

# STRAIGHTEN UP! | LUKE 13:1-17 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 3/01/2026

I. Sobering Realities (1-5) | II. Seeking Fruit (6-9) | III. Setting Things Straight (10-17)

**INTRO:** Last week, Jesus reminded us to **Be Ready and Watchful**, because life is short, and His return is sure! – In today's teaching Jesus gives a call to **STRAIGHTEN UP!** – **He sees the things that Bend Us:** our in, our doubts, our weariness and therefore urges us to **WAKE UP**, respond to His mercy. **RISE UP** as restored sons and daughters who live to bring Glory to God! – Today, we'll discover how **God's Patience** gives us a second chance, **His Compassion** breaks our bondage, and **His Power** sets us upright.

**I. SOBERING REALITIES (13:1–5)** – After learning about preparation for **ETERNITY**, some from the **CROWD** questioned what they were experiencing **PRESENTLY...** a *'Yeah, but'* moment! – **READ:**

**A. Political Cruelties in Life (1–3)** – The question of Pilate's slaughter of Galileans, *"whose blood he mingled with sacrifices"* (v.1) – **The Roman governor** had a rough relationship with the Jews of the land. They never agreed on anything! – **Apparently**, he misappropriated money from the temple treasury to fund an aqueduct project in Caesarea, **which upset the Jews to the point of public protest**. – **At this protest, many soldiers were dressed in plain clothes when an uproar broke out**, which resulted in the death of many Galileans. – **Politically, whose side was Jesus on?** – *Jesus avoided politics sides, instead...*

1. **Addressing The Tragedy (2)** – **When bad things happen**, many people are **quick to conclude** that it's the result of divine judgment because of sin; *Job's friend did this: (cf. Job 4:7)*. – **Jesus' disciples** also thought this way in **(John 9:2)**, saying, *"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"* – *(We still do the same... but the teachings of Jesus Christ should change our misassumptions!)*

- He answers their Question with a Question... *"Do you suppose these are worse sinners than other Galileans, because...they suffered these things?"* He then...

2. **Addressing Their Reality (3)** – His answer **"NO..."** prioritizes that the real issue is PERSONAL... not POLITICAL! – And instead of discussing Pilate's sins... **He explains that: They too were sinners**, right along with Pilate and even the Galileans mentioned. – He used the pronoun **YOU**, 8x's in (vv. 2-5)

a. The word for **SIN**: {Grk: *Harmatia* – lit. *missing the mark*} of which ALL humans are guilty (Rom 3:23)

b. The **Emphasis** Jesus makes is that All Sinners should first be concerned with... WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY PERISH! – And because **NO ONE** is guaranteed **TIME** to prevent their death, **He places the URGENCY** on them, *"Unless you REPENT"* {Grk: *Metanoeo* – lit. *A decisive turning or to change one's mind*}; and also, *"YOU will likewise PERISH."* {Grk: *Apollymi* – lit. *to destroy, lose or be ruined eternally*}

- **When a Believer dies, His BODY Perishes!** (Job 34:15), *"...man returns to dust."* (cf. John 3:16) But His spirit goes to be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8), *"for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord,"* he will also face the **Judgment seat of Christ** (Rom 14:10-12), and ultimately **everlasting life** in the presence of God.
- **When an Unbeliever dies, His PLANS Perish!** (Psalm 146:4; Prov 11:7), *"When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, And the hope of the unjust perishes"*. – And He will face the **White Throne judgment of God** (Rev 20:11-13), and then ultimately **Eternal Separation** from God, which is the **"second death."** (cf. Matt 25:41; Rev 20:14-15)

**P/A** – **All this to say, that TRAGEDY and SUFFERING is NOT always PROOF of GREATER SIN!** – Instead of asking, *"Why them?"* we should ask, *"What about me? Am I ready?"* – *Jesus also includes...*

**B. Providential Collapses in Life (4–5)** – Jesus introduces **Another Tragedy** – Not of **Moral Evil**, but **Accidental Disaster**, where **a Tower Fell on some everyday workers and eighteen of them died (4)**.

- He prompts them to **THINK ABOUT IT...** *i.e., if the victims were worse sinners than others.* – This is something that every reader of Luke’s Gospel should do... THINK ABOUT! (*Respond*)

1. **Applying The Lesson (5)** – *Jesus doesn’t explain why the tower fell.* Instead, He explains what to do in light of it, by repeating what He just stated in (v.3). – The repetition was emphatic: **“Unless YOU repent...YOU will perish!”**

- **Tragedy is a REALITY as long as SIN is present in our world!** (*Many naturally question God about this*)
- **(Ezek 33:11), As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked TURN from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die?**
- **Tragedy is not meant to make us speculate – it’s meant to make us repent!**

2. **Anything Goes!** – **Such a lesson also applies to us today!** – **Death can come Suddenly and Judgment is certain!** – If you haven’t made your preparations yet, it is important to **REPENT right now, so as not to perish...** because this is a temporary world!

**Closing Thoughts: Calamities then... are merciful alarms!** When God shakes the earth, it awakens the heart. Don’t waste the warning! – (2 Pet 3:9) tells us that **God is a merciful God**, who is **“longsuffering toward us;”** who desires not that **“any should perish,”** but that **“they all should come to repentance.”**  
**All Sinners Have a Choice!** – to further address

**II. SEEKING FRUIT (13:6–9)** – Jesus moves from the **call to repent**, to the **Parable of the Barren Fruit Tree**, showing that God is patiently seeking fruit from His people. – **READ:**

**To understand a Parable, it’s important to identify the symbolic elements. In this one:**

- **The Owner or Certain Man (6a):** **God the Father**, who expects spiritual fruit.
- **The Vinedresser (7):** **Jesus Christ**, the intercessor who pleads for mercy and provides care.
- **The Fig Tree (6b):** **Israel** or the **individual believer** expected to show repentance.
- **The Vineyard (6c):** The **Kingdom of God** or the world.
- **The Fruit (6d):** **Repentance** and righteous living.
- **Three Years (7b):** **The complete period of time** or opportunity God gives for growth.
- **The Fertilizer (8):** **The means of grace** and extra effort used to spark growth.
- **The Cutting Down of it (7c):** **The eventual divine judgment** for persistent fruitlessness.

**A. Privileged Placement (6–7)** – **The FIG TREE had every advantage** – **location, care, protection.** Yet it remained fruitless... barren! – **From this parable we find a two-fold application:**

1. **Applied To the Nation of Israel:** **God planted Israel hoping for it to grow and become fruitful** **But it failed to produce the fruit that He desired.**

- Throughout scripture **Israel is often referred to as the: FIG TREE (Hosea 9:10; Matt 24:32-34), the OLIVE BRANCH (Jer 11:16-17), and the VINEYARD (tt. Isa 5:1-7)**

2. **Applied Personally:** **God is looking for fruit in the lives of those who claim to be His.** – When **John the Baptist** came as the forerunner for the Messiah, **he confronted the religious people** about their claims of belief and their actions, **(tt. Matt 3:7-10) Whoa! John message was the same as Jesus’!**

**B. Patient Pleading (13:8-9)** – *Justice says remove it... Mercy says wait!* – The vinedresser pictures **Christ interceding**. – In fact, He brings a **Fertile Solution** for this Fruitless Fig Tree – **WHAT IS IT?...**

1. **Dig And Fertilize It! (8)** – *A solution that also helps us when we've become fruitless in our lives!* – You see... **Digging Deeper** helps the roots to become stronger. **Fertilizing It** provides nutrients to help it to become healthy... **Just give it a year and you're sure to grow!** (*The application is so Rich!*)

- If you are **NOT bearing spiritual fruit**, then you need to get into God's WORD. – It is the only thing that can fertilize an impotent heart. (*Read your Bible and you will grow, grow, grow! Expound*)

2. **Destiny Is Based on Fruitfulness (9)** – The vinedresser's plea for **"one more year"** represents **God's Grace and Patient Mercy**. – (Lam 3:22-23) *says, Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. <sup>23</sup> They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*

- **God had been especially patient with Israel (Rom 9:1-5)** – The **"extra time"** was meant for cultivation and growth, but it is **Borrowed Time** that would eventually expire. – However, if it failed to produce fruit, the simple outcome is to **CUT IT DOWN!**
- **God's Grace does have a deadline!** – As when Abraham pleaded for Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen 18-19)

**Closing Thoughts:** *God digs... God fertilizes... God waits!* **God wants to see fruit in your lives!** – This parable reminds us that God graciously gives us time and help to change, **but that season will not last forever**, so **NOW is the time to let Him set things straight in our lives...**

**III. SETTING THINGS STRAIGHT (13:10–17)** – **READ:** Here was a woman who had an **illness for 18 years**, yet we find her still making her way to the synagogue! (*What devotion, in spite of her dilemma*). – She still went to synagogue, even though **she could not raise herself up!** (*lit. straighten up*)

**A. Bound Condition (10–11)** – As Jesus taught in the Synagogue that day (10), He discovered **TWO persons BOUND** within their circumstances: A Woman bent down and a Ruler wound up!

1. **The Woman's Body Mirrored Her Bondage (11)** – bent, burdened, broken. **18 years of suffering**. **Religion** had seen her weekly but never healed her.
2. **The Ruler's Body Language Exposed His Bondage (14)** – indignant, insensitive, and instructing others of violations on the Sabbath being broken.

**P/A – What a Contrast!** Sin and Satan can bend lives low... Some conditions last long – **but none are beyond Christ**. – Jesus comes to set captives free from Sin and Satan. *A true encounter with Jesus brings a...*

**B. Beautiful Cure (12–13)** – Notice the Discernment and Compassion of Jesus (12), He first **SAW** her, then He **CALLED** to her; He then **SPOKE** to her directly, and **LOOSED** her (verbally), then he **TOUCHED** her

- a. **His Touch:** Upon the TOUCH of JESUS, she was **immediately made straight!** (13a) – **LITTERALLY!**
  - This miraculous scene reminds me of **Jesus' words in (John 8:36)** **"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."** – Jesus Christ does not gradually negotiate chains – He **Breaks them!** – And such freedom should always produce **PRAISE! ...**
- b. **Her Response (13b)...** NOT, *"well it's about time!"* Instead, **she GLORIFIED GOD!** – His Grace both restores her dignity. Her response to broken bonds... **Worship!**

**C. Blind Criticism (14–17)** – At such a miracle, one would think that the Ruler of the Synagogue would also break out in praise (14). – However, because he was Bound by Religion and Hypocrisy, he responded with Resentment! – He doesn't even speak to Jesus directly! (*This is what dead religion does!*)

1. **Ruler Crys Out (14)**. – “**FOUL!**” then He pointed out the RULES! “There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore, come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.” – However,...
2. **Righteousness Speaks Out (15-16)** – First of *the condition of the Rulers heart: Hypocrisy!* (15), then of their normal traditions re: **LOSING** an Ox or Donkey **for refreshment on the Sabbath!** – Their Sabbath traditions prioritized animals over people in need!
  - Jesus rebukes the Ruler telling him to **THINK ABOUT IT HARD!** – This woman was a **Woman of Faith, a daughter of Abraham!** – **Legalism cares more about regulations than restoration!**
  - **The synagogue ruler's bondage was deeper than the woman's.** – Hers afflicted her body, but **his bound his mind and heart**, **blinding him with tradition**, so that **he even opposed the Son of God!** – As a result, he remained **BOUND!**
3. **Rejoicing Breaks Out (v.17)** – *As Jesus silences His opponents*, the crowd are filled with joy! – True worship rejoices when others are restored!

**FINAL THOUGHTS:** **Jesus came to Set Things Straight.** – He challenges all mankind to align their hearts with God's redemptive plan. – The truths found in **(Luke 13:1-17)** invite us to **STRAIGHTEN UP!** – Don't **postpone obedience**, but turn, bear fruit, and **live in the freedom Christ offers today.**

- **A.W. Tozer:** “**Religion can reform a life, but it takes Christ to transform it.**” – It's time to let Jesus straighten what life has bent.
- **If you are BENT, come forward.** If you are BOUND, call out. If you are CRITICAL, repent. Jesus still straightens lives!