

Living on Borrowed Time

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[0:00] Luke chapter number 13, Luke chapter number 13, if you're able to stand for the reading of God's word, I ask that you would. Luke chapter number 13, what a beautiful song, what a reminder. It goes right along with the message this morning.

I'm going to preach a message entitled this, Living on Borrowed Time. Living on Borrowed Time. And I'm enjoying this study through the Gospel of Luke. I hope it's been a help to you. And Jesus is, really this is kind of the conclusion of the sermon Jesus has been preaching since the start of chapter number 12.

And really the entire theme of this sermon is this, be ready. Because the Lord is coming back. I love that song, it is well, I think we could sing it every Sunday and I still wouldn't tire of it.

But I love that last verse that He's coming back. And so since He's coming back, here's what we need to be doing. We need to be ready. And that's what Jesus wants us to know. He wants us to understand that truth.

Whether we know Him as our Lord and Savior, we still need to be ready. And if we don't know the Lord as our Savior, we need to make sure that we are ready. And Jesus shows us exactly how to do that. So we're going to read the first nine verses here in Luke chapter number 13.

[1:04] Have a word of prayer and then jump right in. The Bible says this, They were present at that season some that told Him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye, these Galileans, were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

I tell you, nay. But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

I tell you, nay. But except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish. I just want to throw this in here. You notice Jesus said the same thing twice. It's kind of like when your mom repeats something twice. You probably should pay attention. So Jesus, when He says things back to back like this, He wants us to understand this truth. And so to understand the truth, He illustrates this by giving a parable in verse 6.

And He spake also this parable. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this tree, and find none.

[2:16] Cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also till I dig about it and dung it. And if it bear fruit, well.

And if not, then after that shall cut it down. Jesus, it seems kind of, the illustration here at the beginning, it seems like what in the world is He talking about?

But He's really giving us this idea that we have this illusion, we have all this time. But He gives two specific tragedies, because that morning, they didn't think those things were going to happen to them.

But they did. And Jesus is saying, listen, we don't know how much time we have. Every breath is borrowed. We're living on this borrowed time. So how do we move forward? How do we prepare our lives?

And that's what He's going to show us here this morning. So let's go ahead and ask Him to help us. Father, thank You for this time together. Lord, thank You for Your Word that we can open it up. And Lord, I know there's been a lot of things going on in a lot of lives this week.

[3:15] We're busy. We have a busy week coming up. But Lord, I pray You would help us just to slow down. Lord, help us to do some evaluation, take some inventory on how we're spending our

time. Lord, are we living a life that is ready for You to come back?

Are we on mission for You? Lord, I pray that You would just use this text, You would use Your Word today to speak to our hearts, to challenge us, to convict us, to encourage us where need be.

Lord, I do pray that if there is somebody here today that does not know You as their Savior, Lord, they're not trusting in other things. They must trust in You, Lord, that today would be that day. Lord, I pray You would be with me now.

You would empty me of self. You would cleanse me of sin. You would fill me with Your Spirit. Lord, I want to be a help to Your people this morning as You've been a help to me even studying this text.

Lord, I pray You would receive all the honor and glory that's due Your name.

We ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. I think I already know the answer to this question because we were a slow-arriving crowd this morning.

[4:14] But I'm going to ask anyways, how many of you hit the snooze button this morning? I feel like we are liars in here.

Like, not me. How many of you just, okay, how many of you even set an alarm? Yeah, there you go. Man, you're living by faith, man. That's next-level stuff right there. I appreciate that.

But for those that raised your hand and those that were afraid to raise your hand but still hit the snooze button, I mean, if you're like me, the alarm went off and your first thought was either, ugh, and then it was followed by just a few more minutes.

And we all know how that goes. Five minutes turns to ten minutes. Ten minutes turns to fifteen, and before you know it, you're running around like a chicken with your head cut off.

You're yelling at the kids to get in the car. You're frustrated by everything. Every single light was red, and if you live on the wrong side of the tracks, you are stopped by the Gainesville train that is ever faithful to be there when you're running late.

[5:17] I mean, that's how I think. I'm like, do I have time to go down California or do I have to drive all the way to 82 just in case the train comes?

You know, and I see people like that, and I've been there too, and they're mad at the lights, and I tell them, I can't believe all these lights, and you know, the reality is if you just got up on time and left a little bit earlier, you'd be okay. But it's one of those things, and we've all been there, and honestly, the snooze button was okay when it comes to your morning alarm, but the problem is, is it's not just something we do with an alarm clock.

I think we do it in our life often, whether it's spiritual things or just everyday life. It's not that we're saying no to certain things. We're just saying, now's not a great time.

Hey, a couple more days. Next week, when it slows down, and I think we're all guilty of assuming we have more time than we do. We think things like this.

I'll get to it later. I'll deal with that tomorrow. Some of us have been dealing with saying that for weeks now. I'll deal with that tomorrow, and you know, we just kind of want to keep pushing it down the road.

[6:28] We say things like, I got plenty of time. You know, and I was like that in school. I got plenty of time to finish this project. You know, I just figured this. I work better under pressure, so I'm just going to wait until like the last minute, then it's going to really help me focus.

But the problem is, is we think we have all this time, and then suddenly, we don't. That things that's been on the calendar for months, that deadline at work, it just seems to have snuck up on you. That bill that you were going to pay, guess what? You forgot to pay it. This is your friendly reminder. Check your bills. Pay them. A conversation you may have wished you would have had before it was too late.

But here's what's even more serious, is that we don't just do it with everyday things. I think if we're honest, sometimes we do it with spiritual things. We do it with eternal things.

We assume that we have more time to get right with God. We think to ourselves, the Lord knows I love Him, but I'll just deal with this later. Maybe you're at a stage in your life, maybe young people think, I'll get more serious when I get a little bit older.

[7:39] I'll get more serious when this happens, and one day I'll really go all in for God. Listen, it doesn't matter if you're a teenager, or you're the oldest person in your room, today's the day to go all in. That's what Jesus calls.

That's the life that He calls us to live, and Jesus is confronting that exact mindset here in Luke chapter number 13. And we read those first five verses, and we think, man, what did these two

tragedies some 2,000 years ago have to do with us here at Central Baptist Church in 2026? Because really it has nothing to do with these tragedies. What Jesus is really trying to pull out and to put into our lives is that we need to live our life with some urgency. We need to be urgent about the things of God. It's time to be serious about dealing with repentance, about dealing with things in our life that are there that should not be. It reminds us of this simple reality. We are living on borrowed time. See, you don't control, if we're going to kind of think of an idea here, we don't control how much time we have. [8:49] But what we can control is what we do with the time that we have. That's what Jesus wants us to understand. He wants us to be a people that live with urgency.

So the question naturally becomes, how should we live knowing that we're on borrowed time? Because I think we understand that. We understand the reality of that. Here in the text, Jesus is going to give us three powerful reminders about life and about time and about eternity. And the first thing that we see here is this. Number one, that tragedy is a warning, not a measure.

Tragedy is a warning, not a measure. Verse number one, they were present at the season, some that told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Now, maybe to us, we're thinking, okay, I'm not really sure what that means. But you got to realize that the Bible, they would understand that. This would be like, this would be a major event in their history.

[9:53] This was something that didn't happen that long ago. Pilate is still alive. He is still in rule at this time. And this was shocking. I mean, it would be like if we said, you remember 9-11?

I mean, many of us in this room, we would instantly know exactly what it was. And there's opinions about it. And there's all kinds of situations about it. But that was kind of the situation here. Now, we don't know all the details, but more than likely, this atrocity took place during Passover.

It would have been the only time that these ordinary worshipers, these Galileans, would have been allowed kind of into the temple grounds area. They would have traveled in for Passover. We see that throughout the Gospels.

And they would have been there and they would have been directly involved. They would have purchased a lamb or a turtle doves, depending on their financial state. And they would have been in that opportunity. And see, these Galileans, they had simply come to worship the Lord.

Now, some historians say that they were using some of this opportunity to protest against Pilate, to protest against the Romans. We've seen that. Israel did not like the fact that Rome was in charge and they kind of had their hands in some of the religious ceremonies.

[11:04] But we don't know what the details were, but Pilate decided, you know what, we're just going to kill them right here. And so, he had his officers, his police, his soldiers, they would have killed them right there in the temple grounds.

I mean, we see things, we see tragedies like this even in our culture. People have come in and shot at churches and different things like that. That's kind of what this was. That they were there just worshipping.

They were there just serving the Lord and it was disturbing and it was violent and it was unforgettable. Everybody in town knew about it and it was the talk of the town. So, Jesus is preaching this sermon.

If your Bible has red letters, I mean, he's talking and somebody's just in the middle of the sermon, hey, did you hear about this? What do you have to say about this, Jesus? You know, it kind of seems as an interruption.

And here's the issue. The assumption in the crowd was this. Those people must have done something to deserve that. That was the way that they thought. And I just want to remind you, this is not really new thinking.

[12:07] If you know your Old Testament, there was a man named Job. Job was a very rich man. He was a very powerful man. He had pretty much everything he ever needed. He had houses and lands. I mean, he was probably the most wealthy man on the face of the earth.

And yet, God allowed Satan to come and to touch those things and he lost all those things. And then Job had some really awesome, solid friends show up. And if you've read the book of Job, you know I'm being completely sarcastic.

But I mean, I kind of understand where Job's friends were coming from. Because I mean, Job seemed to have everything and then like in a moment, everything was gone and they're there and they kind of feel bad for him and they're kind of, they don't know what to say.

They're like, let's just sit here for a minute. Then they decide, you know what? Job, you're a bad dude. I mean, we've thought about it. We've prayed about it. And only bad things happen to bad people.

And that was kind of their mindset. That Job's suffering was because he was an awful, wicked sinner who was just really good at hiding it. That was their mindset. And really, it's been that way for a long time.

[13:15] You go to John chapter 9. The disciples, the apostles of Jesus, they're there and this blind man comes in and here's what the disciples ask. Why was this man, who sinned that this man was born blind?

Was it his parents or was it him? Because when they looked at somebody that was maimed or somebody that had a deformity like that, the only option for that was they were sinners. That was the only option.

And before we judge the Job's friends and before we judge the disciples, I submit to you that sometimes that mindset, it runs deep in our human nature. And honestly, here's why it does. It's an attractive way to think because it's neat and it's clean and it's self-satisfying because we can look at a situation and we can think because if tragedy only happens to bad people, I must be a good person then.

That's kind of what we think. That's kind of how our mind works. In other words, here's what they're saying. They didn't have a legitimate question. They're saying, come on, Jesus, just tell us they did wrong so we feel better about ourselves.

[14:25] That's what's taking place here. That's kind of the mindset. But Jesus, He's just like my parents were. He just kind of ignored it and just went on. He just kind of He's not there to play their game and in fact, He brings up another tragedy.

Verse number 14, verse number 4, excuse me, or those 18 upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell and slew them. Think ye they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

See, many believe this Tower of Siloam would have stood near the wall of Jerusalem. Maybe when you read the Bible you heard of the Pool of Siloam. This would have been maybe what many historians believe is they were building one of the aqueducts to bring water in to have a better water source and what happens during this construction is it collapses and it kills 18 people.

It was an absolute tragedy and here's why that matters. Here's why Jesus is bringing it up because the Galileans were kind of looked down upon. They were Jews but they were just Jews from the wrong side of the tracks.

They were kind of the backwoods Jews. They were the redneck Jews. They weren't sophisticated Jerusalem Jews. So what they had going on for them is when they looked at them well the Galileans you know what they probably had that coming.

[15:47] If they would just learn to keep their mouth shut if they would just learn to not mess with Pilate they probably wouldn't have had that happen. But Jesus brings up a situation that nobody could say that about.

This was random it was unexpected there was no explanation it was an accident. In Jesus he uses both examples to drive home the same point.

He says there in verse number two suppose ye these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things and the crowd's thinking absolutely we do. That's a hundred percent what we think because that is what they thought.

He says in verse number five verse number four think ye that they were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem. And Jesus gives the same answer to both.

He says I tell you I tell you this no. He said you're thinking about this wrong. You're assuming the wrong things. Now before we move on I don't want us to misunderstand this.

[16:49] Jesus is not saying that sin never brings consequences. Sin does bring consequences. We got to be careful because our sin will find us out.

That everything we do is not hid from the Lord. But that's not the point of this text. Here's what he's doing. He's rejecting the idea that all tragedy is the result of us being sinners.

That's what he's saying. Because that's how they thought. They thought well as long as I'm good and as long as nothing happens to me then I must be living okay. My life is good. My life is right before the Lord. But that's not the he's not he doesn't want us to miss this. His message is found in verse 3 and verse 5 he says this but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.

Here's what Jesus is doing. He's not comparing sinners. Galileans versus Jerusalem people. You know higher society versus regular people.

[17:56] That's not what he's doing. No here's what he's doing. He's leveling the ground. He wants us all to understand this they were all sinners. That we all fall short of the glory of God.

That we're all guilty. That we all deserve death. You think well I don't know if I like that message. It's the message. But God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. Listen tragedy is not proof of greater guilt. It's just a reminder that judgment is coming one day.

I think we mentioned last week it's appointed a man once to die and after this the judgment. He's just saying listen sometimes life has tragedies. Sometimes there's unexplainable things as this tower falling or pilot kind of going off the rails.

But instead of asking about it instead of thinking about it every time we hear about a tragedy an accident a sudden death an unexpected loss sometimes we try to explain it away. We try to figure out the issues of it instead of saying why did this happen to them we need to look at a text like that and say what does this mean for me?

[19:08] How can I apply this to my life? Because the truth is that you're not guaranteed tomorrow either. I mean it's not a popular thing to think about but it is the reality.

I would imagine all of us in this room know somebody or know something very close where some tragic accident happened. And it was just they were here and they were gone. And we know that true but if we're honest we think well that will never happen to me until it does.

And Jesus wants us to be mindful of that. Listen to this. The real question is not why do bad things happen to good people? I'm sure you've heard that all the time.

Why do bad things happen to good people? No I think here's a better question. Why do good things happen to bad people? Because that's all of us. God loves us.

I don't know. I think it means God loves us. That God is merciful and that he's gracious and that's the answer. Why do good things happen to bad people? Because he's gracious and he's merciful and he's patient with us.

[20:17] And the reason that matters so much in our life is sometimes we're carrying things that we are not intended to carry. we're carrying guilt and for things that you didn't cause.

Sometimes a tragedy happens and you know what? We can't get past it. Sometimes parents live in blame their whole life because their child decided to make a choice and is living a prodigal style life. Families carry burdens they were never meant to carry. But Jesus is showing us here in this text that not all tragedy is a result of our sin.

That death happens. Tragedies come to all and sometimes the unthinkable even comes to the most faithful people. Which means the issue is not why them.

The issue is this. Are you ready? That's what Jesus is driving home. Because when these men went to build the Tower of Siloam, they didn't think when they got up that morning that was the last morning they were going to get up.

[21:20] Nobody thinks that. We see accents all the time on the highway. Nobody gets up and thinks that's going to be me today. I mean we just live life like we just have unlimited time.

No, it's borrowed. We don't know how much time that we have. But why does Jesus dig so deep in on this idea? We've been talking about repentance for it seems weeks now. I think he does it because of this.

Number two, life is limited so repentance is urgent. Life is limited so repentance is urgent. Notice what he said again in verse 3.

But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. This word except it means unless this happens, nothing else matters.

That's what he's bringing us to the point. I mean you can live your life and do all of these things but except ye repent, it doesn't matter what you did. This is the most important decision that you will ever make.

[22:20] Here's what Jesus is saying. Repentance is not optional. It's not when you get around to it and you feel like it's a good idea and if it fits in your schedule and it kind of molds around your lifestyle.

No, it's absolutely necessary. But notice what Jesus doesn't say. He doesn't say all you need to do is just try a little bit harder. He doesn't say you know what you need to do?

You just need to be a better person. You know sometimes you ever wake up and say man today I'm just going to be a better person and then you get in your car and you start yelling at people. At least they don't know.

You know that's just between, isn't it super hard just to be a better person sometimes? Because even sometimes on the outside you're trying to be a better person, on the inside you're like I want to punch these people in their face. So if I'm looking at you weird when you're talking to me you just think he probably wants to punch me in my face.

I'm just trying to be real. If us getting to heaven was based on being a better person I'm not sure any of us would make it. Jesus doesn't say hey here's what I need you to do.

[23:24] Here's how you get to heaven. Clean up your life. Well I got to clean my life up a little bit before I come to Jesus before I come to church. No, no. Here's what you got to do. Repent. You got to realize that you're a sinner and God loves you and he saved you.

That's where it starts. He never says clean yourself up. He says come unto me. That's the goal. That's the aim. So here's the question. We talked a lot about it but what is repentance?

I just want to dig in real quick so we make sure we understand. Because I think repentance is often misunderstood. Sometimes people think repentance is just emotion. It's crying and it's feeling bad. Listen, sometimes that is that way. But you know what? Sometimes I cried and I was sad when I got caught growing up just because I got caught. I wasn't really repentant.

I was just like my dad's going to kill me and I'm probably going to die. I might as well cry about it. But sometimes that's how we treat repentance. We know it's wrong but we actually enjoy it.

[24:23] We just want to say I'm sorry so we can just move on past it. Sometimes people view repentance as a ritual. It's something you go through. It's something you do.

That's not what repentance is. Repentance, true repentance, true biblical repentance when Jesus says except you repent, here's what it means. It means you change your mind about your sin.

That's the first step. You change your mind about your sin and then number two, you turn from your sin to Jesus. Basically you're going down life, living life like this, you realize that you're a sinner that you sinned against God and you want to go towards him.

That's what repentance is. It's turning from your sin, not just stop sinning, but stop sinning and turn towards Christ. That's the goal. That's the aim.

And here's the reminder. It's not a temporary change or a quick fix. You know what? I mean, we'll give an example. How many of you have ever been to the dentist? Yeah, we got some dental hygienists in here and stuff.

[25:25] You know how good I brush my teeth the week I'm going to the dentist? Like I'm supposed to. And then when, you know how much I, you know when I floss the day before? Because they're going to say, do you floss them?

I'm like, absolutely I floss. Don't listen to that, Miss Jordan. Because she asked me that. I'm like, is that not how we operate? Yeah. But that's sometimes how we view repentance.

We do something, we feel like, man, I need to get ahead of this before this train comes down the track and the Lord just smashes me. Listen, God's not trying to do that. That's not what he's, that's not the goal. He's not up here to make our life miserable.

You know why he wants us to live in a state of repentance? So we can have a relationship with him. Because he loves us and he cares for us and he wants the best for us. He's giving all of his thoughts towards us and sometimes we're just not going that way.

See, it's not a quick fix. It's not a temporary change. It's a change of mind that leads to a change of life. And it affects how you think and how you live.

[26:24] Not one day, not one week, but for the rest of your life. Does that mean we're perfect? No. No, we can, we can know that we're saved.

We can know we're on the way to heaven and we can have repented of our sins one time. Salvation is a one time thing. Let's just make sure we understand that. You don't have to get saved over and over again, but we still sin and we have to repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness.

First John 1, 9, if we repent of our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us. It's about fellowship with God. That's what it's about. You say, well, preacher, why should I repent?

Because Jesus shows us in these verses, it's because judgment is certain. He says, except ye repent, notice what he said, ye shall all likewise perish.

Not might, not maybe, we will. That's the reality of it. We don't like to talk about it, but every person will face death and after that, they'll face God.

[27 : 27] But here's the beautiful thing. If you know Christ is your Savior, you don't have to fear that. I'm ready to see the Lord face to face. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.

I want to see my Savior. I want to be there. I don't want to have to deal with sin anymore. I want to live in a place of a perfect relationship with Jesus Christ. And Jesus knows this.

He knows that death is coming. He knows judgment is certain. And he's telling us this because he loves us. This is not a, oh man, the preacher's mad and Jesus is mad.

I'm thankful Jesus tells us the truth. That we don't live through life thinking we're all good. And then judgment comes and we think, wish somebody would have told me about this. You ever had one of those things at work?

You think, I wish somebody had told me about this. I'm completely unprepared. I look silly up here. Listen, that's not how Jesus operates. And he's confronting this, this illusion of time that we think that we have.

[28 : 25] In fact, he's just lovingly reminding us, time is no, we have no guarantee of it. And we have no guarantee that we have more time later.

So what he's saying is, is we must make sure we are right with him right now. That we, we don't leave these, this, this auditorium this morning thinking, I'll deal with that later.

See, the greatest tragedy is not how you die. That's what the Jews thought. Like, I can't believe they got slaughtered in the temple. I can't believe, man, they got to be really bad if a tower fell on them.

I mean, I mean, towers just don't fall on people unless you're bad people. That's what they were thinking. Jesus says, no, actually the worst way to die is without repentance. That's where you don't want to find yourself.

Like, a tower's not great. But a repent, without repentance, has eternal consequences. And that's what Jesus is teaching. And before we move on, I just want to, I want to make it real in our lives real quick and just ask yourself, is there something God has shown you that you've been putting off?

[29 : 33] Maybe there's a sin in your life. And he says, get rid of that. Stop doing that. And we keep saying, well, it's not that bad. I'll deal with it later. Like, you know, I'll deal with it.

And then it, Lord, just let me be. Maybe it's a step of obedience that we're delaying. He's calling you out to do something. Maybe to take a stand at school and share the gospel with your friends, to take a stand at work.

Listen, peer pressure is not just only for teenagers. Sometimes we're not willing to do what we should at work because we're afraid. Maybe God is leading us to that step of obedience. Maybe it's just, maybe you're coming to this realization, I've never really repented of my sins.

You just need to trust Christ today for salvation. Listen, if you keep saying later, later becomes into not at all, and the urgency fades, and you find yourself maybe one day thinking, it's too late.

So what are you putting off spiritually right now? Because whatever it is, I think this, it's probably more urgent than you think it is. Because we don't know how much time we have.

[30 : 39] It's borrowed time. So life is limited. Repentance is urgent. So why hasn't judgment come? That's what the world says. Well, where is he? You always talk about Jesus coming back.

Where is he? Well, I love this third point. God is patient, but time is running out. Peter tells us in the book of 1 Peter that God is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness.

He's not lazy, but he's rather that all should come to repentance. No, God is patient. And to close out his sermon, Jesus uses a parable to illustrate this truth.

He introduces us to a man that planted a fig tree in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit, and he found none. And I think we would understand the frustration there. Some of you want to be gardeners.

And you go out to your garden, you're thinking, why is nothing growing? All I grow is leaves. It's just green all the time. And you know what? And you think, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to tear this up and throw it away and plant something new.

[31:42] That makes sense. You spent money. You cultivate the ground. You fertilize it. You do all of these things. Why? Because the idea is it bears fruit. That is the goal.

And this tree that we're introduced to in verse number six had everything it needed to bear fruit. It had been planted. It had been cared for. It had been watered over and over and over.

It had been fertilized for years and absolutely nothing. What a one-time thing. Because some people have the idea that God is just going to, he gave you one chance and then you're done. No, three years. That's what the Bible says in verse number seven. Then he said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, behold, these three years I come of this fig tree and find none. There was no growth, no fruit, no change.

Notice what he says at the end of the verse. He said, cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground? He said, why is this tree taking up all this space in my vineyard and not doing its one job producing fruit?

[32:47] That's what he's saying. And if we're looking at this strictly from a farming perspective, from a vineyard dresser, that is a perfectly reasonable suggestion.

Cut it down. It's not worth anything. They're reasonable. The tree was planted in good soil. It was given space. It was given sunlight. It's drawing nutrients from the ground and it's producing nothing. It was using resources without fulfilling its purpose. And the guys, the vineyard dresser says this, the owner says, it must go. But I love verse number eight.

And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also till I shall dig about it and dung it. The caretaker speaks up. Let's just give it, let's give it one more year.

Look, I'm going to put some extra work in it here. I'm going to put some people around this tree that really know what they're doing. I'm going to call a tree specialist. I'm going to come and have the soil tested and I'm going to dig around it.

[33:50] I'm going to make sure it's got everything that it needs. I'm going to fertilize it. Let's just give it a little more time. You know what that is? Astonishing mercy.

That's what that is. See, don't miss this. The owner represents the justice of God. God is just. And he will exact justice.

Perfect justice. Everything he does is perfect. But the caretaker, it represents the mercy of Jesus Christ. Because God says, hey, this tree is not doing anything.

Let's get rid of it. And Jesus says, let's just give it a little more time. Let me just, I'm going to send some people in his life and they're going to love on him and they're going to share the gospel. Let's just give him a little more time.

See, justice says, cut it down. And mercy says, give it more time. See, the Lord is merciful to give us time to respond.

[34:52] How does God work in that time? He digs around the roots. He fertilizes. He brings the word into your life. Maybe he's brought people into your life. You know what they're doing? They're just loving you.

They're sharing the gospel. He sends the spirit to stir your heart. Maybe it's right now the Holy Spirit saying, that's exactly what you need. And he reminds you of sin, not to make you feel terrible, but to realize there's a debt to be paid.

But here's the great news. He already paid the debt. And he presses that conviction on your soul. And moment after moment, month after month, God is working to produce fruit in your life.

He loves you. He cares for you. But here's the reality. There is a time limit. Verse 9. And if it bear fruit, we're good to go.

But notice what he says. And if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down. He's not being mean here.

[35:53] He's just speaking to the reality that at some point time will run out. Some people live a few years. Some people live 100 years. But the opportunity is not going to last forever.

See, God's patience. Get a hold of this. God's patience is not permission to keep hitting the snooze button. Whether it's salvation, whether it's obedience, whether it's service.

It's not a good time right now. I'm busy. I got kids at home. And when I get out and we just keep it and snooze. Keep it and snooze. No, here's what God's patience is. It's an opportunity to repent.

That's what it is. But what can we take home with us? I think we can take this. That every day that you wake up, every breath that you take, every moment that you have, here's what it is.

Borrowed time. That's what it is. Everybody in this room, we're living on borrowed time. So ask yourself, am I bearing fruit?

[36:57] Or am I just taking up space? Am I growing spiritually? Or am I just coasting? Am I responding to God?

Or ignoring Him? Snoozing Him? Listen, do not waste the borrowed time that God is giving you to respond.

The time is now. We don't know the rest of this day. We know this. We have this time right here. Would the Lord help us to respond however He spoke to our hearts?

With our heads bowed and our eyes closed, why don't we stand and get ready for this time of invitation? If you're here, you say, Preacher, I know the Lord is my Savior.

I put my faith and trust in what Jesus Christ did on the cross of Calvary. Let me ask you this. Is your life bearing fruit? That's what Jesus intends for us to do.

[37:58] Bearing fruit looks like living a Christ-like life. Loving God. Loving others. Sharing the gospel. Leading your children and the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.

Being a witness wherever God places you. He's not calling you to be perfect, but He is calling you to make a difference. People can see the fruit of your life. They can see your good works and want some of that.

And glorify your Father which is in heaven. That's the goal, that we're to let our light so shine. He's not looking for perfection, but He is looking for progress. Is your life changed and continuing to change?

That's a sign that you are in the family. That God is working. Because real repentance produces real fruit. Maybe you're here and you try to turn over a new leaf.

You're trying to be a good person. You're trying to do the right thing. Listen, there's nothing wrong with that. But the most important decision you'll ever make is do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior?

[39:05] Because the only reason you're here, the only reason I'm here is the mercy of God. And the only reason you still have time is the grace of God. But do not presume on that grace.

God is looking for fruit. And here's the beautiful thing. Jesus made a way. That's what the cross of Calvary is about. We're all sinners. But we must all come to that realization that it was my sin that put Him on that cross.

That that should have been my cross. And He died the death that I should have died. And He paid a debt that I should have paid. And He was buried and He rose again so that I might have life and I might have it eternally.

I might have a purpose in my life here today. Don't put it off any longer. You may not feel comfortable coming down here at this invitation time. Nobody's going to be looking around.

Brother Garrett's down here. My wife's down here. I'm down here. I'd love to show you from the Word of God. After church, you say, Preacher, I've got some questions about that. I'll sit down with you. Let's talk about it.

[40:06] Because that is the most important thing that you can ever do is trust Jesus Christ as your Savior. Whether you know Him or you don't, don't assume you have more time. Don't delay what God is doing in your heart.

Come today. Father, thank You for this time.