

Luke 13:1-9

“Repent”

February 28, 2016

Our text tells us that just because bad things are happening to us; this does not mean that God is punishing us. Likewise, just because good things are happening to us does not mean that our God is blessing us. As one scripture passage says, God brings rain on the crops of the good and on crops of the bad equally. Likewise, a good man, Job, faced a lot of tough things because God allowed it to happen. Those tough things included losing his children, his animals and his reputation. Likewise Job’s wife and friends turned against him by accusing Job of being a great sinner. They told Job that God was punishing him because of His great sin. Therefore Job was told that he needed to repent.

This is the time of Lent. Lent is a time when we all need to repent because we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. When we repent, we humble ourselves and say that we have placed ourselves first in our lives. In God’s language we are saying that we have failed to love God above all things and love our neighbor as our self. When we repent, we are saying that we have taken our path in life rather than submit to God and follow His direction for our lives. Therefore we should all repent daily.

However when we repent, we need to remember that Christ took our punishment for our sins, our failures and our weaknesses. In our faith and repentance, our God no longer sees our sins. In our faith, our punishment is complete because our Christ took it to the Cross at Calvary and paid for our sins with His blood. In our faith, we owe nothing. There is no time in this life not between death and heaven when we have to pay for sin. For our God deliberately puts our sins out of His mind and remembers them no more because Christ paid for them.

Instead Luther tells that we are to consider it a blessing to face trials of many kinds. Why? As we endure the trials of our lives, we give glory to God's name because Christ is our example on the Cross at Calvary! You can hear people say: "They must love God a lot to endure such trials and still keep the hope in their lives." That is how the Chinese Christians earned the name, "the Smiling Ones" as they kept the faith in the face of persecution. When Adam and Eve were forced out of the Garden of Eden, they brought with them the evil things we experience in our world. Sinfulness is in us, around us and brought to us by satan, the evil one, and his forces. Christ overcame sin, death and the devil with His blood on the Cross at Calvary.

Last week, I talked about the conflict between the two kingdoms. The first kingdom is this world. The second kingdom is God's kingdom. We are called to be

citizens of God's kingdom, rather than this world. We are to avoid allowing this world to gain priority over our lives by distracting us from our faith. As one Scripture passage says, "It is better to lose your hand than go to hell." As Jesus said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled, trust in God, trust also in Me." We bear the fruit of faith when we think, desire, say and do the things of God rather than be consumed by the things of our world like financial problems, family problems and the physical problems of the body.

Therefore when bad times come, use them as opportunities to glorify God's name rather than as the means to separate us from our God. When bad times come, use them to grow stronger in the faith rather than blame God and walk away. For in our faith, our God lives in us. In our faith, He stands by us and even at times carries us. Sadly the more we allow our faith to be distracted and weakened, the less support we have from our God because we have allowed ourselves to be weakened in our faith. Our support from God remains the same, but we don't experience it because we are weakened in our faith. Take heart as Jacob said to one of his sons, "as your day is, so shall your strength be." Even though we are weakened, God will strengthen us to keep the faith in us if we allow Him. Amen.