

Reading Luke in Lent



Gospel of Luke 12:49–13:10

Not Peace, but Division

49 'I came to cast fire on the earth,
and would that it were already kindled!
50 I have a baptism to be baptized with,
and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!
51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.
52 For from now on in one house there will be five divided,
three against two and two against three.
53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father,
mother against daughter and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

Interpreting the Time

54 He also said to the crowds,
'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, "A shower is coming."
And so it happens.
55 And when you see the south wind blowing, you say,
"There will be scorching heat," and it happens.
56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky,
but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Settle with Your Accuser

57 'And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?
58 As you go with your accuser before the magistrate,
make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge,
and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison.
59 I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny.'

Repent or Perish

13:1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans
whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.
2 And he answered them,
'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans,
because they suffered in this way?
3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.
4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them:
do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?
5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.'

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

- 6 And he told this parable:
‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.
- 7 And he said to the vinedresser,
“Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none.
Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?”
- 8 And he answered him,
“Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure.
- 9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”

Reflection

Reading through Luke the opening sentences will remind us of John the Baptist and his promise of Baptism . They also look forward to Luke’s volume the Acts of the Apostles when the Apostles will be baptised in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This looking back and forth emphasises the present moment. One the road to Jerusalem time is running out. Now is the time for repentance. Forgiveness can only follow true repentance which involves the ability to recognise the nature of our sins

- What are the signs in our own lives which we need to reflect on and seek forgiveness?
- Where do we need the vine dresser to build us up?

Prayer

To set the earth ablaze, O God,
your Son submitted to a baptism unto death,
and from his cup of suffering
you call the Church to drink.

Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus
and give us strength in time of trial
to run the race that lies before us.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
Amen.