

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

4-2-25

Luke 13

Repent or Perish – Verses 1-5

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.”

13:1-5 Pilate may have killed the Galileans because he thought they were rebelling against Rome; those killed by the tower in Siloam may have been working for the Romans on an aqueduct there. The Pharisees, who were opposed to using force to deal with Rome, would have said that the Galileans killed by Pilate deserved to die for rebelling. The Zealots, a group of anti-Roman terrorists, would have said the aqueduct workers deserved to die for cooperating. Jesus dismissed the idea that accidents or human cruelties were God’s judgment on especially bad sinners. Neither the Galileans nor the workers should be blamed for their calamities. Whether a person is killed in a tragic accident or miraculously survives is not a measure of righteousness. Everyone has to die. Jesus did not explain why some live and some die tragically; instead he pointed to everyone’s need for repentance. No matter how or when it occurs, death is not the end. Jesus promises that those who believe in him will “not perish but have eternal life” (John 3: 16).

Jesus Illustrates Some Principles Regarding God’s Judgment – Verses 6-9

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.’”

13:6-9 In the Old Testament, a fruitful tree was often used as a symbol of godly living (see, for example, Psalm 1:3 and Jeremiah 17:7-8). Jesus pointed out what would happen to the other kind of tree—the kind that took valuable time and space and still produced nothing for the patient gardener. By this illustration Jesus warned his listeners that God would not tolerate forever their lack of productivity. (Luke 3:9 records John the Baptist’s version of the same message.) Have you been enjoying God’s special treatment without giving anything in return? If so, respond to the Gardener’s patient care, and begin to bear the fruit God has created you to produce.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath – Verses 10-13

¹⁰ On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, ¹¹ and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set

free from your infirmity.” ¹³ Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

13:10-13 Why was healing considered work? The religious leaders saw healing as part of a doctor’s profession, and practicing one’s profession on the Sabbath was prohibited. The synagogue leader could not see beyond the law to Jesus’ compassion in healing this handicapped woman. Jesus shamed him and the other leaders by pointing out their hypocrisy. They would untie their animals and care for them, but they refused to rejoice when a human being was freed from Satan’s bondage.

Jesus Responds To The Angry Ruler Of The Synagogue – Verses 14-17

¹⁴ Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.” ¹⁵ The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? ¹⁶ Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?” ¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

13:14-17 In our fallen world, disease and disability are common. Their causes are many and often multiple— inadequate nutrition, contact with a source of infection, lowered defenses, and even direct attack by Satan. Whatever the immediate cause of our illness, we can trace its original source to Satan, the author of all the evil in our world. The Good News is that Jesus is more powerful than the devil or any disease. He often brings physical healing in this life; and when he returns, he will put an end to all disease and disability.

The Parables Of The Mustard Seed And The Yeast – Verses 18-21

¹⁸ Then Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? ¹⁹ It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.” ²⁰ Again he asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? ²¹ It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

13:18-21 The general expectation among Jesus’ hearers was that the Messiah would come as a great king and leader, freeing the nation from Rome and restoring Israel’s former glory. But Jesus said his kingdom was beginning quietly. Like the tiny mustard seed that grows into an enormous tree, or the spoonful of yeast that makes the bread dough double in size, the kingdom of God would eventually push outward until the whole world was changed.

The Narrow Door – Verses 22-27

²² Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. ²³ Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?” He said to them, ²⁴ “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. ²⁵ Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ “But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’ ²⁶ “Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ ²⁷ “But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’

13:22 This is the second time Luke reminds us that Jesus was intentionally going to Jerusalem (the other time is in 9:51). Jesus knew he was on his way to die, but he continued preaching to large crowds. The prospect of death did not deter Jesus from his mission.

13:24-25 Finding salvation requires more concentrated effort than most people are willing to put forth. Obviously we cannot save ourselves—there is no way we can work ourselves into God’s favor. We “make every effort to enter through the narrow door” by earnestly desiring to know Jesus and diligently striving to follow him whatever the cost. We dare not put off making this decision because the door will not stay open forever.

13:26-27 The people were eager to know who would be in God’s kingdom. Jesus explained that, although many people know something about God, only a few have acknowledged their sins and accepted his forgiveness. We may not necessarily see the people we expect to find in the kingdom of God. Some perfectly respectable religious leaders claiming allegiance to Jesus will not be there because they were not true followers and secretly were morally corrupt. Just listening to Jesus’ words or admiring his miracles is not enough. We must turn from sin and trust in God to save us.

The Destiny Of Those Who Don’t Strive To Enter – Verses 28-30

²⁸ **“There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. ²⁹ People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. ³⁰ Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”**

13:28-29 God’s kingdom will include people from every part of the world. Israel’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah would not stop God’s plan. True Israel includes all people who believe in Christ. This was an important fact for Luke to stress as he was directing his Gospel to a Gentile audience (see also Romans 4:16-25; Galatians 3:6-9).

13:30 God’s kingdom will have many surprises. Some who are despised now will be greatly honored then; some influential people here will be left outside the gates. Many “great” people on this earth (in God’s eyes) are virtually ignored by the rest of the world. What matters to God is not a person’s earthly popularity, status, wealth, heritage, or power but his or her commitment to Christ. How do your values match those of the Bible? Put God in first place, and you will join people from all over the world who will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus Continues His Work Despite A Threat From Herod – Verses 31-33

³¹ **At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.” ³² He replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ ³³ In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!**

13:31-33 The Pharisees weren’t interested in protecting Jesus from danger; they were trying to trap him themselves. The Pharisees urged Jesus to leave because they wanted to stop him from going to Jerusalem, not because they feared Herod. But Jesus’ life, work, and death would not be determined by Herod or the Pharisees. His life was planned and directed by God himself, and his mission would unfold in God’s time and according to God’s plan.

13:33 Why was Jesus focusing on Jerusalem? Jerusalem, the city of God, symbolized the entire nation. It was Israel's largest city and the nation's spiritual and political capital; Jews from around the world frequently visited it. But Jerusalem had a history of rejecting God's prophets (1 Kings 19:10; 2 Chronicles 24:19; Jeremiah 2:30; 26:20-23). It would reject the Messiah, just as it had rejected his forerunners.

Jesus Laments Over The City That Will Reject Him – Verses 34-35

³⁴ “**Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.** ³⁵ **Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’**”

13:34-35 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem: Jesus spoke with special feeling, repeating the name for emphasis and depth. When God repeats a name twice, it is to display deep emotion, but not necessarily anger (as in the Martha, Martha of Luke 10:41 and the Saul, Saul of Acts 9:4). This deep love Jesus had for Jerusalem was with full knowledge of the city's sins: the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. Despite that, He still pleaded with the city to turn from the destruction that would come upon it.

13:34-35 How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings: Jesus wanted to protect, nourish, and cherish His people the Jews, even as a mother bird protects the young chicks. This picture of a hen and her brood tells us something about what Jesus wanted to do for these who rejected Him. He wanted to make them safe - He wanted to make them happy - He wanted to make them part of a blessed community - He wanted to promote their growth - He wanted them to know His love. This could only happen if they came to Him when He called. But you were not willing! The problem was not the willingness of Jesus to rescue and protect them; the problem was that they were not willing. Therefore the predicted destruction would come upon them.