former example happened by Pilate's action, while this one was an accident.
- The tower in Siloam: It was located in Jerusalem, so those who died when it fell were probably Judeans, rather than Galileans – *who were looked down upon by the Judeans.* Jesus wanted to make it clear that sinners are sinners – *whether they are Galileans, Judeans, or whoever!*
 - Tragedy and death: What should come to mind when we hear of such things? Dr. Just, in the CC, wrote that *"any such tragedy should be seen not as a sign of God's judgment on specific people for specific sins, but as a sign of his judgment of all people [He also wrote:] The Christian conclusion is not 'they must have deserved it,' but rather, 'I deserved the same'" (535).* So Jesus emphasized that *repentance is very important for all people!*
3. **God's Work Through His Word:** ⁶ **And he told this parable:**
- Fruit was expected: **"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and**

found none. // The “seeking” was not just once, *but over and over again!* And what was he seeking? *True repentance!*

- b. Time has run out: ⁷ **And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground [make it unproductive]?’** // God is *patient*, and during such times He expresses *much kindness* (Rom 2:4), *but His patience has an end!*
- c. Give it one more year: ⁸ **And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure.** // God exercises forbearance, *which is patient restraint* – thus one more year. Even though sin deserves *immediate condemnation*, He gives the unrepentant time to repent (2 Peter 3:9) – *but eventually that time will run out!*
- d. Live 🙌 or die 🙏: ⁹ **Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”** // Kenneth Bailey made this comment: “The vinedresser must act to save the tree and at the same time the tree must respond to those acts or they are of no avail” (CC, 536). For example, *God wants to work through His Word*; however, when people refuse His Word, *they are refusing His saving work in their lives!*

This Week’s Challenge: Since time is running out for all who are unrepentant – *not sorry and/or not trusting in Jesus*, how will you reach one such person with God’s life-changing Word?

Let Us Pray: Dear F, S, and HS, please keep working in our lives and help us to share Your saving truth with others!