

Ripped from the Headlines

Luke 13:1–9

1. **Two Tragic Events**
2. **Conventional Wisdom**
3. **Jesus' Response**
4. **A Story**

The Application:

For the Family:

Read together Luke 13:6–9 – *The Fruitless Fig Tree*

Explain the picture. There is a fig tree planted in a vineyard which is not producing any fruit. The owner of the vineyard wants it dug up and thrown away. The vinedresser asks that the tree be given one more year. He will help the tree by putting manure around it. After a year, if the tree produces fruit, then they will let it alone. If it doesn't produce fruit by that time, then it will be dug up and thrown away.

The owner in this story represents justice. Since the tree does not produce fruit, it should be dug up and thrown away.

The vinedresser represents mercy. The tree should be allowed a second chance and some help to produce fruit.

Use this example: Suppose you told your child to clean their room or they would lose screen time (or some other privilege). Later when you checked, they hadn't done it yet. Justice says they need to be punished. Mercy says they could be offered a second chance.

As a parent you have a choice: justice or mercy. Or you could combine justice with mercy by offering a new deadline: Get it cleaned by dinner, or lose screen time. The punishment stands, but they have additional time to get it done. You might even offer to help them.

Explain that this is how God works. The wrong choices we make need to be punished. But through Jesus, we are offered a second chance. God expects us to make good choices, and he will help us do that. When we make a bad choice, we need to ask God to forgive us and give us a second chance to make the right choice.

Pray together, asking God for forgiveness when you make a bad choice and for a second chance to make the right choice. Thank him for being a just and loving God. Tell him you want to honor him by making good choices.