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Will Baptist Church

Bob Bradley

Looking at Our Sin

CAMPBELL CHAPEL FWBC - SERMON

Looking at Our Sin

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Luke 13:1-10

- 1 *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*
- 2 *And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?*
- 3 *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*
- 4 *Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?*
- 5 *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*
- 6 *He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*
- 7 *Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why encumbereth it the ground?*
- 8 *And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it :*
- 9 *And if it bear fruit, well : and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*
- 10 *And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.*

This is a wonderful lesson for here tonight. Many times we have misunderstanding and thoughts that are not right about **suffering**. We will never, while we are on planet earth, figure out why people suffer, why children suffer, why good people suffer. We will never, while we are on planet earth figure that out. What happens sometimes is that we make wrong judgments towards people. We see people suffering and automatically say that it must be them because they have committed some horrible sin or something.

Jesus is going to tell us here that is not right.

I know that if we live as the world lives, and we use all the vice and activities of the world then there is a good possibility that we are going to suffer because of that. However, the thing is that **good people suffer** today. Tragedy happens to good people. **Tragedy happens to everyone** in every walk of life.

We don't understand things, or why things happen. Some of the greatest people I've ever known have died in tragedies. Things like that happen. Do we know why? We don't know why. We need to understand something. Before we start jumping on the band wagon and pointing our fingers at people saying that it is because of some horrible sin that they committed; we may want to rethink that just a little bit. It is not always like that at all.

Tragedy Comes

1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

When you read what is happening here, and when you read some of the historians—the Bible does not tell us all that happened here. The only thing it tells us is that there were some people here who were evidently in the temple worshiping. They were making their sacrifices unto Almighty God. Evidently, Pilate has had these people killed. Right here in the temple area, right here where they are worshiping Almighty God, right where they are making their sacrifices and giving their offerings to Almighty God; for whatever reason, Pilate has these guys killed. When the crowd was looking on, they knew this event very well; they came to Jesus.

Sinners above All?

Jesus had been teaching and preaching. They came to Him and tell Him this is what has happened. There were Jewish people here who were worshiping. Pilate has killed them and mixed their blood with their sacrifices. Do you know what their thought was? They said to Jesus, "These guys must have been sinners above all Galileans because they have suffered such things." Keep that thought in your mind because that is what is going on.

These guys had come here to worship. They had brought their sacrifices here. They had come here to worship Almighty God. Do you know what happened to them? They had been murdered. They had been slaughtered.

In our world today, even just a few weeks ago; we were watching on the news where they were having service and some idiot got up inside the service and pulled out a gun and killed a few people. I hope that we are smart enough to know that just because some of these things happen is not necessarily because of some sin that someone has done.

The Bible tells you and me that it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment. I don't know when we are going to leave here. I don't by what means that God is going to take me out. However, I do know one thing; I'm going to leave here one day. I say, "Glory to His name."

Do you know what people might say after we are gone? They might say all kinds of things. They might say that we were hoodlums. If we are eaten by a wild pack of dogs, they might say all kinds of things about us. However, that does not matter. The main thing is today; **"Are we living right? Are we living where the presence of God and the spirit of God are present in our life?"** If that is the case, then what does it matter by what means that we leave here? Does it matter? It does not matter at all. Let's don't

think that when people suffer tragedies and all kinds of horrible things happen to them; that is not the acid test that someone is living in sin.

Self-righteous

You see, the Jews here that were saying this were very self-righteous people. Self-righteousness exalts self. It runs everybody else down. It puts self up here on a pedestal and it puts everybody else way down here on the ground level.

The Bible says that these fellows said, *"These guys must have been sinners above all Galileans because they had suffered such things."* Jesus said, *"Suppose ye..."* Jesus could read their minds. He knew exactly what they were thinking. He said, *"That's what you guys were really saying. You guys are thinking in your minds that these guys must have been sinners above all the Galileans around here because they suffered these things."* He had a message for them. He looked them right straight in the face and He said, *"I'm going to tell you something. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*

5 I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

What we need to understand today is this. Do you know what Jesus said here? He said, *"I tell you nay."* That was not the case. These Galileans here that had died this tragic death, who had been murdered right in the temple area; they were not sinners above everybody else." Do you know why? It is because we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

If that was a test for us, that tragedy was going to happen, and then tragedy would happen unto us all. We all are sinners. There is none, there is not a man on this earth that doeth good and sinneth not. If we are going to say that everyone who dies a tragic death is a sinner then you had better dig a hole in the ground because you are about ready to leave here in a tragic way because we are all sinners. Truth? Every one of us is sinners. Some have been saved and some have not been saved, but we are sinners. We are saved by the grace of Almighty God.

These guys were saying in their hearts—Jesus could read their thoughts. He knew what they were thinking. Jesus said, *"You guys are thinking these Galileans are sinners above all Galileans upon the earth. I tell you nay."* In other words, that's not right. He says, *"Except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* You see, they were looking at these people as being sinners. They were looking at them as being really deep down, hard core, the greatest sinners that ever lived because of what they were suffering. However, Jesus said, *"Hey, you self-righteous guys think you are living above everybody else. If you don't repent, the same thing will happen to you."* That is really what He is saying in the Greek.

When we read it here in the English that we have, but when we read it in the Greek; do you know what it actually says? *"You guys are saying or supposing that these guys because they suffered this tragedy and have died; they must have been great sinners. No, that is not the case. However, I am telling you right now that except you repent the same thing is going to happen to you likewise."* Do you know what that is saying? *"If you guys don't straighten up, tragedy is coming to your door."*

Friend, that is very true in our lives. Do you know what we do many times? We get so critical of people sometimes and we want to look down our noses and think that we are better than they. We want to judge them. Please don't ever do that. You may have a job today. You may have a car today. You may have your bills paid today. Your kids may be healthy today. Everything may be going wonderful in your life today, and if it is then you need to praise God.

I'm going to tell you something that you don't need to be doing. Your neighbor that is not doing so good; you don't need to be talking about him that he is some kind of a scoundrel. Friend listen; that will get you in trouble very soon and very quickly. We want to make judgments against people, but the same yardstick that you judge your neighbor by is the same yardstick that God is going to judge you by. I would to God today that we would understand when we make judgments against people the same judgments we make against them; God is going to judge us the same way. These guys said, "These guys are sinners. These guys are horrible people because this tragedy has happened to them." However, Jesus said, "*If you don't repent, the same kind of tragedy is coming your way.*" That happens.

Tower Tragedy

The next thing He says here, He tells them about the tragedy here. Not only the murder that happened here in the temple, but the tragedy that happened as these construction men was working on a tower in and around the city of Jerusalem.

I don't know if you have ever worked on scaffolding or not, but sometimes that is not a very safe place to be. There are many accidents working off of scaffolding. [It is dangerous] even today with our modern technology, and all kinds of different stuff today for people work off of. These guys didn't have all that modern stuff back then. Do you know what happened? I don't know all the details that happened, but I know that there were 18 men that were working on a tower. The tower fell and 18 of them died. We understand that was a tragic day here.

I thought about today as their families and children, all the hurt and all the harm, and sorrow when the news came out that this tragedy had happened. I thought about a few years ago when we got the news about the coal miners that were trapped up in WV. We have got that news many different times about people who have died. You can just feel people's pain. You can look at their children, wives, and husbands and see all that they are going through. I can see what was going on here on this particular day. I can remember many times in my life when I have got bad news about someone dying, or someone who has perished; someone that has gone out. Do you know what it does? It breaks our heart. Do you know what Jesus said here? He said, "Do you think these 18 people who died in this tragedy were sinners above all the sinners that dwelt upon the face of the earth?" He said, "*I tell you nay. Except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*"

Repent

I would to God today that we would understand that we must repent. If our lives are going to be a life that is pleasing unto God, then we must change directions. We must **turn around**. That is what the

word “**repent**” means. What we need to do today is we need to repent. We need to **change directions** because judgment is coming.

Fig Tree

Look at this parable that He is going to teach something here. These fellows here were making their judgments against people who have been murdered. They were making judgments against people who had lost their life in a construction accident. Jesus looks at them here and says something. The Bible says:

6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

A few weeks ago, we talked about the fig tree just a little bit. A week or two ago we talked about Jesus cursing the fig tree. Do you remember that? We talked about that.

In this story here, the fig tree talked about is **Israel**. We know that Jesus is talking about Israel when He’s speaking these words. However, today I want us to look at that today, just a little bit on us. Put us in this story and see what we can learn from it.

This guy had a fig tree in his vineyard. He planted it there. It belongs unto him. We know that God is a very gracious God. When I look at the fig tree here, he has planted it in his own vineyard. It had plenty of good soil around it. It had every opportunity to bring forth fruit, just like all the other trees that were around it. There is no doubt in my mind the vineyard that he is talking about belongs to Almighty God. However, he plants a tree here and he is expecting fruit to come from it.

That is exactly what God expected from the nation of Israel. He expected them to bear fruit. However, God was a very patient God. Not only did He wait many, many years in the Old Testament, but He waited three and a half years while Jesus was ministering here. He waited forty years after that. Then there came a time when there was no fruit and then God sent judgment.

Before we get to that let’s look at something here. He had planted a vineyard. There was a fig tree in his vineyard. This vineyard belonged to him. This fig tree belonged to him. There was nothing wrong with the ground that was there. There was nothing necessarily wrong with the tree. However, listen to what happens. The Bible says:

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why encumbereth it the ground?

In other words, the fellow that took care of the ground comes unto him and he said these words.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why encumbereth it the ground?

Do you know what happens here? The guy that owns the vineyard and the fig tree comes to the vine dresser and says this. He says “*I have come here three years looking for fruit upon this tree and I don’t*

find anything here. Just cut it down. There is no use for it to be here. There is no use for it to even be here because it is not producing any fruit."

Bringing Forth Fruit

Listen. This is something tonight that I want to talk about. Many times in our lives, we want to say and blame God for all kinds of things. **Do you know what God wants in my life and in your life? He wants us to bring forth fruit.**

Jesus Christ has died upon Calvary. He has shed His precious blood. He died on that precious day. He was buried, but He arose that you and I might bring forth fruit. There is nothing wrong with Him. There is nothing wrong with what He has done.

Do you know where the problem is at today? It is with me and with you. The reason that we are not bearing fruit is not God's fault. God loves us. God has planted us in good ground. He has blessed us and given us every opportunity to bring forth fruit. **Why aren't we bringing forth any fruit?** Isn't that a good question? That is a good question.

If we are not bringing forth any fruit, then why aren't we? If we say that we are saved and we don't bring forth any fruit; then we are really saying that there must not be much to Jesus Christ. If we are saying that we are saved and following Him; He is our Lord and our Master, and if we are not bringing forth any fruit then we must be saying that there is not much to Him. That is what it sounds like, isn't it?

However, that is not the case at all. If we are not bringing forth any fruit, it is not the land owner's problem. He planted the fig tree in good ground. He sent the rain. He sent the sunshine. The fig tree here is probably five or six years old. It says he has come these three years to get fruit from it. As I read about fig trees, it takes at least three years for them to bear fruit. Then he has come these other three years, so this tree is probably six years old anyway. It still yet is not bearing any fruit. Do you know what the land owner says? "Cut it down. What is the use? What do we have any need for this tree? It is not doing anything. It is just taking up space."

Our Whole Duty

God placed you and me here to bring forth fruit. **Our whole duty, man's whole duty is to fear God and keep His commandments.** That is our whole duty.

We have things twisted around today. We think our whole duty here on planet earth is to get what we can get and get all we can. Run over anybody we can to get it. Enjoy it all. Anything that comes into our hearts and minds just go do it. That is what we think we are here for today. However, that is not it folks. God has placed us here.

If you are saved today, God has planted you somewhere. **God expects fruit from your life.** If we are not going to bring forth any fruit, then what good are we? Really? **To God, if we are not bearing fruit and if we are not going to bear fruit, then what good are we?** Would everybody agree with that?

I'm not saying that God doesn't love us. I'm not saying that God is not concerned about us. I'm not saying that God gives up on us. I'm not saying all that. What I'm saying...actually Jesus said that. If we are not bringing forth fruit then what good are we?

The reason that I am saying that is that these guys were self-righteous. They were looking down upon the guys that had been murdered. They were looking down upon the guys here that had suffered this tragic death and this accident. Do you know what they could not see? They could see everybody else and the tragedies that have happened to them. They could see everybody else and they could classify them as great sinners. However, **they could not see themselves as a tree not bringing forth fruit.** They could see all this other stuff. They could look at other people's lives. They could see the tragedies of other people's lives and they could automatically blame it all on SIN. They could see all that, but **they could not see how self-righteous and how wrong that they were.**

The land owner says *"We will just cut it down. What is it doing any good? We will just cut it down."* Do you know what the vine dresser said? *"If you don't care..."* He agreed and there is no doubt that he agreed. I know he had been here these years. The tree had not produced anything. He had not got any fruit from it. He would be justified in cutting the tree down. However, he says, *"Give me one more year. Let me dig around it. Let me loosen up the ground that is around it. Let me dung it. Just maybe it will bring forth some fruit. If it does not bring forth any fruit, in that period of time, then we will cut it down."* Isn't that what it says? That is what it says, isn't it?

A couple of things here...

I hope that we understand today; I hope that we don't have the mentality, or the thinking that we can just cruise through life never doing anything for God. [I hope that we don't think that we can just], breeze through life never bringing forth any fruit and then one day the angels of heaven are going to come and take us home and we are going to have a shouting time up there. I hope that we don't think that way. I hope that we don't think that we can look at all the tragedies of everybody else and pronounce them great sinners because they are suffering these great tragedies and can't see ourselves as being just as bad as they are. We are not bringing forth any fruit. I hope we are not like that. I hope that we are not that blind. If we are, then tragedy is coming.

This story doesn't tell us what happens here. The guy who is dressing the vineyard says *"Let me dig around it and fertilize it. Let's wait one more year. If it doesn't bring forth fruit, then we will cut it down."*

What is it going to take in our lives to get us to the place where we can see we are just a sinner saved by the grace of Almighty God? We are not any better than anybody else. What is it going to take to get us to put self-righteousness aside, and to see that we are not bearing any fruit? If we don't change, the tree is going to be cut down.

I want to ask us to do something. As I said earlier, forty years after these scriptures do you know what happened? The tree in this story here was cut down. As we read this, it does not tell us that. However, as we read on down through history, it does tell us that.

You see, Jesus goes to the cross. He dies. He rises from the dead. The church is born on Pentecost. The early church, the apostles preach the gospel. They give great witness unto the nation of **Israel**; unto this fig tree, that there is a God in heaven. They should be bringing forth fruit. Do you know what? It didn't change them any. They kept going on their way.

The Tree Cut Down

In 70 AD, Titus came. You who read history know that. Titus the Roman came. As I read history; as the Romans came there was a rumor started. It is not Biblical, but it is history. There was a rumor started among the soldiers. Do you know what they did? There was a rumor that there was gold that they had used for mortar in the bricks, in the big huge rocks that made up the temple area. Do you know what they did? They tore it down one rock at a time.

Jesus said that they would actually do that. Didn't He? He said, "There shall not be one stone left upon another here that shall not be thrown down." Do you remember reading that? That is in the book. Do you know what they did? They took the temple down one rock at a time. They completely destroyed it. The tree here was cut off.

Seriously

I want to say this tonight. I mean this sincerely. **I'm talking to some people tonight that if you don't straighten up you are going to be cut off.**

Am I saying that God has given up on you? Nope.

Am I saying that God does not love you? No.

Am I saying that you are a throw away people? No.

I am telling you this. You can spit in the face of God. You can mock God. You can do a lot of different things for a long time, but there comes a time that the **mercy of Almighty God is going to be stopped and judgment is going to come.**

If we could resurrect the people of Noah's day there would be real proof of that. They could tell us that. Noah told us it was going to rain and we did not believe it. We knew God was a merciful God and we did not believe that He was going to destroy us.

If we could talk to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, they would tell us the same thing. If we could talk to the people in Nineveh, they would tell us the same thing.

Listen tonight. Please, **straighten up.** Let's live right. Let's do what is right.

Does that mean that we are never going to mess up? No.

Does that mean that we are never going to have problems? No.

Does it mean that we are never going to lose our temper? No.

However, we are not going to go out here every day and habitually live in SIN. We are not going to be doing that. **Christian people do not habitually live in SIN.** Many church members do. However, Christian people don't.

Am I mad at anybody? No, I'm not mad at anybody. However, **I am concerned about some of you.** I know some things about some of you that you don't know that I know. It scares me to know what I know and you living like you are. It ought to scare you to death, really. It ought to...Well we need to **repent.**

Jesus said to these guys, *"Except ye repent ye are going to perish."* *Perish means to be eternally separated from Almighty God.*

The sin that you are committing today is not worth it for you to lose your eternal soul. It is not worth it. Whatever price you put upon it, however important you think it is, how much joy it may bring you, how it might make you feel, it is not worth it. One moment in the lake of fire and you will agree with me.

Jesus loves you friend. He does not want to cut you off.

Am I saying that He gives up on you? No, I'm not saying that. However, I am saying that there is a line that we cross many times—when that is, I don't have any idea. For some people it comes early in life and for some people it comes late in life. I don't have any idea. There is a step that we take one time and there is no going back.

The children of Israel—we have been reading this in our studies—how many times that people died because of their sin. God gave them space. God gave them time. God sent prophets. God sent people to warn them. God was very long-suffering. However, there came a time that God said "That's it. I've warned you. You stepped across this line and now judgment is coming."

I would plead with you today. How long is God going to tolerate sin in our lives? I don't have any idea. I don't really know. I would plead with you today, to find a place to pray somewhere. Whether it is at this altar, at your house, at your job, out in the woods or down by the river bank; to find you a place to pray and ask God to forgive you and to cleanse you. I hope that you do that.

Do you know what I want to see? I want to see you all go to heaven. I want to see you all go. You cannot go living in sin. It is impossible.

God loves us. Don't be so blinded to our sin as these folks here were. They could look at the tragedies of the other people. They could look at the accident that had happened and the tragedy. They pronounced them as great sinners, but they could not see themselves as being great sinners.

The sad thing in our church world today is that we can see everybody else's problems. We can see everybody else's sin, but we don't want to look at ourselves. We don't want to look at that.

I'm persuaded of better things of you than that. You don't have to tell me about it, but you have to tell God about it. You don't have to tell anybody else about it, but you have to tell God about it.

Come and pray—