



Welcome to God's Faithful Pursuit with me, Shannon Bishop, your host. We are a ministry of Family Church in Port Charlotte, Florida. Join us as we share stories of God's glory and faithfulness in the lives of others. And it's my hope that you are spurred on to love and good works through the encouragement that you find here. Thanks for joining us.

Hey friends, thanks for tuning in. Shannon Bishop here. Just me, by myself and I wanted to talk to you today about just some stuff that I've read in the Word lately that encouraged me and so I wanted to share it in hopes that it would encourage you as well. I've been reading in Luke recently and I came across the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree, and it just had some lessons in there that I thought would be good to go over with you guys in case it felt, you know, good timing in your life for what you're going through. So why don't we pray together and then we'll talk about it.

Father God, thank you so much for this day. I pray that you would be with us as we look into your word and extract the lessons that you have for us and the encouragement. God, we love you so much. Let your Holy Spirit do the speaking. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen. So, the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree. Actually, it's in Luke 13:6-9, you're probably familiar with it, but I'm just gonna read it. It's a short one and just so that you know, you know what we're talking about. And real quick before I read it, a parable.

Just so you know, this is a great definition of a parable by the way. If anyone's ever like, what's a parable? It is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Boom, done. Isn't that great?

I love that definition. I'm gonna say it again. It's an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. And Jesus always told parables because that was his way of trying to teach the people around him a lesson like how to learn something speaking like a language that they would understand, speaking into, you know, the things that are around them, the things that they see and do. You know, a lot of his parables are about wedding feasts or gardens or plants.

Fig tree, you know, fig tree was big over there at this time. And it actually, a lot of times he's referring to Israel when he talks about a fig tree. So. But yeah, let's take a look at the passage. Alright, so this is Jesus, and he told this parable.

A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, look, for three years now, I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Just cut it down. Why should it use up the ground? And he answered him, sir, let it alone this year also until I dig around it and put on manure.

Then it should bear fruit next year. Well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.

I love the picture of Jesus that we see here, because even though he's talking, he's telling the story, he is literally sharing a story where he is the intercessor for us. Because the man who, you know, has this vineyard tells the vinedresser, look, just cut it down. It's not working. It's not doing what it's supposed to do. And he speaks up and just says, hey, let me.

Let me try one more thing. And Jesus is the one that steps into the gap for us when all we deserve is judgment. All we deserve is hell, really. And he stepped in and said, wait a minute, I want to help. And so, we're just.

We're thankful. We're so thankful for what he's done for us. But this is just a little picture of that. So in case you never noticed that there's one. There's one little nugget, you guys.

And then also, as I was reading this, you know, this is one of those parables that if he was speaking to Israel, you know, he's speaking to the rebellious Israel, the people that are not following him, that are not seeing, you know, the truth of who he is. Because at the end it says, just cut it down like it's gone. There's no chance, you know. And so, this parable very much speaks to the unsaved person because we know that as believers, we cannot be snatched from his hand. So, there is no, oh, try one more time.

And if they don't get it, just cut them off like they're done. That's definitely not a message for believers. However, we can read this parable as a believer and we can extract some biblical principles from it, because he's such a good God and he doesn't just his word is alive and active. There's always going to be lessons that we can pull from it. So as a non believer, when you read this story, it's basically a call to repentance.

It's Jesus saying, hey, I'm standing in the gap for you. This is your chance. This is your chance to come to me. This is your Chance to repent and be saved. And I mean, you just don't know how much time you have left.

How much time. I mean, he's giving it one more year in this story. So, it's like as an unbeliever, you don't know how much time you have left. I mean, none of us do. But how much time you have left to be saved, to receive this free gift of salvation.

So, take this as your moment. Your moment to reach out and repent and believe. And for those of you that are saved, the things that we can take from it. Now, this one is very cliché

sounding, but I say bloom where you're planted. Because this fig tree is planted in the garden.

Like this is where it's going to be and it's not bearing any fruit. And so, a lot of times you look at where you're planted, whether it's at where you work, your home life, your church, the state you live in, you know, and you might not be happy with it. You might think of where you're planted and you're like; I don't want to be here. And you spend a lot of your time complaining or wishing or, you know, just not having a very good attitude. And when that's the case, how much fruit can you bear when you've got a mind that is so negative and so ungrateful?

I guess I don't want to make anybody feel bad, but at the same time, I've been there plenty of times in my life where I was not happy with where God had me. And I did complain a lot. Like that was my go to was just to be negative and complain and pray like, God, get me out of here or God save me, God, do this. Instead of just saying, God, can you grow me during this time? I know you have me here for a reason and I trust you.

And so, yeah, first off the bat, we can see that this fig tree is in the garden, meaning it has a purpose. The vinedresser put it there for a reason. And just like God puts us places for a reason, we can look at that and say, okay, there's purpose. I need to bloom where I'm planted. And then secondly, the part comes where he says, let me dig around it and put down manure and see if that will help it bear some fruit.

And I just think what a great analogy that is for our life when we go through difficult times. It's like God is digging those bad, those bad weeds out of our heart. And maybe we don't want him to, but I mean, that's what is going to produce fruit. So if you're going through a season where you're just like, you feel like you're not producing a lot of fruit, you're just going through trial after trial, sometimes see it for what, what it most likely is, which is the Lord is working on you and he's digging out that stuff that needs to come out because it's hindering your growth. And then the manure.

Guys, let's just be real. Sometimes life is stinky. Sometimes we go through things that are not ideal and it's not attractive and it just stinks. And. And that's.

But, you know, in regard to manure and a plant, it actually produces growth and it makes things better. And so whatever situation you are in right now, just know that if, if you're open to it, if you're not fighting him, he is working on you and he's going to produce fruit in your life and then that fruit will be able to be given to others and you'll be impactful for the kingdom. None of us want to be that barren fig tree, that one that, you know, because there is another story in the Bible when he curses the barren fig tree and he is just upset that it has nothing to show. And again, it goes back to Israel when. And all of us, really.

But when, you know, the Messiah is standing right before them and they don't even see him, he just, you know, gets a little upset. But that's okay. It's because he loves us so much. He just wants us all to be with him and to follow him. But yeah, I recently, I've got a little plumeria tree.

I mean, it's only like a little branch with like two little branches coming from it. So it's in a pot. Someone had given this to me a couple years ago and it was a lot smaller then. So it has grown. I've never been known to be like a gardener type person.

I always want to be because I love flowers and I love fresh things, but I'm still learning. Okay. And I have. So, I have this plumeria and when I first got it and I watered it and I had it out back, had little flowers on it and it was so beautiful. Then the next.

And then, you know, it loses its leaves and then it's just like a stick practically. And then when the next springtime comes, spring, summer, it is supposed to bloom again. Well, mine did not. And I was like, what's wrong with this? And I looked it up and apparently I had it in Too much shade.

And so, I moved it out to a different spot, and I was like, okay, next year it should blossom. And so, I've been waiting all this time, and it's been growing little by little. I mean, no leaves or anything, because it doesn't leaf until the spring. And so, sure enough, the spring is coming, and little leaves are starting to grow. And I was so excited.

I'm like, I cannot wait to see my plumerias. They're so beautiful and I love them so much. And, yeah, all these wonderful big green leaves came, but no flowers came. And I was like, well, what's the problem? Where I've been watering it, it's in the sun.

And then it started to get little spots all over each leaf. Like just gross little brownish black spots, almost like mold spots all over every single leaf. And now the leaves are just shriveling up and falling off. And I'm just left with this plant going, what happened? Why I'm so disappointed?

I wanted to see beautiful flowers. So, I looked that up, and it's either I need insecticide or fungicide or something. Something has impacted this plant, whether it's bugs or mold or something. So I'll let you know next year how it goes. But the story that I'm sharing is because this is how when Jesus looks at us and we're not bearing fruit, we're not doing what we're supposed to be doing, it's disappointing.

You know, he's got great plans for us. He's got great plans for each and every one of his followers. And when we're just using our time to complain or be negative and we're not bearing fruit, we're not able to let our lives reflect him and give him the glory and point back to him. And it's just disappointing, you know, that my plumeria is so ugly right now, it's not

cute. And so anyone that is going to come over to my house and see it is going to be like, oh, boy, what's going on here?

And not saying, like, I care what other people. People think, but I care what people think in the sense of, am I. Am I bearing fruit? Or when people look at me, are they like, oh, man, she's really. She must be going through something because she's really negative.

And, you know, you hope you have good enough friends in your life where if they see a lot of negativity coming from you, they can kind of say, hey, what's going on? How can I pray for you? I'm. I'm hearing you know all this stuff and, and what a great opportunity to encourage a friend and be there for them and just kind of help them see, you know, what, what they're putting out there. But if you don't have a friend like that, then sometimes it's really hard to realize.

So let me be your friend today and tell you, hey, take a look at your life. Take a look at what others see when they look at you. Do they see a moldy plumeria or do they see a beautiful tree with flowers on it? So, yeah, look at God's word. Look at the things that we can extract from that.

Just a quick story and we have all this encouragement. That's what I love about God's word, about the Bible. It's just, it's beautiful. So bottom line for today, take away if you're not saved. This is a call to repent and turn to Jesus because you just never know how much longer he's giving you.

And if you are a believer, then nothing can snatch you from his hand. However, you should still be living in such a way that you bear fruit in season and out of season, meaning when life is flourishing and everything's great, we should have fruit to share with others. But then also in the seasons of drought and struggle, we should also be able to point to the one that gives us hope. I hope this encouraged you today. We'll catch you next time.