

**Sermon Notes of
Guest Speaker Dr. Dan Rodgers' Sermon on August 11, 2019:**

"Carpe Diem! Luke 13:1-9"

[In today's sermon, guest speaker Dr. Dan Rodgers shows us how important it is to Carpe Diem – to seize the day and not put off yielding our lives to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.]

Notes

Introduction:

- The news has been filled with the killing of people in the house of worship.
- Now there have been mass shootings in other places, but isn't it really scary when they take place in houses of worship?
- In our church we have an emergency escape plan, but God forbid we would have to implement it, but these are the days in which we live.

- There was the incident about the mosque in New Zealand where Muslim worshipers were killed.
- Then there was the Jewish synagogue in Pittsburgh where many worshipers were killed.
- And at the church in Sri Lanka, many Christians were killed on Easter Sunday.

- Now, in the United States, over 600 Christians have been murdered while at worship.
- These incidents should cause us to reflect on life and on death.
- This brings up the question: "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

Today's message:

- So, let's examine Luke 13:1-9 and by doing so we will answer 3 questions.
 1. What did Jesus' words mean to the people of Judea and its leaders in His day?
 2. What did Jesus' words of judgment mean to the individuals to whom He was speaking to as well as to us today?
 3. And what do all of His words mean for you and me here today?

- Now, the context of these verses is that Jesus is on His way with many of His disciples and followers from Galilee to Jerusalem.
- Now, what's going to happen to Him when He gets to Jerusalem? Jesus is going to be betrayed and crucified.

- And since this the Passover season, many pilgrims walk with Him.
- Luke tells us that there are thousands of pilgrims going to Jerusalem.
- In these verses, Jesus is going to talking about impending judgment and possibly impending doom.

Luke 13:1, Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

- Some of the people who asked Jesus this question were part of the pilgrims on the journey to Jerusalem.
- We need to remember that Jesus was also a Galilean.
- Among the Galileans were zealots who were considered to be the most violent of all the zealots who hated the Romans.
- Now at the Passover season, people could go to the Temple Courtyard and offer their own sacrifice of a lamb at the altar that was set up there.
- While some of the Galileans were offering their sacrifice, Pilate had some of his thugs go there and butchered those people, sliced them up and poured their blood on the altar.
- Now, why did these people ask Jesus this question? Some wanted Him to call fire down from heaven to devour the Romans.
- Also Jesus had talked about judgment and some wanted to see how this played into the realm of judgment.

2) Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?”

- The Jewish people believed that if you obey God, you will be blessed and if you disobey God, you will be cursed.
- Some thought that God had hated and punished these Galileans at the Temple Courtyard because they were bad people.
- So what does Jesus tell them?

3) I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

- After Jesus shouted, NO!” He turned the situation on to them by saying, “But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”
- What did Jesus mean by this?
- We often think of the word “repent” to mean a change of behavior.
- But primarily, the Greek word *metanoeo* translated “repent” means “change your mind, change the way you are thinking.”
- Now, obviously when you change your way of thinking you will change your behavior.
- When you change your thinking, you then will have a new perspective on life, a new consciousness of how you look at yourself and others.
- So what does the word “perish” mean?
- Dan then made the comment, “I like to tell the story that I left a jar of mayonnaise out of the refrigerator too long and it perished.”
- “It didn’t disappear, it wasn’t annulated, it didn’t burn up – it stank and was no longer useful for the purpose for which it had been created.”

- Now the Greek word for “perish” can mean “to die, be destroyed, or be ruined” but it also means “it was no longer fit for the purpose in which it was created.”
- So, Jesus is telling them, “Unless you change your mind, you won’t be fit for the purpose in which you were created.”
- “Yes, you will die, you will perish, but the sad thing is that you are not fulfilling what God wanted for you – the purpose for which you were created.”

4) 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?

- This probably means the tower by the pool of Siloam near the Temple – so these people were temple worshipers.
- And they were killed as they were going to the Temple to worship – how shocking.
- Then Jesus asks another question about these people’s guilt – were they the biggest sinners than all others?

5) I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

- Yes, Jesus is a little angry here. And do you know why He is angry? He’s angry for the people – He’s not angry against them.
- Jesus wanted them to open their minds to see that He was the Son of God, the Messiah and that He was sent to save them.
- Now there are many types of genre (stories) in the Bible.
- Dan calls this one a “warning genre” where Jesus is loudly warning people in order for them to repent and accept Him as their Savior.
- If you love people, you have to yell at them to get their attention when they are in danger of hurting themselves. Casually talking to them won’t get their attention.
- What happened in 70 AD? The fall of Jerusalem where the Roman armies invaded and destroyed the city, including the Temple and killed thousands of people.
- According to several Jewish historians, the followers of Jesus got an advanced notice and left Jerusalem and went to a place of safety in the city of Pella.
- Jesus wanted His audience to repent and change their minds and accept Him as Savior so they wouldn’t be slaughtered by the Romans.
- Jesus then decided to tell a story, hoping to get his message across to the people.

6) Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any.

- Because of the audience’s knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, they understood much better than we do today about what Jesus was trying to get across to them.
- According to Hosea and Joel, they said that the leaders of Judea are likened to fig trees.
- And Isaiah tells us that God’s people are His vineyard.

7) 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?’

- What do you call a person who takes care of a vineyard? A gardener.
- Now, who is “the Gardener”? It’s the one who created the Garden of Eden.
- The Gardener is Jesus.
- Now in the Old Testament, the first three years, the fruit of the fig tree was forbidden to eat.
- In the fourth year, it was holy to the Lord. So you had to give the fruit to a Levite.
- These three years of bearing no fruit were probably years 5, 6 and 7.
- And so what does the owner say, “Cut it down!”

8) “‘Sir,’ the man (gardener) replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it.

- The Greek word for “leave it alone” means “allow, permit, pardon, and forgive.”
- Now what did Jesus say on the cross before he died? “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
- Jesus was saying, “Let’s not give up now. There’s still hope.”
- Once Jesus dug around the tree, it was better able to receive the “living water” which gives eternal life.
- The analogy of digging around and fertilizing the tree conveys the concept of changing one’s way of living, which isn’t very pleasant most of the time.

9) If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

- Yes, there is a day of judgment, but even so, God is merciful and God is gracious and God gives us time.
- We need to realize that time is one of the most precious commodity we have.
- Jesus wanted his audience to know that the day of judgment was coming because He loved them.

The meaning of this story for us today:

- Now, we all going to die one day. Life can end abruptly.
- This story is about life ending abruptly.
- So, we need to realize the value of every day of our lives.
- There’s a Latin expression, “Carpe Diem!” which means “seize the day!”
- Yes, the future is important, but carpe diem! – seize the day.
- Every minute and every hour of the day is precious, so don’t let it just go by.
- Are we ready to meet Jesus?
- In the song, “Can You Imagine” they lyrics ask, “What will it be like when I stand before Jesus?”
- Wouldn’t it nice that when we meet Jesus, he says, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”
- Now are there bad habits and behaviors we have that we would like to change?
- So, when are you going to change them? After you’ve alienated your family members? Carpe diem! Seize the day.
- Change those bad habits today, don’t wait until tomorrow.

- Respond to God's love today and seek His guidance so you can make those changes.
- For example, there are people whose forgiveness you need to ask for by letting them know that you are sorry for what you did or said to them.
- When are you going to do that – next month, next year? Carpe diem! Seize the day. There's no day like today.
- And then there are people that you need to forgive who have offended you?
- When are you going to do that – next month, next year? Carpe diem! Seize the day. There's no day like today.

- Dan then talked about a dear friend of his Al Barr, who has recently passed away, and how he positively impacted the lives of so many people, including Dan.
- Is there someone you need to tell how much you appreciate them, how much you value them, how much you love them.
- When are you going to do it? Carpe diem! Seize the day.

- A few years ago, Dan decided to be friendly to people while in riding in elevators.
- He then gave the example of being in an elevator in a hotel as he was going to the first floor to attend a conference when a young man came into the elevator.
- He was very impressively dressed in a tailored black suit with a starched white shirt and sported an attractive tie.
- And in his arms were a dozen red roses.

- Dan struck up a conversation with him by saying: "It looks like you are going somewhere very important."
- The man replied, "My girlfriend is currently here at the hotel to attend a conference and I was going to ask her to marry me. But when I got up to her door and I got cold feet, so I backed out, because I know she would turn me down."
- Dan then told the young man how good looking he was in his suit and encouraged him.
- When they reached the lobby, the young man said he was going back up and would propose to his girlfriend.

- So, we need to realize that a few kind words spoken to people can touch their lives and make such a difference.
- We need to do that. So, when is it going to start? You know the answer – Carpe diem! Seize the day. There's no day like today.
- We need to heed this parable of Jesus here in Luke and take each day seriously.
- Time will run out in our lives, therefore we must seize the day.
- Take each day seriously and by God's power and by God's grace and by God's mercy and through the work of the Holy Spirit, we can make a difference in our own lives and in others.

- Dan then told another story where he was on a tram going to the airport and an apparent homeless man, who quickly filled the car with his bad odor, sat down next to him.
- Dan could hardly wait to arrive at his destination so he could get away from this individual.

- And then the Holy Spirit said to Dan, “Do you think God loves this man sitting next to you? Do you think you are better than he is? So, since God loves him, why don’t you love him?”
- The tram arrived at the airport, and as Dan was leaving, inspired by the Spirit, he told the man that God loves him and that he loved him too.
- The man responded with tears in his eyes and said, “No one has ever said that to me in my entire life. This makes such a difference in my life. Thank you.”
- Do we understand that we have the ability to touch people’s lives and make a difference?
- Yes we do. So when are we going to do that? We know the answer. Carpe diem! By God’s grace seize the day.