

“Cure for the Burn” Luke 13:1-9

Context: Luke’s account of Christ’s foundational teaching shifts away from the disciples need to understand persecution, kingdom values, God’s meeting of human needs, and the disciples’ ultimate business and toward the kernel of the Gospel and the need for the unbeliever to repent. The healing and parables that follow demonstrate the Kingdom into which repentance will lead. This section continues to fulfill Luke’s purpose of securing the wobbly faith of ‘God lovers’ by revealing how the Kingdom of God grows in power and strength (cf. Luke 1:3-4).

Where’s hope: Hope is found in a merciful God who is compassionate, longsuffering, and swift to forgive the repentant (cf. Luke 13:3; 2 Peter 3:9).

1. Call to repentance (Luke 13:1-5)

Jesus corrects the wrong thinking that really bad things happen to people who are worse sinners than anybody else. He declares that misery is the eternal end of everyone except those who choose to change their way of thinking about God. Thus, the degree of sin in the lives of the Galileans murdered at Pilate’s command or those dying in the natural disaster at Siloam were not the big point. The way they (and anyone for that matter) think about God, others, and themselves, is the big point, because that is what determines one’s eternal destiny.

2. Fruit of response (Luke 13:6-9)

Jesus cuts to the chase, using the parable of the fig tree, a common representation of Israel. The fruit looked for by the farmer represents the righteousness expected of Israel by God. The three years represent a period of completion in their history as the Chosen nation bearing God’s message. The time extended represents one last chance for the nation to turn to God at the calling of Jesus. The warning of the final cutting down of the tree represents the cutting off of Israel because of their rebellion and is parallel to the previous two calls to repentance or else to face destruction.

For Further Study:

- Luke 13:2-3 and 4-5 teaches the ubiquity and equity of the sinful human nature, as well as the ultimate consequence of perishing. Our **doctrinal statement ‘On Last Things’** under **what we believe** describes this consequence as “eternal punishment” (cf. footnote 7 Matthew 25:30; Daniel 12:2; Mark 9:43-44 <http://www.gracepointfellowship.org/files/DocStmnt.pdf>). On what Biblical grounds does our position differ from the three common positions of annihilationism? How does one respond to the accusation that our position is a “mean God” position (cf. 2 Peter 3:9)?
- Repent ([*metanoeo*](#)) and perish ([*apollumi*](#)), found in Luke 13:3, are two words that represent two key concepts in soteriology. As a **Bible study method**, look up both words in *Vine’s Expository NT Dictionary* (<http://vines.mike-obrien.net>). What is one changing their mind about when they repent? What must come first before that change of mind occurs (Ephesians 1:17ff; 4:20-23)? What does the evidence look like in the witness of your life?
- In Luke 13:6-9, Jesus uses a parable to emphasize God’s longsuffering as well as His sense of justice. Using the method found in Interpretation of Parables on our website (<http://www.gracepointfellowship.org/resources/community-life/2008/3/18/bible-study-resources>), determine the verse that describes the central theme of the parable. How does that verse emphasize the point found in verses 3 and 5?

Transformation exercise:

Reflect on Luke 13:5. Take 15 minutes tomorrow morning to reflect on how your change in mind about God has changed your life. Give thanks for His grace that enabled your change. If there has been no change, ask for His grace to begin the process.