

Mar. 12 - Scripture: Luke 13: 1-17

Verses that speak to you: Luke 13:8 (NIV) "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it.'"

Luke 13:13 (NIV) Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Observation: This passage seems to have two unrelated events: 1) Jesus tells a parable about an unproductive fig tree, 2) Jesus heals a woman on the Sabbath.

Jesus first responds to the speculation by some that a group of "really bad sinners" received their punishment at the hand of Pilate. Another 18 died when a tower fell on them. Jesus says, "No. These folks are no worse than the others in their neighborhood. And beware. You, too, may die if you do not repent."

Then Jesus reinforces this by telling a parable of the man who planted a fig tree. It produced no fruit for three years. Because of this he directed the caretaker to cut the tree down. The man replies (in verse 8) that he would like to give it one more year with some additional care.

This says to me that God has rules and high expectations for our lives and that there are consequences for failure. BUT he gives us more than one chance. Furthermore, there is someone nurturing our growth.

One Saturday, Jesus spoke to a woman and touched her to affect a cure for a condition that caused her to be stooped-over for the past 18 years. This caused a stir among the Pharisees because he had healed on the Sabbath.

What ties these two events together for me? The touch of the caretaker. The man who cares for the vineyard hopes to nurture the fig tree into productivity. Jesus touches the woman to free her from bondage.

Application: This passage encourages me with both a stick and a carrot. I should avoid being unproductive and I should lean on Jesus for healing from any bondage.

Prayer: Father, thank you for creating me with a purpose. Jesus, thank you for giving me the chance to know the Father's heart for me. Holy Spirit, help me daily to do your will.

Writer: Harv Hobson - I have been at Eastminster for 32 years. My life is a lot better since I renewed my acceptance of Jesus as lord and savior back during college. I met Pam in Chuck Jones's college/career Bible study. We got married in January 1979. I really enjoy singing at church and singing barbershop. I've been a Ham radio operator for over 40 years although I'm not active now.