

**Parables of Luke (NCC Equip Class January-March 2017)**

Session #2: January 15, 2017

**“The Barren Fig Tree” or “The Parable of Presumption”**

Luke 13:6-9

**Introduction:**

**Review:**

What is a parable?

**Two-Fold Intent of Parables:**

#1 - \_\_\_\_\_ Truth from Unbelievers and Unbelieving Israel

#2 - \_\_\_\_\_ Truth to Believers and Followers

**Context:**

What is spiritual presumption?

Historically, how had Israel been spiritually presumptuous?

Briefly, describe God’s character in His own words from Exodus 34:6-7:

**Broad Context (of the Parable in Luke 13:6-9):** The History of God and Israel

**Immediate Context:** Christ’s Sermon from Luke 12 and a Question and Answer Given in Luke 13:1-5

What action does Christ recommend in Luke 13:3 and 5? \_\_\_\_\_

**The Barren Fig Tree Parable is Both a History and a Warning:** (Explain)

#1 – History - \_\_\_\_\_

#2 – Warning - \_\_\_\_\_

**Two Key Themes:**

- 1) The Great Patience of God – Allowing Fruitless and Wicked People to Remain
- 2) The Presumption of Fruitless and Wicked People Unwilling to Repent in the Face of God’s Continuous Mercy and Faithfulness

**In the Old Testament Fig Trees Commonly Symbolized:**

#1 - \_\_\_\_\_

#2 - \_\_\_\_\_

**I. The Fate of the Fruitless and the Patience of God (6-7)**

What two plants is Israel likened to in the Old Testament (cf. Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 8, 24; Hosea 9; Micah 7):

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

When Israel is depicted as a vineyard or fig tree in the OT, what is often the problem regarding its fruit?

**A) The Futility of Fruitlessness (6)**

Why would a fig tree typically do well in a vineyard?

How long had this tree gone without fruit? \_\_\_\_\_ About how long had this generation of Israel had Christ in their midst preaching, performing miracles, and calling on all to repent? \_\_\_\_\_ (See also Luke 3:7-9)

How had Israel proven to be like this fig tree?

**B) The Fate of the Fruitless (7)**

What does the owner of the vineyard want to do with the tree and why?

What happens to unfruitful people who will not repent and believe?

## **II. The Last Chance for the Fruitless and Still More Patience from God (8-9)**

### **A) The Last Chance for Fruit (8-9a)**

What does the vinedresser want to do for the tree?

What is going to happen to the tree if it still produces no fruit?

How is Christ like this vinedresser?

### **B) The Future of the Fruitless (9b)**

How had God been ridiculously generous with Israel before, during, and after the time of Christ?

Why do you think this parable's ending is left open (i.e. We are not told what happens to the tree)?

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### **Parable: "The Barren Fig Tree" (Luke 13:6-9)**

#### **Context:**

- 1) Old Testament History of God and Israel
- 2) Rejection of Christ by Israel
- 3) Luke 12:1-13:5

#### **Representations in the Parable:**

- 1) Fig Tree in the Vineyard = Israel
- 2) Owner of the Vineyard = God
- 3) Vineyard Keeper = Possibly Jesus

#### **Point of the Parable:**

Despite having so many privileges from God, Israel has presumptuously proven to be unfruitful. God keeps extending to them grace upon grace and mercy upon mercy. But how much time do they have left before God's patience runs out?