

ST JOSEPH THE WORKER
 ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



LUKE 13

Repentance, Healing, and the Kingdom's Growth:

Luke 13 underscores the pressing call for personal repentance, the transformative power of Christ's healing, and the surprising and expansive nature of the Kingdom of God. It reminds us that following Jesus requires more than superficial connections, urging sincere commitment and readiness to enter through the narrow door of faith and obedience. Above all, Jesus' lament over Jerusalem serves as a solemn reminder of the tragic consequences of rejecting God's saving work.

Verses 1-5: Call to Repentance

In response to questions about the culpability of Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with sacrifices, and those killed by a falling tower, Jesus emphasizes the need for personal repentance to avoid perishing.

Verses 6-9: The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

Jesus tells a parable about a fruitless fig tree, illustrating God's patience and the urgent need for repentance.

Verses 10-17: Healing on the Sabbath

Jesus heals a crippled woman in the synagogue on the Sabbath, facing opposition from the synagogue leader. He defends His action, arguing for compassion over legalistic observance.

Verses 18-21: The Parables of the Mustard Seed and Yeast

Jesus uses parables of a mustard seed and yeast to depict the small beginnings and expansive growth of the Kingdom of God.

Verses 22-30: The Narrow Door

Jesus answers a question about who will be saved, teaching about the narrow door to the Kingdom and warning that many who presume they will enter will be left outside.

Verses 31-35: Lament over Jerusalem

Despite Pharisees warning Him about Herod's plot to kill Him, Jesus continues His mission, lamenting over Jerusalem's rejection of prophets and their forthcoming desolation.

Luke 13 provides a vivid exploration of Jesus' teachings and activities, as He calls people to repentance, provides healing, and elaborates on the nature of the Kingdom of God. This chapter further highlights the mounting opposition to Jesus, and His lament over Jerusalem's impending doom.

Themes

Repentance and Judgement
 Healing and Deliverance
 The Kingdom of God
 Rejection and Acceptance

Topics

Call to Repentance
 The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree
 Healing on the Sabbath
 The Parables of the Mustard Seed and Yeast
 The Narrow Door
 Lament over Jerusalem

People

Jesus
 The People
 The Crippled Woman
 The Synagogue Leader
 Herod
 The Pharisees

Locations

The Place Where Jesus Was Teaching
 The Synagogue
 Jerusalem

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Luke 13

A Call to Repentance.

1 At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices.

2 He said to them in reply,

“Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way, they were greater sinners than all other Galileans?”

3 By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!

4 Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem?

5 By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!”

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.

6 And he told them this parable:

“There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none,

7 he said to the gardener, ‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. [So] cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?’

8 He said to him in reply, ‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it;

9 it may bear fruit in the future. If not, you can cut it down.’”

[13:1–5] The death of the Galileans at the hands of Pilate (Lk 13:1) and the accidental death of those on whom the tower fell (Lk 13:4) are presented by the Lucan Jesus as timely reminders of the need for all to repent, for the victims of these tragedies should not be considered outstanding sinners who were singled out for punishment.

[13:1] The slaughter of the Galileans by Pilate is unknown outside Luke; but from what is known about Pilate from the Jewish historian Josephus, such a slaughter would be in keeping with the character of Pilate. Josephus reports that Pilate had disrupted a religious gathering of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim with a slaughter of the participants (Antiquities 18:86–87), and that on another occasion Pilate had killed many Jews who had opposed him when he appropriated money from the temple treasury to build an aqueduct in Jerusalem (Jewish War 2:175–77; Antiquities 18:60–62).

[13:4] Like the incident mentioned in Lk 13:1 nothing of this accident in Jerusalem is known outside Luke and the New Testament.

[13:6–9] Following on the call to repentance in Lk 13:1–5, the parable of the barren fig tree presents a story about the continuing patience of God with those who have not yet given evidence of their repentance (see Lk 3:8). The parable may also be alluding to the delay of the end time, when punishment will be meted out, and the

Cure of a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath.

10 He was teaching in a synagogue on the sabbath.

11 And a woman was there who for eighteen years had been crippled by a spirit; she was bent over, completely incapable of standing erect.

12 When Jesus saw her, he called to her and said,

“**Woman, you are set free of your infirmity.**”

13 He laid his hands on her, and she at once stood up straight and glorified God.

14 But the leader of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the sabbath, said to the crowd in reply, “There are six days when work should be done. Come on those days to be cured, not on the sabbath day.”

15 The Lord said to him in reply, “**Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it out for watering?**”

16 **This daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years now, ought she not to have been set free on the sabbath day from this bondage?**”

17 When he said this, all his adversaries were humiliated; and the whole crowd rejoiced at all the splendid deeds done by him.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed.

18 Then he said, “**What is the kingdom of God like? To what can I compare it?**”

19 **It is like a mustard seed that a person took and planted in the garden. When it was fully grown, it became a large bush and ‘the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches.’**”

The Parable of the Yeast.

20 Again he said, “**To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?**”

21 **It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed [in] with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch of dough was leavened.**”

The Narrow Door; Salvation and Rejection.

22 He passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem.

23 Someone asked him, “Lord, will only a few people be saved?” He answered them,

24 **“Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough.**

25 **After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, ‘Lord, open the door for us.’ He will say to you in reply, ‘I do not know where you**

importance of preparing for the end of the age because the delay will not be permanent (Lk 13:8–9).

[13:10–17] The cure of the crippled woman on the sabbath and the controversy that results furnishes a parallel to an incident that will be reported by Luke in 14:1–6, the cure of the man with dropsy on the sabbath. A characteristic of Luke’s style is the juxtaposition of an incident that reveals Jesus’ concern for a man with an incident that reveals his concern for a woman; cf., e.g., Lk 7:11–17 and Lk 8:49–56.

[13:15–16] If the law as interpreted by Jewish tradition allowed for the untying of bound animals on the sabbath, how much more should this woman who has been bound by Satan’s power be freed on the sabbath from her affliction.

[13:16] Whom Satan has bound: affliction and infirmity are taken as evidence of Satan’s hold on humanity. The healing ministry of Jesus reveals the gradual wresting from Satan of control over humanity and the establishment of God’s kingdom.

[13:18–21] Two parables are used to illustrate the future proportions of the kingdom of God that will result from its deceptively small beginning in the preaching and healing ministry of Jesus. They are paralleled in Mt 13:31–33 and Mk 4:30–32.

[13:22–30] These sayings of Jesus follow in Luke upon the parables of the kingdom (Lk 13:18–21) and stress that great effort is required for entrance into the kingdom

(Lk 13:24) and that there is an urgency to accept the present opportunity to enter because the narrow door will not remain open indefinitely (Lk 13:25). Lying behind the sayings is the rejection of Jesus and his message by his Jewish contemporaries

are from.’

26 And you will say, ‘We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.’

27 Then he will say to you, ‘I do not know where [you] are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers!’

28 And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out.

29

And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God.

30 For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

Herod’s Desire to Kill Jesus.

31 At that time some Pharisees came to him and said, “Go away, leave this area because Herod wants to kill you.”

32 He replied, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and I perform healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I accomplish my purpose.

33 Yet I must continue on my way today, tomorrow, and the following day, for it is impossible that a prophet should die outside of Jerusalem.’

The Lament over Jerusalem.

34 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were unwilling!

35 Behold, your house will be abandoned. [But] I tell you, you will not see me until [the time comes when] you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

(Lk 13:26) whose places at table in the kingdom will be taken by Gentiles from the four corners of the world (Lk 13:29). Those called last (the Gentiles) will precede those to whom the invitation to enter was first extended (the Jews). See also Lk 14:15–24.

[13:32] Nothing, not even Herod’s desire to kill Jesus, stands in the way of Jesus’ role in fulfilling God’s will and in establishing the kingdom through his exorcisms and healings.

[13:33] It is impossible that a prophet should die outside of Jerusalem: Jerusalem is the city of destiny and the goal of the journey of the prophet Jesus. Only when he reaches the holy city will his work be accomplished.

Bible Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' teaching on the need for personal repentance speak to the concept of individual responsibility in spiritual matters?
2. What does the parable of the barren fig tree teach about God's patience and judgment?
3. How does Jesus' healing on the Sabbath challenge legalistic attitudes towards religious observance?
4. What do the parables of the mustard seed and yeast reveal about the nature and growth of God's Kingdom?
5. How does Jesus' teaching on the narrow door shape our understanding of salvation and commitment to God?
6. How does Jesus' lament over Jerusalem reflect His heart for the lost?
7. How might the healing of the crippled woman on the Sabbath challenge our perspectives on observing religious traditions?
8. How can we apply the lessons from the parable of the barren fig tree in our personal lives?
9. What does the parable of the mustard seed teach us about the potential impact of small acts of faithfulness?
10. How does the parable of the yeast inspire us to be leavened in the world for God's Kingdom?
11. How does Jesus' teaching on the narrow door challenge the concept of 'cheap grace' or easy-believism?
12. How can we respond to Jesus' lament over Jerusalem in our own contexts and communities?
13. How does Jesus' response to the Pharisees' warning reveal His determination to fulfill His mission?
14. How can we cultivate a sense of urgency in response to Jesus' call to repentance?
15. How can the healing of the crippled woman inspire us in our ministries of compassion and healing?
16. How can the growth patterns of the mustard seed and yeast guide our expectations and efforts in kingdom work?
17. What lessons about persistence and humility can we learn from Jesus' teaching on the narrow door?
18. How does Jesus' lament over Jerusalem motivate us to intercede for our cities and nations?
19. How can Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees regarding Herod inspire us to courageously fulfill our mission?
20. How does the theme of repentance in this chapter challenge us to regularly examine our hearts and lives?