

08.03.22 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “Fruit Follow Repentance”

Scripture Reading: [Luke 13:1-9](#)

Reflection: Rev. George Vink

The NIV Bible’s heading for this scripture is rather stark. Did you notice it? Its *“Repent or Perish”* seems as well as sounds rather threatening. Luke’s previous chapter contains several rather serious statements. Its “Warnings and Encouragement” are followed by a parable in which God declares, “You Fool!” Strong stuff! Jesus’ “Do not worry about your life...” and a gentle “Do not be afraid, little flock” follow. All of this is followed by a lesson on being watchful as a faithful steward serving his master and statements about divisions and interpreting the times. In the middle of it all, predictable Peter asks, “Lord, are you talking to us or others?”

Luke continues with, “Now there were some present...” introducing those listening. And, almost as if to draw attention away from Jesus’ strong statements about being prepared, they tell Jesus about a terrible tragedy their fellow Galileans had experienced. It’s with all of this heavy stuff as background and eighteen more killed by a falling tower whom Jesus added that Luke wrote, “Then Jesus told this parable.” He had their attention.

It’s a parable/story about being what we’re called to be, doing what we’re expected to do. Fig trees are supposed to produce figs. They’re not decorative background or camouflage. After a certain amount of time, their fruit of figs can be expected. A parable so applicable for those who’ve sung, “I have decided to follow Jesus, No turning back....” It doesn’t mean forever debating “election,” fruitless points about who decided what but doing what followers of Jesus are called to do: produce fruits of repentance.

As followers of Jesus, saved to serve, we know what we need to do. It’s feeding the hungry, visiting the lonely, welcoming the outcasts, and loving difficult people. It’s still the mandate of “...seek first the Kingdom” as Jesus put it. And, doing so is not a misunderstood Christian nationalism as our identity, but a way of life, listening and loving reflecting God’s love for every neighbor using the gifts given to us. It’s praising God and honoring his name by singing his praises and seeking justice for everyone, not just those we like or are like us.

Followers listen well to Jesus by being lights in the midst of dark, distorted political persuasions. It’s producing the fruit we’re expected to share, having the abilities and opportunities provided. It’s about the fruit! Jesus says it: “Bear fruit or be cut down.”

Prayer:

Gracious God, giver of gifts, help me to know what your expectations are of me. I live in a world where I’m tempted to avoid getting involved, neglecting the gifts or abilities given. I need your encouragement. I’m inclined to coast, excuses ready. Move me to bear fruit. Amen!

Action Item for the Day/Week:

Take a hard look at what, if anything, you're doing for Jesus. What is it that you're doing because you're a Christ follower? Nothing? Really? Time to repent while you can.

Songs for today:

[Take My Life and Let It Be](#)

[Have Thine Own Way Lord](#)

[Dear Lord and Father of Mankind](#)