

“Why Cumbereth it the Ground?”

Luke 13:6-9 (KJV)

Introduction:

- A. Jesus gave Jews back to back lessons on repentance and responsibility.
 - 1. Repent or perish. (vs. 2-5).
 - 2. Produce or be cut down – The fig tree parable (vs. 6-9).
 - a. Fig trees were common where Jesus lived (Mark 11:13ff; John 1:48)
 - b. Like a fig tree, God had planted and nurtured the Jews, his chosen - like Christians today.
 - c. Like a fig tree, God looked for fruit and found none - like many today.
 - d. Like a fig tree, God gave them opportunities to repent and produce - like many today.
- B. Jesus illustrated three great lesson about our opportunities in this parable.

Discussion:

I. God Gives Us Opportunity to Produce. (vs. 6-7).

- A. This fig tree was blessed by its owner.
 - 1. Enjoyed life in the vineyard.
 - 2. Enjoyed care of the vine dresser.
 - 3. Enjoyed soil and fertilizer.
- B. Thiss fig tree disappointed its owner.
 - 1. Ignored responsibility to bear fruit.
 - 2. Cumbered the ground - used space, food, moisture.
 - 3. Burdened the rest of vineyard by taking and not giving.
 - 4. Not because produced less than another, but did not do what it could.
 - a. In parable of sower, all good seed did not produce same amount of fruit. (Matt. 13:23).
 - b. In parable of talents, one talent man not expected to produce five talents. (Matt. 25:14-30).
- C. This fig tree is typical of so many professed Christians today.
 - 1. All they are doing is using up the ground – to them Jesus would say, “Why cumberest ...”
 - 2. Accept benefits of life (Acts 17:25) without its responsibilities.
 - 3. Accept benefits of citizenship without its responsibilities (Rom. 13:1-7)
 - 4. Accept benefits of home without its responsibilities. (1 Cor. 7:3)
 - a. Benefits of husband and wife.
 - b. Benefits of parents and children.
 - 5. Accept benefits of being in Christ without its responsibilities. (cf. Tit. 2:11,12)

II. God Gives Us Opportunity to Repent. (v. 8-9).

- A. The fig tree had a second chance - opportunity to repent.
- B. We all need and have a second change.
 - 1. All have sinned. (Rom. 3:10, 23)
 - 2. All need repentance. (Acts 17:30).
 - 3. All given opportunity to repent. (2 Pet. 3:9).

III. God Limits Our Opportunity to Produce and Repent.

- A. Owner’s long-suffering was limited for the fig tree. (“Three years”; “this year”)
- B. God’s long-suffering was limited for Jewish nation. (Matt. 23:34-37)
- C. God’s long-suffering was limited for people in Noah’s day. (cf. 1 Pet. 3:20).
- D. God’s long-suffering was limited for “that woman Jezebel” (Rev. 2:20-23).
- E. God’s long-suffering is limited for us.. (Acts 17:31; 2 Pet. 3:10)

Conclusion:

- A. Are you producing? Or merely using up the ground?
- B. How long do you think the Lord will put up with it?