

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 63

Luke 13:6-9 - God's Rights

INTRODUCTION: In these days when everybody is seeking his own rights—poor people march for their rights, different races march for their rights, different trades strike for their rights, everybody seems to be working for himself—there is very little said about God's rights. This parable reminds us that God also has some rights. It is a beautiful story. There was a certain man who had a fig tree in his orchard. He came to find fruit; he found none. He went to his vinedresser and told him that for three years he had been trying to find fruit on the fig tree and could find none. He ordered the vinedresser to cut it down, where upon the vinedresser pleaded with the man to give him another year. He promised that he would work on the tree, hoping that it would bear fruit and that if that year's work failed, he would agree that the tree should be cut down. Of course, in the story the man represents God the Father, the tree represents the Christian, and the vinedresser represents the Lord Jesus. Let us notice what God has a right to expect from us.

- I. GOD HAS A RIGHT TO EXPECT FRUIT FROM US. This is the purpose of the fruit tree. A man who has an apple tree has a right to expect apples. A man who has a peach tree has a right to expect peaches. One who has a rosebush has a right to expect roses, and one who has a fruit tree has a right to expect fruit.

Now what does the Lord have a right to expect from us? Notice Proverbs 11:30, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." Look at the words, "a tree of life." The fruit of a Christian is more than just soul winning. It is winning a soul and making him a soul-winning Christian. In other words, the fruit of a fruit-bearing tree is another fruit-bearing tree. God has a right to expect us to be soul winners. Then He has a right to expect us to train our converts to be soul winners.

- II. GOD HAS A RIGHT TO OWN ME. Notice that the man owned the fruit tree. God has a right to own me. I Corinthians 6:19, 20, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." He has a twofold right to me. First, He has a right to me by creation. He made me. I am His, and I have no right to be my own. I am in God's world. I eat His food, I drink His water, I breathe His air, I enjoy His beauty, I look to His heavens, I bask in His sun. Hence, I have no right to be my own. My only right is to do His will because I belong to Him.

I belong to Him, not only because of creation, but I belong to Him because of redemption. He bought me on the cross. I have trusted Him. I am not my own. I am His!

- III. GOD HAS A RIGHT TO CUT ME DOWN IF I DO NOT BEAR FRUIT. This is taught throughout the Bible. In John 15 we have the story of God cutting down the branches that do not bear fruit. In I Corinthians 11:30, we are reminded that God cuts some down (or takes their life and takes them on to Heaven) because they take the Lord's Supper unworthily. In I Corinthians 5 we have the story of a man who committed sex sin with his stepmother, and God took his life. In Acts 5 we have the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who promised to give God all of a possession but kept back part of it. These are just a few of the Scriptures that remind us that God has a right to cut us down, to take our lives, to take us on to Heaven if we do not bear fruit.

- IV. THERE IS ONE DIFFERENCE. Notice, the vinedresser pleads for the tree. He begs for another year. He loves the tree. He has been closer to the tree than the owner has. See him as he nurtures the tree, digs around the tree and does all he can to make it a fruit-bearing tree. Here is Jesus. He loves us. He does not want us to suffer, so He comes to God and pleads on our behalf. He asks God to give us a chance to bear fruit.

Now notice the picture here. Here is a man who owns a tree. He comes one year and checks it. He finds no fruit. He lets the tree grow. This shows that God is longsuffering and does not want to cut it down. He comes the third year. There is still no fruit. He makes his decision. He must cut the tree down. However, the vinedresser intercedes and pleads for the tree. The owner gives the tree one more year because of the vinedresser. There are several beautiful things taught here.

1. God's patience. He waited four years to cut down the tree.
2. Jesus, our intercessor. Here is a picture of Jesus sitting on the right hand of the Father as our intercessor, our advocate, our mediator.
3. God's final judgment. Finally, God will judge. He will not let us get by with sin. He is longsuffering; He is patient, so He waits and waits and waits and waits. Yet He will judge, He will punish, He will chasten, He will take our lives.

CONCLUSION: A beautiful parable is given in Isaiah 5:1-6, which tells what the vinedresser did to make the tree bear fruit. Read Isaiah 5:2 and notice all that he did to it.

1. He "fenced it." This is a picture of God placing a fence about us.
2. He "gathered out the stones thereof." This is the Lord taking away sin from our life.
3. He "planted it with the choicest vine." In other words, here is a picture of God putting us in a church with other good people.
4. He "built a tower in the midst of it." This is a picture of prayer.
5. He "made a winepress therein." He makes us a blessing to others.

In spite of all of that, it brought forth wild grapes. See the end of verse 2. Notice what was done, as you read Isaiah 5:1-6.

1. The hedge was taken away. Verse 5b.
2. The plant was eaten up. Verse 5c.
3. The wall was broken down. Verse 5d.
4. It was trodden down. Verse 5e.
5. It was laid waste. Verse 6a.
6. It was not pruned. Verse 6b.
7. It was not digged. Verse 6b.
8. Briars and thorns came up. Verse 6c.
9. No rain came on it. Verse 6d.

All of these things are simply proof that God will patiently wait for us to bear fruit. When we don't, He cuts us down. His judgment is sure.