

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.



The Journey of Discipleship
Luke 9-19

Ripped From the Headlines

Luke 13:1-9

Our Story So Far – Luke 9:51-12:59

- Jesus sets his face to go to Jerusalem and fulfill his mission.
- He sends messengers into Samaria, who are rejected.
- He sends out 72 missionaries, who return with stories of their authority over demons.
- The parable of The Good Samaritan shows that loving your neighbor means helping those who are in need.
- Mary sits at Jesus' feet like a disciple, showing that loving God includes listening to him.
- Jesus gives his disciples a model prayer, and teaches them to be persistent in prayer.
- After driving out a demon from a mute man, Jesus challenges those who doubt his power or want to see more signs.
- Jesus confronts some Pharisees and lawyers, accusing them of hypocrisy and burdening people with legalism.
- Jesus warns his disciples against hypocrisy. He exhorts them to acknowledge him before others, and promises the Holy Spirit will help them face persecution.
- Jesus warns his disciples against greed or worry.

Last Week: Jesus warns his disciples to be ever watchful and prepared for his return. As servants waiting for their master to return, they are to keep vigilant, despite any delay. Like a thief, Jesus will arrive on an unexpected hour. He encourages his disciples to settle their accounts, before it is too late.

This Week's Story: Luke 13:1-9

Read Luke 13:1-9 and discuss the following questions:

Two Tragedies **1-5**

What is the chief cause of the first tragedy? (1)

What is the chief cause of the second tragedy? (4)

What conventional wisdom does Jesus reject? (2, 4)

How does Jesus apply the tragedies in a new way? (3, 5)

How can tragedies help us re-focus and re-prioritize our lives?

According to Jesus, how should we respond when we see tragedy around us?

Read John 9:1-12 – The Healing of the Man Born Blind

What is the assumption behind the leading question? (2)

What does Jesus think about the man's situation? (3-5)

Why do you think Jesus makes mud to put on the man's eyes? (6)

How would you describe the man's testimony? (11-12)

Read John 9:13-34 – The Pharisees Investigate

What convinces some of the Pharisees to oppose Jesus? (16)

What question nags at some of the other Pharisees? (16)

Why do they question the man's parents? (18-19)

How did the parents respond? (20-23)

What fear affects their response?

Trace the development of the man's thinking about Jesus:

Vss. 11-12

Vs. 17

Vs. 25

Vs. 27

Vs. 33

Contrast that with the thinking of the Pharisees:

Vs. 16

Vss. 18-19

Vs. 24

Vss. 28-29

Vs. 34

Read John 9:35-41 – Jesus Encounters the Man

Why does Jesus wait until now to fully present himself?

How is the man able to finally affirm Jesus as Lord?

How does verse 39 illustrate the chapter?

How is your spiritual sight? 20-20? 20-800?

Do you have any blind spots? Why?

What would correct them?

The Fruitless Fig Tree **6-9**

What is the problem with the fig tree?

What is the owner's solution?

What is the vinedresser's solution?

Read 2 Peter 3:8-15

What is the reason for God's patience? (vss. 9, 13, 15)

How should we live in light of this? (vss. 11, 14)

Where are you in your journey with the Lord in terms of:

..... *holiness and godliness*

..... *without spot or blemish*

..... *being at peace*

If you had one more year to change your life, what would you do?

What "fruit" would you like to be producing a year from now?

Next Steps:

- When trials come, I will use them to contemplate the frailness of life and the certainty of eternity.
- Rather than judging others, I will see other people's tragedy through the lens of eternity rather than the lens of judgment.
- I will make sure to spiritually till and fertilize the ground of my life in order to bear fruit for Christ, by repenting of sin, evaluating my priorities and praying for others.

Memory Verse – Luke 13:5

No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.