

# Luke

Carefully Investigating the Gospel ... Together

## SSBC Luke Bible Study #49

*Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.*

Passage: Luke 13:1-9

Sermon Date: Aug 27, 2006

### Show Me the ..... Fruit!

My Father-in-Law had a 4-acre orchard in his backyard, with over a hundred fig, pear, apple, and chestnut trees. He would tend them carefully, digging around them and fertilizing them in ways he'd learned as a boy growing up on a small farm in Sicily. The trees were unimpressive looking – short & scraggly – but they produced good fruit year after year.

Two other trees caught my untrained eye one year. They were five times taller than the others, and had impressive expanses of leaves. Nonno (italian for Grandfather) chuckled as he told me in his broken English, "These two trees – no fruit!" They were ornamental pear trees, which grew rapidly and looked impressive, but bore no fruit whatsoever.

Jesus uses a similarly fruitless tree in a parable in this week's passage, challenging us to consider our own "fruitfulness." As we begin the study, let's pray that God will help each of us hear His call to us to repent and to bear kingdom fruit. By the way, one of Nonno's two fruitless trees was torn in half by lightning later that year, and a few months later both were blown down in a windstorm when their shallow roots couldn't hold them up! How are your spiritual roots these days? How much fruit are you bearing? Turn the page and be "tilled."

*These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and posting at [www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/](http://www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/). Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact [studieditor@southshorebaptist.com](mailto:studieditor@southshorebaptist.com)*

*South Shore Baptist Church  
578 Main Street, Hingham, MA 02043  
(781) 749-2592*

Bible Study:

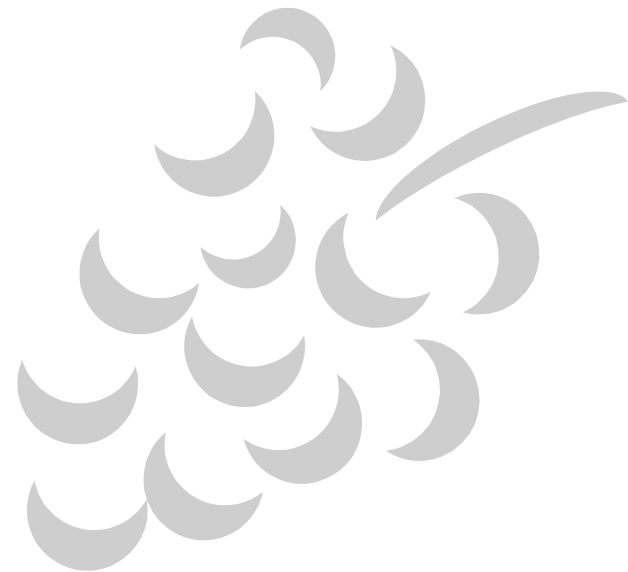
1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the chart below to note your observations and any questions you have.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p><sup>1</sup> Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? <sup>3</sup> I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."</p> <p><sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'"</p> <p><sup>8</sup> "Sir," the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. <sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"</p>	

Vineyard assignment:

Certain portions of Scripture are easier to imagine and understand when we consider their probable settings. Luke 12:1 tells us that Jesus was speaking to a crowd of many thousands, and thus it seems likely that they were outdoors. As you read this question and work on this Bible study, you are probably indoors. While writing this study, I found it very thought provoking to take my notebook outside and sit in the shade under a grape arbor as I pondered this passage and spent time talking and listening to God in light of Luke 13:1-9. The concord grapes were a good month from being ripe, but they still hung above me in stark contrast to the barren fig tree in Jesus' parable. And my own life offers much contrast as well – there is so much more fruit I could be bearing, so much more ground to break in the area of repenting. It was a rich and fruitful time.

2. So here's your assignment. Go find somewhere different to sit for a while. Get some distance between you and your sources of distraction and interruption. Go outside if possible. Bring only this study booklet, your Bible, and a pen. Re-read the passage a few times. Ask God to guide you toward His truth. Share your heart's response to the passage with Him. Ask for His guidance in understanding it. Ask what He wants you to hear most in it. Use the space below to jot down some of your thoughts, feelings, insights ...



*[try also reading John 15:1-16 during your time in the "vineyard"]*

3. Next, use this chart to **interpret some key observations**.

a. Select a few of your observations & questions from pages 2-3 that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and interpret and apply them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

<b>Observation</b> What does it say?	<b>Interpretation</b> What does it mean?

4. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- **S**ins to avoid
- **P**romises to believe
- **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- **C**ommands to obey
- **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them – listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

<b>Application</b> How do I apply what it means?

### **Dig Around It Some More:**

- 5.a. What are some of our modern day equivalents to the first century events in Luke 13:1-5? In other words, what have you heard in the news that made you (or others) think that perhaps God was judging some unrepentant people through calamities & hardships?
- b. Are calamities and hardships ever/sometimes/always divine punishment for sin? (Consider Job 1:8-22, John 9:1-3, Heb 12:4-11)
- c. What point is Jesus making by correcting his hearers' misconception that Pilate's and Siloam's victims were somehow more guilty than others?
6. Twice Jesus says "... unless you repent, you too will all perish."
- a. What does it mean to repent? Look it up using a secular dictionary as well as a Bible dictionary and encyclopedia ([www.studylight.org](http://www.studylight.org)).
- b. The theme of repentance is woven throughout the storyline of the Bible. Trace it by exploring 2 Chr 7:14, Isa 55:6-7, Eze 18:30-32, Hos 14:1-2, Joel 2:12-14, Mt 3:1-2, Acts 3:19, 8:22, 17:30-31, 26:20, Rom 6:1-2, 1 John 1:8-2:6. What does God repeatedly say to man about repentance?

7. In the parable of the fig tree in the vineyard ...
- a. ... who does the vineyard owner represent?
- b. ... who does the vineyard worker represent?
- c. ... who does the fig tree represent?
8. What does Luke 13:6-9 tell us about ...
- a. ... God's character?
- b. ... Jesus' mission?
- c. ... the response God expects from His people?
9. Why is God so patient with us, despite our resisting His loving efforts to "dig around and fertilize" us? (Consider Isa 48:8-13, Rom 9:14-22, 2 Pet 3:8-10)

10. Imagine if Jesus sent you an email letting you know He had just pleaded with His Father for some more time for you – and He offered to “dig around and fertilize” your life a bit to help you to bear more fruit.

a. What do you think that might look like? What would He trim, loosen, tighten, add, take away, ... ? How have you experienced such trimming in your life already?

b. What is your part in the process? What steps can you take toward increased fruitfulness in your life in the days, weeks, months ahead?

*You did not choose me,  
but I chose you and  
appointed you to go and  
bear fruit – fruit that  
will last. (John 15:16a)*

11. Pop quiz: Try Philip's gospel-sharing challenge (Acts 8:26-40 is the story of Philip sharing the gospel message with the Ethiopian eunuch who asked about a certain passage in Isaiah). Can you similarly share the basic gospel message primarily using just the Luke 13:1-9 text? Try writing an outline or short version below. Then try verbalizing this with someone in a role-play or, better yet, for real. [For a gospel primer, review Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9, 10:13]