

Sermon Notes, March 7, 2010
Response to Tragedy: Repent
Luke 13:1-9

Tragedies in the Headlines: AD 2010

- “Gunman Dead After Killing 3 at St. Louis Workplace” –Fox News
- “Haiti Raises Earthquake Toll to 230,000” –The Washington Post
- “1.5 Million Displaced After Chile Quake” –The New York Times

Tragedies in the Headlines: AD 30

- “Pilate Massacres Galilean Zealots in Jerusalem”
- “18 Die as Tremor Collapses Tower of Siloam” –The Jerusalem Gazette

The Most Difficult Question for Christians

How can an omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient God allow so much unnecessary suffering? –Victor Stenger, prominent atheist

JESUS’ TEACHING ON SUFFERING

1. Suffering is Part of a _____.

The World is Full of _____ Evil

(Luke 13:1-3 NIV) *Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. {2} Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? {3} I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.*

(Jer 17:9 NIV) *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*

(Mark 7:21 NIV) *For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,*

The World is Full of _____ Evil

(Luke 13:4-5 NIV) *Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them--do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? {5} I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."*

(Rom 8:22 NIV) *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

2. Some Suffering is Not Related to Our _____, but Some Is. _____

Some is Not.

- What about the Galileans? (Luke 13:3 NIV) *I tell you, no!*
- What about the Tower? (Luke 13:5 NIV) *I tell you, no!*
- What about the Blind Man?
(John 9:1-3 NIV) *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. {2} His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" {3} "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.*

Some Is.

- What about the Fig Tree?
(Luke 13:6 NIV) *Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any."*

A Good Book: Peaks and Valleys by Spencer Johnson

- To Get Out of a _____ Sooner.
Relax, knowing that Valleys end. Do the opposite of what put you in the Valley. Get outside of yourself; be of more service at work and more loving in life. Avoid comparisons. Uncover the good that is hidden in a bad time, and use it soon to your advantage.
- To Stay on a _____ Longer
Be humble and grateful. Do more of what got you there. Keep making things better. Do more for others. Save resources for your upcoming Valleys.

The Summary of it All: _____

(Luke 13:3 NIV) . . . *But unless you repent, you too will all perish.*

(Luke 13:5 NIV) . . . *But unless you repent, you too will all perish.*

Pain insists upon being attended to; God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world. –C. S. Lewis in *The Problem of Pain*

God’s Patience (as illustrated in *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe)

Friday: *“But if God much strong, much more than devil, why God no kill the devil so make him no more do evil?”*

Crusoe: *You may as well ask, why God no kill you and me when we do wicked things.*

Sermon-based Small Group Discussion Guide

Week of March, 7, 2010

Luke 13:1-9

Icebreaker: Describe an earthquake or tremor that you have experienced. Or tell what you know about the New Madrid quake of 1812.

1. From Pastor Mark's sermon, who were the Galileans that some people were asking Jesus about (vs. 1)?
2. Describe what you think Pilate's character may have been like.
3. What do you know about the Tower in Siloam to which Jesus refers?
4. In your own words, what was Jesus' point in verse 2? (See also vs. 4)
5. It may be difficult, but to the best of your ability, tell where you see God in the tragic earthquakes, first in Haiti, and this past week in Chile.
6. If an earthquake struck St. Louis and caused great personal loss, how would you respond to God?
7. Jesus uses the fig tree to refer to Israel, God's chosen people. But they misused their chosen position. As believers in Jesus chosen by God, how might we misuse our rights as chosen ones?
8. Jesus boldly calls for Israel to repent in verses 3 and 5. What did he mean by repent?
9. How do you feel about the consequences of not repenting in these verses?
10. How can you discern between suffering due to causes outside of human control and suffering due to our own sinfulness? When is suffering not my fault, and when is it my fault?
11. The fig tree parable shows us that Jesus is a fruit inspector. What kind of fruit is he looking for and what does it teach us?
12. James 4:1-3 tells us of at least one thing that causes us to be unfruitful. What is the root sin that needs to be repented of? Give an example from your own life?
13. If, like the fig tree, you had one more year to turn something around in your life, what would it be?
14. Like Jesus, we should look for fruit. What fruit do you see in St. Paul's congregation?

Prayer

Pray for people impacted by earthquakes in Chile and Haiti.

Pray for one another.