

February 28 2021

Second Sunday of Lent

Luke 13:1-9, 31-35

Children's Message: Lent is a time of repentance. Yet repentance is not just limited to Lent. Repentance should be something that continues the whole year long. In this morning's reading Jesus warns His listeners to repent. Repentance is not what you may think it is?

We lose so much meaning of words in the translations. Repentance in Greek means to rethink a decision that you made. It can also mean to change your mind and have a change of heart. Whichever way you look at it repentance is a change in your thinking. I once had a wise man tell me that a smart person does not say yes or no. A smart person says both yes and no. What he was really telling me was that a smart person can change their minds. Isn't that what repentance is?

We should always be re-evaluating the choices and decisions we make in life. We should not become a slave to the decisions we make by not changing our minds. Sometimes bad decisions can harm us and sometimes innocent people as well. Do not be so attached to your decisions that you cannot change them. The hardest decisions are the ones between two equally good options.

This morning Jesus is warning His listeners about the people that they are hanging out with. His listeners are hanging out with the wrong crowd. They are rebels. If the Romans capture them with the rebels,

they will all be killed. Jesus is telling them to repent and rethink who they are hanging out with. It may cost them their lives and innocent people may get hurt. This Lent think about the decisions that you have made in your life. Who do I hang out with? Will hanging out with them get me into trouble? Maybe I need to rethink about the time I spend playing Minecraft? Could I use that time in a better way? Do I get enough physical activity?

Repentance is a great idea. Lent encourages us to continue it throughout the rest of the year. Try to keep a flexible mind. So that you can change your decisions when you need to.

Adult's Message: There are so many rabbit holes one could go down on these few lines in Luke. Since this is the second Sunday of Lent let us start with the obvious. God's judgement for sin and His involvement in our lives. It is not so much what Jesus says this morning as it is what is not said. The unsaid words that are understood to express the deeper reality.

The disciples tell Jesus about the latest events regarding Pilate's cruelty. They inform Jesus that Pilate had taken the blood of some Gallileans and mixed it with their sacrifice. That is a brutal and total slap in the face of the religious Jews. I am no fan of Pilate, but he is probably frustrated to no end with the Jews. Pilate was a very intense person. He had great pressure from the Emperor to keep the peace in Judea. During his stay there he had to put down sixty violent rebellions by the

Jews. So there is no love lost between the two groups. The rebellions during Pilate's tenure would be a foreshadowing of things to come.

Take notice how Jesus answers His disciples. He answers them with a question, "Do you think this was done because of their sins?" Jesus is asking them if they think this event was a judgement from God? Jesus answers them that it is not. Then He brings up the topic of the tower that fell on some people and killed them. Was that also a judgement of God because of their sins. Jesus again assures them that it was not.

In both stories, Jesus reveals to us and those listening that God is not petty. God is not in the business of doling out torture and natural disasters to zap us for our sins. God does not have to do that. We generally do it to ourselves. Remember in Matthew where Jesus said God makes it rain on the evil and the good people. Life can be complicated and there are times when disasters do occur. God is usually not behind them. If you look hard enough there is usually a person to blame. We should always be aware of our actions and how they may affect others. There are times people make poor choices and good people get hurt and suffer.

Have you noticed the pattern that after each incident Jesus says, "But if you don't repent, you will die just like them." Some have thought that this was a threat. I do not think so. The English translation seems a bit harsh. The word repent means to change your thinking or seriously consider the choices you are about to make. Look at it this way, "But if you don't change your thinking you will die." Our Lord is not threatening them, but warning them. Jesus is able to foresee that their choices will lead to disaster. The Jews inability to rethink their actions

will lead to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Many innocent people will be killed because of a few rebels.

Jesus is talking to the chosen people of God. They are the ones that God called in Abraham's day to be a blessing to the nations. Yet this rebellious behaviour is not why they were chosen. Their rebellious actions are not befitting the chosen people of God. Jesus is telling them to rethink their actions and start behaving like God's chosen people.

The story of the fig tree expresses the true nature of God's judgement. Our God is long suffering and patient with His stubborn people. The Romans are not like the Hebrew God. Their patients will run out and their judgement will be to destroy Jerusalem. The fig tree is Israel and God planted it to bear fruit.

The fruit that God wants to grow in Israel is that of love. The fig tree is blessed and is to be a blessing to others. God wants Israel to bear the fruit of love even under Roman occupation. God's chosen people do not lash out in violence. God's people do not repay evil with evil. God's people are to love their enemies and to do good to those who persecute them. God is not quick to judge. The purpose to cultivate the tree was that the world may taste the fruit of God's love.

Jesus tries to change the thinking of those who are listening. He knows what the future will hold for Jerusalem. That is why He weeps over the city. The Jews have forgotten who they are and the high position they have been called to. They are God's chosen people and they need to start behaving that way. They need to repent their decisions concerning rebellion. The destruction of Jerusalem was not God's judgement. It was human stupidity. The words of Our Lord are just as

important them as they are today. WE are the children of God and we need to behave as such. We should be reflecting God's love back out into society and those around us. That is how they will know we are His children, by how we love. Take care and God bless and spread the love,
Pastor D