

The Third Sunday in Lent  
“The Life of Repentance in Christ”  
Luke 13:2-3  
March 23, 2025  
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 3rd Sunday in Lent is from our Gospel reading, Luke 13:2-3

**“2 And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”**

So far the text...

Does a common theme in our readings jump out at you today? It's pretty straightforward, - Repent and live or you will perish.

In our Old Testament reading from Ezekiel 33 we heard God say these words:

**“As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!’”**

And at the end of this reading God repeated these words:

**“18 When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it. 19 But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it.”**

Turn, turn, turn. Do an about face from evil. A 180 degree reversal of direction. For if you don't, then God, who is just, must punish the evil doer and the evil doer will perish – not just a physical death, but an eternal death.

God doesn't want that to happen! He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He wants all to live. And so the message the central message of the Bible is repent. Turn from evil and receive God's forgiveness and live!

So, for a time God's people, the Israelites did trust in Him after they were rescued from Egypt. As our epistle reading from 1 Corinthians 10 tells us.

**“For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”**

But, then they turned against God and this was the result.

**“5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.”**

What happened? God's Word doesn't leave us in doubt. **“As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.”**

They were destroyed for their unbelief. It's the same word that Jesus speaks to the people in our Gospel and to each of us.

**“repent you will all likewise perish.”** That is be destroyed eternally.

God doesn't want this to happen to anyone and so the Israelites history is recorded for us to serve as a strong warning.

**“11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”**

And again in Jude verse 5 we hear:

**“5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.”**

Today's readings are very personal. They make us stop, and examine our hearts, see our sins, turn away from them in repentance, and turn to Jesus for forgiveness. Drink from the Rock.

As we hear later in Jude:

**“20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”**

God wants us to repent continually, daily and receive His mercy daily– and especially when we see and hear of examples of people perishing.

A few recent reports came to Jesus that some Galileans had been slain by Pilate, and that a tower had fallen and killed 18. Immediately, the people wanted to know why? In their minds they jumped to the conclusion that these poor souls had to be worse sinners than others for such a tragedy to befall them.

When we hear of deaths due to tornadoes, fires, floods, and hurricanes, or terrorism, maybe that is our first thought also. If something bad happens in New Orleans, well we think that God is giving them their just punishment for all the vice that goes on there.

But no one knows the mind of God and His reasons for allowing bad things to happen.

We know the stories of the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah. Luke gives these examples 4 chapters later in chapter 17 for our admonition.

**Luke 17:27**

**They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.**

**Luke 17:29**

**“but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.”** Same word – destroy – perish . They didn’t repent and were perished eternally. Their deaths were a direct punishment from God.

For Job, however, it was for his good and for the strengthening of his faith that strong winds killed his family and raiders took his livestock. He himself, even suffered physically. Yet, through these tests, Job didn’t lose faith. In fact, God blessed him with much more than he had lost. So, Paul says in our epistle,

**“God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”**

God promises us great eternal blessings – for all of us who endure the tests and tragedies in life, and don’t lose faith in the Rock Jesus Christ!

So, Jesus answers the question quickly about whether the tragedies that were reported to Him were because the people were worse sinners.

**“I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”**

We are all sinners. Equally guilty and deserving of God’s punishment and wrath. What is crucial is to not act as judge of others and try to determine someone’s secret sins, but look at your own heart and repent of your own secret sins...before it’s too late.

Those people who went died when the tower fell on them expected to come home for dinner. We never know when our last day will come. So, Jesus wants each of us daily to be ready by repenting and receiving the Gospel. Dig, water and fertilize. Law and Gospel daily applied to our lives!

And the Lord mercifully gives time for all to repent. So we hear in 2 Peter 3:9

**“8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”**

Not perish – there’s the same word again – but come to repentance.

So we know and cherish this verse so much from John 3:16.

**“16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

Not perish – how? By believing in Jesus.

**17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

For Jesus Himself had to perish in order to rescue us. Jesus says this in our Gospel that we heard last Sunday.

**“33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.**

Friend of sinners and tax collectors. Jesus came to save all who are lost and perishing. We will hear this message especially next week in Luke 15 with the parable of the lost prodigal son.

So, put an end to conjecture and speculation about why this or that tragedy has happened to someone else. And instead, look at your own soul. See the great need of salvation. See your lostness. Repent and live! Live in Jesus daily who perished and rose again to give you eternal life.

Amen

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**