

Repent, Receive, Reach-out Luke 13v1-35

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[0 : 00] Are those 18 who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them, do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Then he told this parable. A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit in it, but he did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, For three years now, I have been coming to look for fruit in this fig tree and haven't found any.

Cut it down. Why should it use up the soil? Sir, the man replied, leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig round it and fertilize it.

If it bears fruit next year, fine. If not, then cut it down. On the Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues.

And a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.

[1 : 14] Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. Indignant, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, There are six days for work, so come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.

The Lord answered him, You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?

Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for 18 long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her? When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

Thank you, Sam, and thank you for handing out the pens and notes there.

We're looking at our series through Luke's Gospel. Today we reach chapter 13. We're going to be touching on all of it.

[2 : 42] We didn't read all of it, but that's okay. We are going to look at all of it. And if you've missed any of the talks along the way, you can always go back and listen.

You can find them on the church website. And if you have any comments about the church website, we'd love to have your feedback on those sorts of things as well. And because we're covering such a large section this morning, there'll be bits that we don't touch on, and you might have questions about that, so please feel free to ask afterwards.

Come and have a chat about it. We'd love to talk to you further. Thank you very much, Sam, for doing that. Well, let's pray and ask for God's help.

Father, as we gather together to hear your word, we want to hear it carefully and clearly.

We want to hear the seriousness of what you are saying and the implications that it has upon our lives today and as we go about our life this coming week.

[4 : 39] Father, would you reach into our hearts and grab a hold of us and change us and conform us so that we are people who live by your agenda and according to your will and purpose.

Father, we come before you and ask that you would help us to put aside what we think is important and listen afresh to you to what is truly important.

Help us then, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. What's the time?

How many times do we ask that in a day? Our whole day is ordered, isn't it? And structured by time. 7 a.m. Time to get up or turn off the alarm and roll back to sleep if you're like me.

12.30. Lunchtime. Time to pick up the kids. Time to go to the shops. 8 p.m. Time for that meeting.

[6 : 05] Time to go out. Time to go to bed. Time reminds us what needs to be done. In fact, the closer we get to that time, the more urgent things become.

Well, Luke wants us to keep an eye on the time. Before we get stuck into chapter 13, there are two times that we need to adjust our life to.

Two times that will help us understand chapter 13. The first time that we've got to be focused on is cross time.

Go back to chapter 9. Just a few pages to chapter 9. Chapter 9 is a turning point in Luke's Gospel. Jesus has just identified himself to be the Messiah. That is God's anointed king, God's saving king. And here's what he says about himself in chapter 9, verse 22.

[7 : 13] And Jesus said, The Son of Man, his favourite title for referring to himself, he says, The Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life.

So here, for the first time, Jesus is making it crystal clear to us. He's telling us that he must die. He must go to the cross.

And from this point forward, everything in Luke is heading towards Jerusalem, where Jesus will die. So, if you look at verse 51 of chapter 9, it reads, As the time approached for Jesus to be taken up into heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is the place of execution. In Jerusalem, Jesus will die. And from this point onwards, time and time again, Luke keeps telling us that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem.

Because, at the cross, salvation comes. So the first timing that we need to be adjusted to is cross time.

[8 : 33] The second timing is judgment time. Have a look at chapter 12. Chapter 12 obviously comes before chapter 13, and in chapter 12, Jesus has been telling a parable, a story about his return in judgment.

So chapter 12, verse 40. And he's telling us there, Jesus says, You also must be ready, because the Son of Man, again, that same title that he gives to himself, will come at an hour or at a time when you do not expect him.

One day, the risen Lord Jesus is going to return in judgment. And he's saying, we've got to be ready for this. And to help us to understand how we need to be ready, he tells another short story.

Verse 57. It's like a little illustration. Have a look at chapter 12, verse 57. Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?

As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, so he's saying, look, put yourself in this situation. As you're going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled on the way, or your adversary may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.

[10 : 08] In other words, time is running out. There is an urgency. We've got to sort things out with God. You see, cross time prepares us for the coming of Jesus.

And that's the time frame we're in right now. The cross has happened. But judgment is yet to come. This is the time frame we're in.

Salvation is here today. Judgment is coming. And this is the time by which we're to adjust our life to. This is the time that our clock should be altered to.

And Luke wants us to take these two timings with us as we head into chapter 13. So three things we need to deal with urgently while we have time.

First, time to repent. Into chapter 13 we go. Jesus impresses us with the need to repent.

[11 : 18] Look at verse 3. But unless you repent, you too will all perish. And in case we haven't got it, the end of verse 5.

But unless you repent, you too will all perish. To perish is to face that judgment of God. A fearful and eternal separation from God for all eternity.

Hell itself. So there is this pressing urgency to repent. And repentance implies two things.

It implies turning from something. So you're going in this direction. And you've got to turn around 180 and go this direction. Turn from something.

And turn to something. So turn from your own desires and dreams. And turn to Jesus and pursue His will for your life.

[12 : 20] Repentance isn't just a one-off event. It is a daily action where we repent continually. It means dying to self. Dying to living my way and turning and saying, I am living for Christ.

And we continually need to alter ourselves and repent. His glory. Not my glory. His agenda. My agenda. And the reason we need to repent.

Well, there's two reasons in this little section. First, the reason to repent is because life is fragile. We don't know when life will end.

You see, Jesus' call for repentance comes in the context of sudden and surprising death. Look at verse 1. Now, there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

It sounds horrific, doesn't it? It was a horrific murder that took place. Pilate, of course, was the Roman prefect, the one who was in charge.

[13:34] He was in charge of military and security. And from history, history tells us he was quite a brutal man. And to remind the people who was in charge, he would just often have them killed.

And here we're reading in chapter 13, verse 1, he has people from Galilee knocked off. One minute they're on their way to the temple and the next minute they're dead.

Or look at verse 4. Jesus says, what about those 18 people who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? One minute they're out looking at all the views around them, perhaps looking down at their friends down below.

The next minute the tower collapses and they're dead. And the presumption behind both of these sudden and surprising deaths is that they must have been involved in some terrible sin.

God must be punishing them. But look what it says in verse 5. I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

[14:53] No, they're not worse sinners than you or I. They are not more guilty than you or I. In fact, I could be a worse sinner.

You could be more guilty than these people that's been talked about here. The point is, life is fragile. We will all die and we do not know when.

There is no guarantee that we're going to grow old. Sometimes death is sudden and surprising. An accident in a car. An untreatable disease.

Caught in an act of terrorism. One minute enjoying life. The next minute we're dead. Life is fragile. we need to repent. Well, the second reason we need to repent is, well, mercy will cease.

[15:55] God longs for people to repent. And the fact that we are still alive today is a sign of God's mercy. Look at verse 6.

Then Jesus told this parable. A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard. Now, we kind of associate vineyards with grapes, but they did sow fig trees there too, apparently.

And he went to look for fruit on it, but he didn't find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, look, for three years now I've been coming to look for fruit off this fig tree and I haven't found any.

So just cut it down. Why should it use up the soil? Why should it waste space if it's not producing fruit? Well, the point is simple, isn't it?

God looks for repentant lives. He looks for fruit. He looks for change and transformation. And if there's no fruit, there will be judgment.

[16:59] But, let's not miss this. He is merciful and gracious. He gives people more time. So look at verse 8. Sir, the man replied, leave it alone one more year.

Give the fig tree another year, another season. I'll dig round it, I'll fertilise it. If it bears fruit next year, fine, then it will have been worth it.

If not, if there's no fruit, cut it down. every day we live is a day of mercy.

God is giving opportunity to each one of us. But a day will come when we look for mercy and it will be too late for judgment will have come.

So he says, repent because life is fragile and mercy will cease. But not only is it a time to repent, so let's get our timings right again.

[18:11] We've got the time of the cross, the time of judgment that shapes and affects how we live today. And the first timing is, well, it means that we are to be people of repentance.

Second, a time to receive. Look at verse 10. On the Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues.

And while he's there, as we read, he heals this woman. And it has quite an impact, verse 14.

Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, there are six days for work, so come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.

You see, the Sabbath was, according to the law, a time of rest. No work was to be done, even if somebody was in desperate need, even if there was a terrible situation, no work, especially for this

woman.

But for Jesus, there is an urgency. No, it can't wait. This woman is in need. She needs to be healed now.

[19 : 28] You see, Jesus is saying, look, I am the one who has come to bring rest, true rest. I am the one who has come to bring redemption. My work is to restore people.

No, it can't wait. Now is the time to heal. And the healing is seen in two ways. First, free from slavery.

Look at how this woman's illness is described in verse 11. A woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years.

That's a significant amount of time for anybody. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. And then Jesus explains the reason.

Jump down to verse 16. The middle of verse 16. It tells us there that Satan has kept her bound for 18 long years.

[20 : 34] She's been kept bound by Satan. It's like a spiritual slavery. And her physical condition is even a picture of her slavery.

She's weighed down. She's bent over. And Jesus has come into the midst of her life to free her from her slavery.

But it is so much more than just physical. Think back to how God's people were slaves in Egypt. Listen to how God describes his rescue of them.

Here's a quote from Leviticus. It's a summary of all that God did. He says, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians.

I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with your heads held high. You see, the imagery, the picture, as Jesus comes to this woman, he's saying, this is what I've come to do for you.

[21 : 48] Through my death, I am going to free you from a greater slavery, slavery to sin and to Satan. I have come to take the burden of sin from you, the weight of judgment that you carry upon your backs.

I am going to release you from it. Go back to verse 12. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, woman, you are set free from your infirmity.

then he put his hands on her and immediately she straightened up and praised God. You see, Jesus sets us free so that we can walk with our heads held high, no longer burdened in guilt and shame, no longer having to look down and hide.

We've been released. we've been set free from slavery so now is the time to receive Jesus. Second reason to receive slavery, free from slavery and a new relationship.

Look at how Jesus refers to this woman back in verse 12. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, woman, he doesn't even ask, sorry, what's your name there?

[23 : 19] And then call her out. It's just woman. But then look how she's referred to after the healing. Down in verse 16.

Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for 18 long years, be set free in the Sabbath day from what bound her?

daughter of Abraham. Abraham, of course, was the great father figure for all God's children. He was the great example for all people, an example of faith.

He was a man who believed God's promises and trusted God's promises. So all who have faith in God, all who trust and believe in him, become children of Abraham, become children of God.

And now Jesus turns to her, he called her woman and now he calls her daughter because there's been faith. And this is what we can enjoy when we receive Jesus in faith, this personal and intimate relationship with God from no name to God's child, my daughter.

[24 : 38] my son. Now is the time to receive Jesus. So, let's get our timings right.

It's cross time, salvation has come, the time of judgment is yet to come, we do not know when, and that impresses upon us an urgency, a time to repent, a time to receive, and the implication out of all of this and the big application for us today is it implies a time to reach out.

Look at verse 22. Then Jesus went through the towns and villages teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

There's the indication again, Jesus is going to Jerusalem. Why? I'm going to die. This is why I'm here. It's a time of salvation. Verse 23, someone asked him, Lord, are only a few people going to be

saved?

What an excellent question. And I know it's a question that lots of us have asked many, many times. Are only a few people going to be saved?

[26 : 12] Who's going to repent? Who is going to receive Jesus? How many, Lord, how many of my friends, how many of my family, how many are going to follow Jesus?

How many in Carragalline are going to follow Jesus? Well, Jesus answers the question in two parts. First, he tells us, look, the door is open. look at the rest of verse 23. He said to them, make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to do so.

There's only one way, and that's through Christ. Verse 25, once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, Sir, open the door for us.

But he will answer, I don't know you or where you come from. Today, the door is open.

[27 : 37] Right now, the door is open. Every day is an opportunity to repent and receive. Every day that the door is open is a day of God's immense grace and mercy that flows towards us and to our community and to our world.

But one day, a day is going to come when that door will close. End of verse 25, and you will stand outside knocking and pleading, Sir, open the door for us.

But he will answer, I don't know you or where you've come from. The time of salvation will be over, and the time of judgment will have come.

come. Now is the time. Today, reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ.

His second answer is not only is the door open, but he wants us to know that the nations will come.

While there will be people who refuse to repent and refuse to receive, look what he says, verse 29.

[29 : 12] Look, people will come from east and west and north and south and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

What a picture, what a sight. People from every nation across this world, people of all languages and races gathering together for the ultimate feast in the kingdom of God.

People from throughout all time and all ages, people who have repented and received will enjoy God's salvation in all its fullness.

People will come, Jesus tells us. People from all kinds of places that we never thought possible. now is the time.

The nations will come. Reach out with the good news of Jesus. And the implication is crystal clear.

[30 : 20] It's just not easy to miss, is it? if the door is open today, if the nations are going to come, then we have a responsibility, a responsibility with this good news.

How are people going to repent? How are people going to receive? unless they hear the good news about Christ.

So how do we respond to that? Well, two things, I haven't got it on the screen, but you can remember them. The first thing is pray.

Pray for our community. Pray for our friends. Pray for our family. Pray for the people we're going to meet tomorrow at work.

And if we're in any doubt about God's heart for his people, look at what Jesus says, verse 34. Verse 34, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you were not willing.

[31 : 50] Pleading. Jesus longs to gather his people, to come under the safety and security of the cross.

That is his heart's desire that people would come. come. So this Wednesday, in our home groups, you'll see it in the news sheet, there's a little note there, that we're going to simply meet together in our home groups to pray for our community.

As we think about Christmas coming, we want to pray for our community. community. So if you have people that you want to pray for, people in your family, your friends, we're simply just going to pray.

Pray because I can't change anyone and you can't change anyone. Pray that God would work in people's lives, that they will repent and that they will receive Jesus.

So come, I encourage you, join with us, if at all possible, come and pray. Pray for our community.

The second thing we can do is to share the good news about Jesus.

[33 : 24] As part of outreach for us as a church, we're going to be doing two things. We're going to be giving out calendars, bringing them round to some of the homes in Carragalline, knocking on the door, wishing people a happy Christmas, presenting them with a gift, or if you can't do that, just simply putting it through the letterbox.

What impact will it have? I don't know. But I do know that just the other week, very recently, I had a phone call, and it was about a lady, rang her up.

She had got a calendar last year, and had been looking at it, and had seen the little note about further information, and asked would we send out some stuff to her to read.

That's one lady. Is it worth it? Absolutely. share the good news of Jesus with others in a very simple way.

Join with us on those two Wednesdays as our home groups gather with us, if at all possible. And the other one is to hand out the invite to our carol service.

[34 : 44] I'm not sure where mine is here. there's bunches of them at the table. Thank you. Yeah, one. Thanks, Joy. And take them with you.

You can simply give them out to your friend, to a neighbour, somebody who you know. They mightn't come, that's okay. But they're not going to come if they don't get invited.

To come and hear songs about the Saviour, about the Lord Jesus, to hear the good news, of what he has done. Luke wants us to keep an eye on the time, the time of the cross.

That's the time we're living in right now. Judgment will come. It impresses upon us an urgency, time to repent, time to receive, and time reach out, time to pray, to ask our Father to do a work in people's lives, and a time to share.

Let's just take a moment in the quietness to respond ourselves to that. moment in the quietness.

[36 : 10] Maybe it's you who need to repent and receive. Maybe we need to think about how I'm going to pray for the community, and how I can put this into action.

Just take a moment to think those things through and respond to God in the quietness.