

2020.3.29 Sunday Sermon <What Jesus Says At This Time> (Luke 13:1-9)

Scripture for the Sermon - Today's scripture is coming from **Luke 13:1-9**.

¹ Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." ⁶ Then 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. ⁷ 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. 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. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down."

Call to Worship - Prayer by Pastor Kim

Sermon - My loving brothers and sisters, I thank the Lord for keeping us safe for the past week and allowing us to give this worship. Wherever we may be, let us hear His voice and glorify His name. Just as the fish cannot live without the water, we cannot live without the grace of our Father. Especially during these dark moments, we truly need His grace. I pray that His grace will be with everyone and every family members of this church.

Now, let's look at the first verse from today's scripture -

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

To get a better sense of the timeline, we can refer to previous chapter (**Luke 12** Interpreting the Times) and look at the last few verses.

⁵⁴ "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does. ⁵⁵ And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is. ⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? ⁵⁷ "Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸ As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled on the way, or your adversary may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

On His journey to Jerusalem, Jesus was talking to the crowd and providing a glimpse of the coming days. Right at this moment, few people provide a report about the cruel ruler Pontius Pilate killing Galileans. Apparently those making this report were looking for Jesus to offer some explanation of why bad things happen to normal people—in this case even while they were worshiping. The nuance of the report was that extraordinary tragedy in some way must signify extraordinary guilt. They were assuming that the victims must have done something terrible for God to allow something so tragic to happen to them.

After hearing this report, Jesus responds to them that the tragedy suffered by the victims were not related to their relative sinfulness. Let's carefully learn more about Jesus' explanation through Luke 13 and how we can apply His teachings to our current environment.

Key Point #1 - Realize (Verse 2)

- What should we realize? Jesus answers the group of people reporting about Galileans in **Luke 13:2** -
² Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?
- Furthermore Jesus continues asking in **Luke 13:4** -
⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them - do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?
- Jesus then diverts the focus onto the interrogators - wanting them to realize their own sins and shortcomings .
- My brothers and sisters, when one realizes - one also receives the Father's grace. It is the grace from our Lord that allows us to realize and recognize we are all sinners.
- Once Paul received the grace from our Father, he realized all of his sins and weaknesses. Paul explains in the letters to different churches, before meeting the Lord, he thought he was great and strong, but only through the grace of God, he realizes that he is the weakest and sinful person.
- Let's look at the screen - this is yesterday's Covid-19 report from Johns Hopkins University. I narrowed the report to show the numbers for overall USA cases and you can also see the numbers for PA.
- This nation boasted on being one of the richest and strongest countries in the world. Yet, look at the numbers on this report - USA became the epicenter of the virus and has the highest confirmed cases in the world. This country lost the battle against this virus and look at us right now...we are not able to gather in this room together for Sunday worship.
- As we look back at the past week's news, we learn about sufferings of patients and those who lost their lives due to this virus. We have to realize, just because we are alive...it does not mean we are smarter or stronger.
- Every morning our family gives worship to the Lord, and while praising hymn 405 (Amazing Grace) I couldn't stop crying - (see lyrics below).

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.
Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.*

The fact that our Lord saved us, accepted us as His children, and provided us with amazing grace...all of the above should make us realize that we are sinners and we are weak without our Lord. We need to realize and be thankful to Him.

- After praising, the Lord gave our family following message from **Zechariah 1:16-17** -
¹⁶ "Therefore this is what the Lord says: 'I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,' declares the Lord Almighty. ¹⁷ "Proclaim further: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.'"

As Zechariah lead the people to rebuild the Temple, the Lord provided above words to strengthen him. I thank the Lord on providing these words during the family worship. He told me to share these words with you and just as He strengthen Zechariah...He will strengthen all of us and our church.

Key Point #2 - Repent (Verses 3 & 5)

- Let's us recite **Luke 13:3 & 5** together -
³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.
⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.
- Jesus repeats this message twice to tells us we *all* have sins and we must *all* repent.
- English Baptist Preacher Spurgeon once said we all have moments where we see ourselves as sinner. But we must remember, we are far worse than what we think or see ourselves. We have more sins than we think. Do you agree? You and I are far worse and are filled with sins. This is why Jesus is telling

the reports in today's scripture...you are *worse* sinners than those who were killed.

- Jesus shares many messages within the New Testament books. Let's look the first message from Matthew and the last message from Revelations -

Matthew 4:17 - *From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."*

Revelations 3:19 - *Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.*

In Revelations 3, Jesus instructs John to write the message to Church in Laodicea, which is one of the Seven Churches of Asia or also known as Seven Churches of the Apocalypse. The Laodiceans thought of themselves as confident, knowledgeable, and wealthy...but Jesus Christ is telling them to repent.

- As Christians and children of Jesus Christ, our lives will be filled with darkest moments. Please know and remember, God loves us. God loves this nation. God loves this church. Thus, He is providing discipline through these darkest moments, telling us to wake up and repent.
- If you earnestly repent - He will come to us, clothes us, feed us, and be our Father. My brothers and sisters, just as the father waits for the lost son...the Lord is also waiting for us. Let us take this week to pray and particularly look back on all of our wrong doings. Let us earnestly repent and come back to Him.
- Let us look at **Ezekiel 18:31** -

³¹ *Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel?*

The suffering we are currently going through is not caused by natural disaster. If we do not let go of our sins and renew our hearts, we can die physically, mentally, and spiritually.

- Let us also look at **Isaiah 55:7** -
*Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.*
Do you believe? As we hear these words and pray, let us truly come to Him and cry out to the Lord. This week, let us reach out and ask Him to renew all of us and this nation.
- There is a hymn (**177 - Fill Me Now**) with following words - let's all sing if you know the words.
*Hover o'er me, Holy Spirit, Bathe my trembling heart and brow;
Fill me with Thy hallowed presence, Come, oh, come and fill me now.
Fill me now, fill me now, Holy Spirit, fill me now;
Fill me with Thy hallowed presence, Come, oh, come, and fill me now.*

Let the Lord pour His Holy Spirit unto all of us - so that we may all earnestly ask for repentance.

Key Point #3 - Save Time (Verse 8 & 9)

- Let us look last two verses, where Jesus shares a parable -

⁸ *"Sir, 'the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it.*

⁹ *If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down. '"*

Fig trees takes several years to mature and produce fruits. After waiting for three years, there were no fruits. The owner of the vineyard wanted to cut down all the trees...but it was the caregiver who stops the owner and asks for one more year.

- Just like the fig trees, we all deserve to be taken by the Lord. We could have been one of the numbers represented on the confirmed case report. However, just as the caregiver requested for more time, Jesus Christ provided us with more time. Through His death and His grace, we are able to be here today.
- **Ephesians 5:16** tells us - *making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* This is telling us to earnestly request for opportunity. We should not take the given time for granted. One more day, one more worship, one more gathering...we should not take for granted.
- Before the virus, we never would have thought gathering at church on a Sunday would be this difficult. If we are allowed the opportunity to gather in this room, I believe we would take that moment in time as a blessing from our Lord. I truly miss all of you and I pray that the Lord will watch over us.

- We do not know how much time we have. We do not know if we may be one of the confirmed cases. After President Kennedy was assassinated, it was written in one of the magazines - *"He represented the young force and new frontier for this nation, but he just disappeared in front of us...You may be the next."*
- We truly do not know when our last days will be. We all need to prepare well for our entry to heaven.
- Let's look at an image of lotus flower. Lotus flower symbolizes purity. During these dark moments, we should not complain. As Jesus told us today...we need to realize, repent, and truly save time.
- Lastly, let's look at **Isaiah 33:2** - *Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress.* I pray that the Lord will be our savior, pouring His blessings, and truly waiting for us to come back. Let us all pray.