

## The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

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Luke 13:6-9

This is a parable—An earthly story to illustrate a spiritual truth.

There was a vineyard owned by “*a certain man.*” Upon an inspection of his vineyard, he noticed a fruitless fig tree. It wasn't the first time he noticed this barren fruit tree. It had not had any fruit for three years (v. 7). He told “*the dresser of his vineyard*” (the man hired to maintain the vineyard) to cut it down. Why expend any more energy on it. Three years was long enough. It was just taking up ground that could something else could be planted to bear fruit.

But the keeper of his vineyard pleaded to give this tree one more chance—one more year to produce fruit. If it was still fruitless after one more year, it would become firewood.

➔ **DOCTRINAL APPLICATION:** The context is a warning of repentance (vs. 1-5). God used trees as symbols of the nation Israel.

- The **vine** represented Israel's *past* (Ps. 80:8-10).
- The **olive** tree represents Israel's *future* (Rom. 11).
- The **fig** tree represents Israel's *present* (Isa. 5:2-7).

1. The **Vineyard** is the land of Palestine.
2. The **Owner** of the vineyard is God the Father.
3. Jesus is the **Keeper** of the vineyard.
4. **Three years**—Jesus ministered to Israel for three years. But after three years of ministry to Israel, they still had not repented and accepted Christ's offer of the kingdom. Now, God the Father is ready to remove it from His vineyard.
5. **The message** to Israel was clear. Their time was up. They had three years to repent. Jesus was only a few months from the time of His crucifixion. They were now living on “borrowed time.” After Christ's death, burial and resurrection, God would still give them another year to repent. One year went by between Acts 1 to Acts 8. After that, God “set aside” Israel and turned to the Gentiles and would use them to bring forth fruit (Acts 13:45-47; 15:14).

➤ **SPIRITUAL APPLICATION:** Although this parable was not specially *TO US*, it has a spiritual message *FOR US* (2 Tim. 3:16).

### **I. The Lord EXPECTS fruit** (Gen. 1:28).

- The thing that glorifies God is fruit (John 15:8).
- God uses a “vineyard” as an illustration of the church (1 Cor. 9:7).
- Two kinds of fruit:
  - A. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This is fruit as a result of walking in the Spirit. This is something the Holy Spirit produces.
  - B. The fruit of a Christian (Rom. 1:13; Col. 1:10; Titus 3:14). Your life should be producing fruit.

### **II. The Lord EXAMINES progress.**

- The Owner of the vineyard invested three years of his resources into this tree, and had nothing to show for it.
- God has made a tremendous investment in you. It is only reasonable that He get a return on His investment.
- The Lord wants to see some growth in our lives
  - A. What a shame if after being saved for three years, a Christian still showed no growth or fruit, after all God has done for him.
  - B. What more could God do to promote some growth and fruit in your life?

### **III. The Lord EXTENDS opportunity.**

The overall lesson of this parable is that God is long-suffering and patient. After three years, He still extends another opportunity for this tree to produce—A picture of the grace of God.

**SUMMATION:** As God examines your life right now, is He pleased with what He sees? Does He find any fruit that glorifies Him? If the Owner of the vineyard in the parable was disappointed after three years of labor, how do you think the Lord feels with a Christian who has not brought forth any fruit after 10 or 20 years?

The truth is, we are all living on “borrowed time.”