

BE FRUIT BEARING LIVES

Luke 13:1-9

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

The faithful are killed as they gather to worship. A construction project gone horribly wrong, crushes its builders as they work. Two thousand years ago, just as is so often the case today, the fingers of those left standing in the aftermath of horrific circumstance point toward the victims. "Why did this happen? Surely the behavior of those victims *must* have displeased God!

Why? Perhaps because what we seldom vocalize, but internally hold in tension is this: "*If* they didn't cause this, *if* this happened because life is an uncertain, fragile, fleeting thing, then this could happen to me. BUT, *if* their sin is at fault and I am "*saved*" then that must also mean that I am "*safe*." God will bless me even as he condemned those others." But Jesus tells us "NO." The worshipers were "not more sinful", the builders were not "more guilty of wrongdoing" than anyone else. "NO!" The survivors are not more righteous or blessed because they escaped calamity.

Sometimes sin influences the choices that cause tragedy. A drunk driver takes a life, a shooter takes aim in a crowded theater. Sometimes tragedy strikes randomly. Cancer ravages a body, fire or flood ravages a town. God's will? Of course not! The fragility of life is not God's whipping tool but it should certainly be a reminder that our time is limited.

To face this uncertainty Jesus calls us to live lives of repentance, to live every day as forgiven people. In the story of the fig tree in the vineyard, Jesus tells us of a God who wants to give us every chance to repent. A God whose purpose is not to cut us down but to nurture and encourage us to live joy filled, fruit bearing lives. Jesus offers us a repentance based on hope not fear.

Prayer: Nurturing God, Daily I repent and seek to serve you as a child forgiven. In those moments when fear of the unknowable entangles my spirit, free me, Lord to grow in your grace and love. And when my days in this life are ended, allow me Lord to step with assurance into your eternal presence, a child loved and redeemed. Amen.

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