

The Parable of the Fig Tree

Scripture Text:

6. And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any.
7. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'
8. And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.' " (Luke 13:6-9 NASB)

Outline:

- I. The Owner of the Vineyard (v.6)
- II. The Keeper of the Vineyard (v.7)
- III. The Fate of the Fig Tree in the Vineyard (v.8)

Worksheet:

- I. The Owner of the Vineyard (v.6)
 - a. And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; (v.6a)
 - i. Jesus begins to tell a parable in the **context** of what He had just been talking to the crowd about in the previous verses of Luke 13. **(read)**
 - ii. Jesus had just spoken to this same crowd about "discernment", "hypocrisy", "personal relationships", "personal responsibility" and the "judgement" that would follow if not considered individually and collectively in Luke 12:54-59. **(read)**
 - iii. In this parable we hear of a man who had "a" fig tree which had been planted in "his vineyard".
 - iv. **Who** or **what** group of people in scripture are often referred to as a fig tree? _____
 - v. If this is the case **who** does the "man" who had a fig tree represent? _____
 - vi. **What** does the "vineyard" in this parable represent? _____

vii. **What** would be the expectation of the “man” who had a “fig tree” in his “vineyard” be? *[discussion]* _____

viii. **What** is the purpose of a “fig tree” and **who** purposed it? *[discussion]* _____

ix. **What** good is the fig tree if it does not serve it’s God-given purpose? *[discussion]* _____

x. **Spoiler Alert!** This parable is not just for first-century Israelites and Jews! **Who** is this parable a warning to also? *[discussion]* _____

b. and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. (v.6b)

i. The “man” (God the Father) “came looking for fruit” on the “fig tree” (God’s chosen people). Did the man come to early? Did the man come to late? Was it unreasonable for the man to be looking for fruit on the fig tree at the time that he came looking for fruit? Why or why not? *[discussion]* _____

ii. The “man” (God the Father) “did not find any”. So does this mean that he didn’t find any good-sized fruit? Does it mean that he didn’t find enough to his satisfaction? Does it mean that what he did find was not ripe enough to consume? **What** does this mean? *[discussion]* _____

iii. **What** does this mean for the Church today? **What** should our goal be in our individual lives and collectively as the body of Christ, the Church? *[discussion]* _____

II. The Keeper of the Vineyard (v.7)

a. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, ‘Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. (v.7a)

i. **Who** does the “vineyard-keeper” in this parable represent? _____

ii. The “man” (God the Father) asked the “vineyard-keeper” (God the Sin, Jesus) a question about the “fig tree” (God’s chosen people). **What** does “behold” mean? _____

iii. **What** does the number “three” represent in the bible? *[discussion]* _____

- iv. **What** does this say about the amount of time that the “man” (God the Father) gave for the “fig tree” (God’s chosen people) to bare or produce fruit? *[discussion]* _____

- v. **What** does this say about the persistence of God? *[discussion]* _____

- vi. **What** does this say about the expectations of God? *[discussion]* _____

- vii. **What** characteristics are of God are on display during these three years in the parable? *[list]*
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
- viii. Are these **communicable** or **incommunicable** attributes of God? If communicable, then what should the believer do when confronted with the “unfruitfulness” of others? *[discussion]* _____

- ix. Will God settle for anything less than a “fig tree” (a people) that bares fruit? *[discussion]* _____

- x. If you had to say, in yours estimation, **what** year is the “universal church” in right now? *[discussion]* _____

- xi. **Personal reflection/assessment:** If you had to say, in your estimation, **what** year are you in right now? (don’t answer aloud).
- b. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?’ (v.7b)
- i. **Why** does the “man” (God the Father) say, “Cut it down!” *[discussion]* _____

 - ii. Does this seem harsh or extreme? **Why** or **why** not? _____

 - iii. **What** is “cut it down” emblematic of? _____

- iv. **What** does the “man” (God the Father) think about the physical resources that are being used by the unfruitful “fig tree”? *[discussion]*
-
-

- v. Recall what a parable is, A parable is, literally, something “cast alongside” something else. Jesus’ parables were stories that were “cast alongside” a truth in order to illustrate that truth. His parables were teaching aids and can be thought of as extended analogies or inspired comparisons. A common description of a parable is that it is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. (GotQuestions.org, 2021)

- vi. **What** does the earthly story have to do with the heavenly/spiritual meaning related to spiritual resources? *[discussion]*
-
-

1. For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

(Hebrews 6:4-8 NASB1995)

2. But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

(Luke 8:15 NASB1995)

3. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

(John 15:8 NASB1995)

III. The Fate of the Vineyard (v.8)

- a. And he answered and said to him, ‘Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; (v.8a)

- i. What role does the “vine-keeper” (God the Son, Jesus) assume in the parable? *[discussion]*
-
-

1. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears

fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.” (Matthew 13:23 NASB1995)

2. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. (John 17:17-21 NASB1995)
 - ii. Isn't it nice to be kept by Jesus? The One who saves also keeps! The One who saves and keeps also intercedes! What does Jesus save believers from? *[list]*
 1. The _____ of sin. (past)
 2. The _____ of sin. (present)
 3. The _____ of sin. (future)
 - b. and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.' ” (v.8b)
 - i. What does this show about not only the character and attributes of God the Father, but also about that of God the Son? *[discussion]* _____
 - ii. What is clearly demonstrated by this parable as essential needs for the chosen people of God to spiritually mature and bear fruit? *[list]*
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

References:

GotQuestions.org, (2021). What is a parable? Digitally retrieved from <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-a-parable.html>

