

Sunday School Lesson

Luke 13-14: The Cost of Discipleship (December 4, 2022)

## **The Teachings of Jesus**

### **Sin and Suffering**

Does sin cause suffering? Read **Luke 13:1-5**.

*There were some present at that very time who told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered thus? <sup>3</sup> I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Silo'am fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."*

This is a report of some murdered Galileans and 18 people killed by a falling tower. Did God send them suffering? No! God does not send suffering. That is a result of living in a fallen and broken world. Life is not fair. Read **Ecclesiastes 9:11**.

*Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all.*

Also, from Matthew 5:45 "for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

### **Compassion and Forbearance**

It is natural to make an initial judgment based on first appearances. But what does Jesus say about this? Read **Luke 13:6-9**.

*<sup>6</sup> And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> And he said to the vinedresser, 'Lo, these three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down; why should it use up the ground?' <sup>8</sup> And he answered him, 'Let it alone, sir, this year also, till I dig about it and put on manure. <sup>9</sup> And if it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"*

Jesus says to give it time; don't be hasty in your judgment. Our God is the God of second chances and slow to punish. Remember Jonah, who tried to avoid going to Nineveh? God didn't punish him outright, but gave him a second chance to carry out his mission. Only after a full chance to perform properly, **THEN** make your decision to continue or discard.

## Healing on the Sabbath

This introduction is followed by two cases in which Jesus healed on the Sabbath. Jews had a very strict interpretation of resting on the Sabbath and severely limiting anything that could be construed as “work.” Read **Luke 13:10-17**.

<sup>10</sup> Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. <sup>11</sup> And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. <sup>12</sup> And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.” <sup>13</sup> And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. <sup>14</sup> But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.” <sup>15</sup> Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? <sup>16</sup> And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” <sup>17</sup> As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

This is the last recorded time that Jesus taught in a synagogue, or that He even was in one. Note that the woman praised God, not Jesus.

Jesus follows this with another healing, and starts this one with the question on the Pharisees’ minds: how much is permissible on the Sabbath? Read **Luke 14:1-6**.

One sabbath when he went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisees, they were watching him. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. <sup>3</sup> And Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?” <sup>4</sup> But they were silent. Then he took him and healed him, and let him go. <sup>5</sup> And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son[a] or an ox that has fallen into a well, will not immediately pull him out on a sabbath day?” <sup>6</sup> And they could not reply to this.

Jesus’ critics were silent because their “rules” would forbid help on the Sabbath, but the crowd would see them as cold-hearted. You have lost your compassion in your rules!

## Parables Describing God’s Kingdom

- a) Like a mustard seed. Read **Luke 13:18-19**.

<sup>18</sup> He said therefore, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? <sup>19</sup> It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”

Jesus’ point?

The tiniest seed can become a big tree – the Word planted can spread wondrously.

- b) Like leaven (yeast). Read **Luke 13:20-21**.

<sup>20</sup> And again he said, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? <sup>21</sup> It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

Jesus' point? \_\_\_\_\_ Though hidden, it permeates everything. \_\_\_\_\_

### Parables for our behavior:

a) The narrow gate.

<sup>23</sup> And some one said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, <sup>24</sup> "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. <sup>25</sup> When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us.' He will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' <sup>26</sup> Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' <sup>27</sup> But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity!' <sup>28</sup> There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out. <sup>29</sup> And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God. <sup>30</sup> And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last." – Luke 13:23-30

Jesus' point? \_\_\_\_\_ In any pursuit, to be good you have to be committed (rehearse, practice, etc.); in this case, put "God things" first and committed to practice those most often. \_\_\_\_\_

b) The wedding guests.

<sup>7</sup> Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, <sup>8</sup> "When you are invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; <sup>9</sup> and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. <sup>10</sup> But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. <sup>11</sup> For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." – Luke 14:7-11

Jesus' point? \_\_\_\_\_ Humility above esteem. \_\_\_\_\_

c) Giving a dinner. Read **Luke 14:12-14**.

<sup>12</sup> He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. <sup>13</sup> But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

Jesus' point? \_\_\_\_\_ True hospitality does not expect reciprocity. \_\_\_\_\_

## The Cost of Discipleship

What does it take to be a true disciple of Christ's? Read **Luke 14:25-33**.

<sup>25</sup> Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Wow! That really sounds intimidating and daunting!

- The Aramaic word used for "hate" more closely means "to love a great deal less."
- This is a lot easier if you take on the perspective that all things, including your very life, are not really yours; they are all gifts from God. You weren't born with them, and you can't take them with you when you die. You are just the steward of those gifts.
- Jesus is not saying that wealth and material things are inherently bad; but, they must not take the highest priority in your life. You are the steward and you are expected to employ those gifts in God's service.
- Do NOT rush into discipleship; thoroughly analyze the costs (changes in your friends, activities, even lifestyle). But, also, can you afford not to follow His lead?

### Summary:

- This life is not fair.
- We should not be quick to judge and dismiss; rather be compassionate and patient.
- And, when there is an opportunity to be compassionate, take it! Our "rules are secondary to the well-being of God's children."<sup>1</sup>
- "Our message to the world is that we are loved and forgiven."<sup>2</sup>
- Remain humble and hospitable.
- You are a steward; how are you using what you have been entrusted with?

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<sup>1</sup> Larson, Luke, p.219.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 224.

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Reading Assignments:

<b>1. Luke 13:1-5</b>	<b>2. Ecclesiastes 9:11</b>
<b>3. Luke 13:6-9</b>	<b>4. Luke 13:10-17</b>
<b>5. Luke 14:1-6</b>	<b>6. Luke 13:18-19</b>
<b>7. Luke 13:20-21</b>	<b>8. Luke 14:12-14</b>
<b>9. Luke 14:25-33</b>	<b>10.</b>