

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Lord's View Of Fruitlessness

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ur view of things is certainly important to the Lord. On one occasion certain inhabitants of Jerusalem were thinking that some Galileans were great sinners because Pilate was able to kill them as they offered sacrifices. Jesus responded with, *“Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay: but except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:2-3). Jesus wants all to know that just because sudden and horrible things happen to some, it is not conclusive evidence that they are greater sinners than those in Jerusalem who are still alive.

Jesus follows up with a parable teaching the Jews that they themselves have been given time to produce the fruit of repentance in their own lives. If they do not, they will be cut down and perish (Luke 13:6-9). God's patience ended when in A.D. 70 He brought the Roman army to destroy Jerusalem. The parable of the barren fig tree manifests how our lord views us as potential fruit bearing trees, and how he views us when we do not produce good fruit in our lives.

The Lord expects all of us to bear fruit. The vineyard owner in the parable *“came seeking fruit...three years come I seeking fruit from the fig tree...”* (Luke 13:6,7). One would certainly not continually come seeking fruit from a tree that was not created to produce fruit. The owner of the vineyard came in each season seeking fruit because producing figs was what a fig tree was created and planted to do. We, as God's people have been *“created in Christ Jesus for good works”* (Ephesians 2:10). If we are Jesus' disciples and plan on glorifying God, we must *“bear much fruit”* (John 15:8). Being good soil, we may produce *“some hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”* (Matthew 13:7,23), but a good and honest heart, a true disciple, or a new creature in Christ will not continue as such without bearing good fruit in one's life.

When we do not bear fruit, we are not only *useless* to the Lord, but we *hinder* His cause. The fruitless fig tree needed to be *“cut down”* for it was not fulfilling God's plan. The vineyard owner adds, *“why doth it also cumber the ground?”* (Luke 13:7) The Lord views fruitlessness as taking up precious space. Are you a church

member who seldom attends worship services, gives only pennies to its support, and never actively cooperates in the work the church has undertaken to do? With such lack of activity, you are probably not too fired up in being “light” and “salt” nor interested in “good works” that give glory to God (Matthew 5:13-16). Take a moment and see yourself as our Divine owner sees you: you are in the way, and hindering space that could be occupied by those who produce fruit.

The Lord does not want you to get out of the way, but desires you to change and begin bearing precious fruit. The loving vinedresser steps in and asks, *“Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down”* (Luke 13:8-9). Our God is patient. He is willing for constructive efforts to be expended to change fruitlessness into fruitfulness. Our view should focus not only on what we are doing, but on what we are not doing. The Lord is approaching to see fruit. If we are not producing, we are useless to Him. Repent or perish!