

Luke 13:1-9
Unless You Repent

Introduction: We see in this section Jesus' fourth encounter with the Jews. This concludes the teaching that began back in 12:1. Here He reminds them of the necessity to repent of their sin and turn in faith to Jesus alone as the only God-given solution to their sin.

We all, without exception, must repent or face certain danger—13:1-5

- 1) Referring to today's headline concerning a violent act against people from the North—13:1
 - a) ¹ *Now there were some present at that time who informed Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices.*
 - i) This violence was a deliberate act of Pilate's will. Nothing specific recorded in secular history, but it is consistent with other accounts.
 - ii) Recognizing that Jesus came from Galilee and presuming His sympathies would be with the Galileans. Would His patriotism win out? (Pentecost)
 - iii) How much more ready people are to talk of the deaths of others than their own. (Ryle)
 - b) ² *And having responded, Jesus said to them,*
 - i) With a question about the tragedy—13:2 *“Do you^{pl} suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered these things?*
(1) A natural conclusion to which we are too easily inclined.
 - ii) With a warning about the ultimate danger—13:3 ³ *No, I tell you^{pl}, but if (3rd class condition, possible) you^{pl} do not repent, you^{pl} will all perish as well.*
(1) Too often we are inclined to think that the absence of tragedy in our own life is evidence of God's approval. (Bock)
- 2) Referring to yesterday's news concerning an event that occurred to people in the capital city in the South—13:4-5
 - a) With a question—13:4 ⁴ *Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you^{pl} suppose that **they** (emphatic) were worse offenders than all the other people who inhabit Jerusalem?*
 - i) This was simply an accident, interpreted as a matter of bad luck or fate, or even God's judgment.
 - b) With a warning—13:5 ⁵ *No, I tell you^{pl}, but if (3rd class condition, possible) you^{pl} do not repent, you^{pl} will all perish as well.”*
 - i) The circumstances of our death make no difference. Our sin has placed us all in danger.
- 3) Spiritual indifference concerning getting right with God through Jesus Christ is dangerous.

God patiently expects us all to display evidence of repentance in our lives—13:6-9

- 1) The situation of fruitlessness—13:6 ⁶ *“A certain man ...*

- a) *had a fig tree planted in his vineyard,*
 - b) *and he came seeking fruit on it*
 - c) *and found none.*
- 2) The owner's response—13:7 ⁷ *So he said to the gardener,*
- a) Displeasure at its fruitlessness—*'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none.*
 - i) The tree would be at least 6 years old because fig trees take a minimum of 3 years before they begin to bear fruit. Enough time has passed for the owner's expectations to be legitimate. Like Jesus and His ministry.
 - b) Determination for destruction—*Cut it down!*
 - c) Recognition of its negative impacts on others—*Why does it make the ground unproductive?*
 - i) Such trees take the nutrients out of the soil that are needed by other plants.
 - d) Israel should have repented long before this.
- 3) The gardener's response to the owner—13:8-9
- a) One more year—13:8 ⁸ *But having responded, he said, 'Sir,*
 - i) Do what? *tolerate it this year also,*
 - ii) For how long? *until I dig around it* (to help with moisture) *and put on fertilizer/manure* (to help with nutrition);
 - (1) Curious because fig trees don't normally need manure.
 - b) There are only two possibilities—13:9
 - i) Positively—13:9a ⁹ *and if* (3rd class condition, possible), *on the one hand, it bears fruit* (emphatic) *next year, fine;*
 - ii) Negatively—*but if not* (1st class condition, assume true for the sake of argument), *on the other hand, you can cut it down.*"
 - c) God gives Israel an additional 6 months before His judgment falls on His Son at the cross. The point is that the time left to repent is short and the prospect of their doing so is not good. (Bock)
 - d) God gives Israel an additional 37 years until their destruction in 70 AD.
- 4) God's patience with the unrepentant does come to an end. He is a patient God and gives people ample opportunity to repent. But we never know when that patience will run out.
- 5) Tragedy is hard and life is short. But life is more tragic if one does not turn to God. (Bock)

Take-home truth: repent while there is still time