

Time to Grow

Luke 13:1-9

- 1) Jesus's parable in Luke 13:6-9 tells us that God is looking for fruit in our lives. Can you think of any other parts of the Bible which also talk about this? (Hint: Matthew 3, Galatians 5).
- 2) We very often live as if we were immortal, despite rationally knowing that we are not. Discuss your thoughts on this quote from pastor Tim Keller: "Everyone knows they're going to die, and everyone in some way, represses that and lives as if they're *never* going to die. When I had thyroid cancer, the first thing the doctor said was: "This is very treatable." When I had pancreatic cancer, my doctor said: "You're going to die of this, sooner or later, because we don't have a cure for it." I realised, at some deep level, I never really did believe I was going to die; I just didn't. There is some kind of denial that just will not go away until you actually have a doctor saying you're going to die within weeks. The way you look at God, the way you look at your spouse, the way you look at everything, changes when you realise time is limited and you are mortal."
- 3) Read Romans 12:9-12. On judgement day, will we be judged the same as somebody who has never heard the gospel? What impact should this have on us?
- 4) Read Luke 3:8. How does what John the Baptist preaches relate to our text?
- 5) Read Luke 13:6 and Galatians 5:22-23. What kind of fruit is God looking for in our lives? What are the 'figs'? When we see some of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives, then these are clearly some evidence that we are bearing fruit. Can you think of any more? (Hint: a desire to tell others about Jesus).
- 6) The Bible frequently mentions trees, often metaphorically to refer to our lives in Christ. Can you think of any other Scriptures which refer to some kind of plant or tree? (Hint: Psalm 1, Genesis 2:9). What do we know about trees that we might translate to our spiritual lives?
- 7) One thing that we know about trees is that they take time to grow. Can you think of any examples in your life where it took some time for you to surrender to the pruning, growing work that God was trying to do in you?
- 8) In his book, *Changes that Heal*, the Christian psychologist Henry Cloud states that God tends to grow us through plenty of 'grace + truth + time'. What do you think about this 'recipe' for spiritual growth? Why might we need all three ingredients?