

welcome to the
fruit factory
What fruit is your life producing?



Pastor Hugh's Message Series Sundays 9am & 10:30am

Don't Be Fruitless (Luke 13:6-9)
January 26, 2025

Lk. 13:6-9

⁶ He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'" ⁸ But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' "

- A. Welcome to the Fruit Factory! As a Church and as Christians we are to be fruit factories for Jesus.

And there is no better story in the Gospels that confirms that fact.

- B. In fact, of the nearly 40 parables told by Jesus, today's parable hardly needs any explanation.

In one sense, we can all read it, say we get it, and go home. So, how many of you are ready to go home? Don't say "Amen."

- C. Well, before you do go home, let me share with you 3 simple truths God wants you to know from this story.

And the first truth is this:

1. God Has a Wonderful PLAN for You

⁶ He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it..."

- A. As I told you earlier, Jesus told some 40 parables. What's a parable? A parable is simply this: an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

It's God packaging for you awesome truths about Him & Heaven in simple stories.

- B. In other words, these stories are the ABCs about God. I like to say, Jesus is putting the cookies on the bottom shelf (where we can get them).

And today, He wants you to get the truth about God's plan for your life.

C. How many of you have asked, “What is God’s plan for my life?”

You may be a Senior graduating from HS/College, Young Adult, young married, into your career, enjoying retirement...

...and in your journey, you are trying to figure out God’s plan for your life.

D. Well, good news. God has a wonderful plan for your life.

And it’s not about you figuring out:

- Where am I going to college?
- What’s my major?
- Where am I going to work?
- Where am I going to live?
- Who am I going to marry?
- How do I parent my kids?
- What am I going to do after I retire?

E. Most of you are asking those questions, thinking if you got the answer, you would know God’s plan for your life.

What if I told you, God’s got a better plan for your life than the answer to those questions?

Most of us are asking questions about how to SURVIVE in this world. That’s the wrong question.

Instead, you should be asking God how to THRIVE in this world for Him.

F. And Jesus gives you the answer.
Do you know God’s plan for THRIVING in this world?

Look at Jesus’ parable:

Luke 13:6-7

“A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard...”

So, we have 3 actors in this story:

- A certain man
- A fig tree
- A vineyard-keeper

G. And we’ve already learned that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, so each of these 3 actors represent someone important in the ABC’s about Heaven and God.

- (1) Who does the “certain man” represent? It has to be God. He’s the owner of this vineyard.
And BTW, what does the vineyard represent?

It could be the world, but I know when God speaks about His vineyard in the Bible, He's talking about His Kingdom. So, this vineyard represents the Kingdom of God.

(2) So, who does the vineyard-keeper represent? None other than the Son of God, Jesus Himself. God sent Jesus into this world to rescue people from their sins and do what? Plant them in God's Kingdom.

(3) And finally, who does the fig tree represent? First of all, the fig tree represents the people of Israel who were responding to Jesus' invitation to be delivered from their sins and be planted in God's Kingdom. But it also represents you and me, all who claim Jesus our Savior and Lord, and God has planted us in His Kingdom.

H. What a wonderful thought.
When you trust Jesus as your personal Savior & Lord, God does a supernatural work in your life.

And do you know what that supernatural work is?
HE PLUCKS YOU. AND HE PLANTS YOU.

God plucks you out of the kingdom of Satan.
And He plants you (like a fig tree) in the Kingdom of God.

Paul said it this way:

Col. 1:13-14 (NIV)

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

I. Before you were saved, you were in the kingdom of Satan – and he ruled your life. But when you put your trust in Jesus, God plucked you out of Satan's kingdom and planted you in His Kingdom. And now, guess who rules your life? King Jesus.

J. And here's where you come to know God's wonderful plan for your life.

Do you want to know God's wonderful plan for your life?
ANSWER: **Just be a FIG TREE.**

K. Before you go "boo," let me tell you some fascinating facts about fig trees in Israel.

Consider this your horticulture class for today:

- Figs were 1 of the 7 blessings of the Promised Land God was providing His people, which included wheat & barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey (Deut. 8:8)

- Figs are a basic food source in Israel (highly nutritious); high in fiber (good for digestion), potassium, calcium, magnesium, antioxidants & Vitamins A, B6, C, and K.
- And figs are exported by Israel all over the world.
- A fig tree is a low, round tree with many trunks, and can grow up to 30' high and 30' wide.
- And its large leaves make it a wonderful tree for shade especially in summer when it so hot (which is where Jesus found his first disciple sitting under, guess who? Nathanael)
- And its large leaves were used for making clothes. And who do you know in the Bible sewed fig-leaves together and made clothes for themselves? (Adam & Eve [Gen. 3:7])
- Figs are tear-shaped and have a green skin that can ripen to purple or brown; and its inside is sweet with a honey and melon flavor.
- Fig trees lose their large leaves during the winter. And in early spring (March) would begin producing tiny figs followed by leaves. The figs would ripen and be harvested in June. And there would be a 2nd & bigger harvest of figs in August lasting until October. And those figs would hang on even through the early winter.
- In fact, fig trees usually had figs 10 months out of the year.

In other words, guess what fig trees were? Fruit Factories!!

- L. So, what do you think God expects from every person whom He plucks out of Satan's kingdom and PLANTS in HIS KINGDOM?

What do you think is God's plan for your life?

Answer:

Produce fruit – and produce lots of fruit in every season of your life.

God wants you to be a fruit factory for Jesus.

- M. Now the question is, what fruit does God want you to produce from your life?

Mk. 11:12-14

¹² Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. ¹³ And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard *it*.

NOTE: Remember I told you that in winter a fig tree would lose its leaves. In early spring, tiny figs would first sprout and then leaves would follow.

Leaves were a dead giveaway that there were figs.

And if there was a tree that had leaves, but no figs, that tree wasn't going to produce fruit that year.

This fig tree had leaves, but not figs.

In other words, it had the appearance of fruit, but no fruit. And because it lacked fruit, what did Jesus do? He cursed it. Why did He curse it? Read the rest of the story.

Mk. 11:20-23

²⁰ Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ²¹ And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

²² So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. ²³ For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

The fig tree was not about Jesus' hunger. It was about Israel's faith. The tree represented the spiritual state of Israel.

It had lots of leaves. Lots of religion. Lots of church. Lots of rituals. Lots of Bible. Lots of children's ministry. Lots of student ministry. Lots of worship ministry. Lots of Grow Groups. Lots of preaching...BUT GUESS WHAT?

THE PEOPLE DIDN'T HAVE FAITH.

And they certainly didn't have faith that God could & would move mountains.

- N. The fruit God is looking from you is not church attendance, not singing in the choir, not attending Grow Group, not showing up for Student Ministry, not how many Bible verses you can quote, not just believing the facts about Jesus.

The fruit God is looking for is not your religious acts or facts, but do you have FAITH IN JESUS?

- O. Do you really lean on Him?
Do you really depend on Him?
Do you really tune into Him?
Do you really pursue Him?
Do you really talk with Him?
Do you really walk with Him?
Do you really work for Him?
Do you really worship Him?
Do you really treasure Him?
And do you expect from Him?
And to do great things for Him?
- P. Your life may have lots of leaves, the appearance that you have lots of fruit.

But if you don't have FAITH, the kind of faith that is not all about DOING, but is all about BECOMING more and more like Jesus in my walk, my talk, and my thoughts; and treasuring Jesus more and more in my life, you may have lots of religion, but you don't have a relationship with JESUS.

Because what should come out of you when I squeeze you should be GUESS WHO?
JESUS!

- Q. God's wonderful plan for your life is that you would have more and more of Jesus IN you, and there will be more and more of Jesus coming OUT of you.

Thought #2

2. God is PATIENT with You

Lk. 13:7-9

⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'⁸ But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ And if it bears fruit, well.

- A. I think it is interesting that the owner (God), for 3 years, looks to see if the fig tree is bearing fruit.

Now typically, once a fig tree is planted, it takes 3 years for it to start producing fruit.

But this fig tree (Israel) has been planted many years. And then Jesus shows up, and guess how many years He preached about faith? 3 years.

- B. And during those 3 years, God looked for the fruit of faith from Israel's fig tree, but what did He find? NONE, NOTHING.

So, what does He tell Jesus to do?
CUT THE TREE DOWN.

- C. And how does Jesus respond:
This is amazing!

Jesus says,

Lk. 13:8-9

'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ And if it bears fruit, well.

Jesus pleads for God to give Israel another chance. He appeals for God to give Israel more time.

"Give Me more time to work the soil and fertilize it, and hopefully in the next season, Israel will bear fruit."

- D. And God gave Israel another season.

They got to see Jesus resurrect from the dead. That was a season.

They got to see the coming of the Holy Spirit. That was a season.

They got to see the salvation of the Paul. That was a season.

They got to see the salvation of the Gentiles. That was a season.

God more than answered Jesus' prayer. He gave them season after season.

- E. How this so teaches the incredible love, compassion, and patience of Jesus.

Let's do a survey:

How many of you have been going to church for at least 10 years? 20 years? 30 years? More than 50 years?

How many of you started going to church when you were in the womb? I'll be going until I'm in the tomb!

- F. Some of you made decisions for Jesus when you were really young – I was 7 years old. Some of you were saved in your teens. Some in your 20's.

Another survey: Calculate how long you've been a Christian.

How many of you have been a Christian for more than 10 years? 20 years? 30 years? More than 30?

Let me share a quote from Vance Havner:

"How long you have been a Christian only tells how long you have been on the road. It doesn't tell how far you have come."

- G. The sad truth is **there are many who PROFESS Jesus, but there's been no real PROGRESS with Jesus.**

You should be more like Jesus **this year than you were last year.**

You should be more in love with Jesus...

You should be more loving like Jesus...

You should more heart for people like Jesus...

You should on mission like Jesus...

- H. Truth is, there's a lot more PROFESSION than PROGRESSION in churches today.

And let me tell you what Jesus would say about that.

- Let's give them some more time.
- Let's give them another year.
- Let's give them another season.

"Let Me work in their life and let Me move in their life and let Me put them through some rough times and tough times

and let Me help them through some sad times and bad times, and let Me show them some glad times...

And let's see if they'll bend the knee before Me."

- I. How I'm reminded of God's patience with us.

2 Pet. 3:9

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

How many of you have experienced God's patience with you in bringing you to salvation?

Well, God is patient with those who claim to belong to the Lord, too. He's patient with those who are PROFESSING, but not PROGRESSING.

- J. Jesus so wants you to bear the fruit of true faith in your life.

PICTURE: Aren't you glad Jesus doesn't make us come to church dressed according to our true spiritual age?

Some folks would be coming to church in onesies, sucking on a bottle, with a pacifier in their mouth.

Praise Jesus for His patience with us.

- K. Jesus doesn't want you staying in Kindergarten Christianity. He doesn't want you staying in Middle School faith. He doesn't want you staying in High School faith. He wants you to go on and get your Masters in Faith in God.

And believe me, He's going to do whatever He can to light your fire. He'll even put you through the fire.

Because He wants to fire up your faith and be on fire for Him.

And do you know how you know when you're on fire for Jesus? When you have a faith that is making you more and more and more like Him!

- L. So, good news: God is Patient with You.

Finally,

3. God isn't PLAYING with You

Luke 13:7

⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'

- A. Why does God tell Jesus to cut down the tree?
The tree was fruitless.
But notice it was also USELESS.
Look what God says, "It's using up the ground."

In other words, the tree is just taking up space!

And wasting God's good soil and good nutrients that could be used for another tree.

- B. In other words, God is not going to put up with a fruitless follower forever.

And in fact, Jesus said...

Luke 13:9

⁹ And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' "

- C. What is Jesus saying?

If you fail to produce fruit, you fail at having true faith.

And if you fail at having true faith, God will take you out.

And taking you out may mean:

- Hell – for those who are unsaved.
- Heaven – For those who are saved. You go to Heaven earlier than expected.

In other words, I think God has a deadline; a deadline for people who PROFESS, but don't PROGRESS in their relationship with God. In other words, God's patience runs out and God takes them out.

1 Cor. 11:30 – Making a mockery of the Lord's Supper, and God took them out.

Acts 5 – Ananias & Saphira – God took them out.

1 John 5:16 "There is a sin that leads to death."

- D. God's serious about you producing fruit.

And if you become fruitless and useless, instead of messing up His work here on earth, He just may take you on to Heaven.

You may call that cruel.

He calls that mercy.

But the point is: God isn't playing with you.

- E. And what He really wants from you is not your PROFESSION. He wants your PROGRESSION.

He doesn't want you to be FRUITLESS.

He wants you to be FRUIT-FUL!

- F. And if your life isn't fruitful for Jesus, then you need to repent and turn to God and ask Him to give you a heart to produce fruit for His glory.

Conclusion: And you can do that right now.

Begin by asking yourself this question:

Is my life a fruit factory for Jesus?