

Lenten Meditation on Luke 13:1-9 for March 7, 2010 (written by Rev. Paul Binder, Sarasota, FL)

These nine verses of Luke's Gospel come close to being a very brief version of the forty-day Lenten journey from Ash Wednesday through Easter.

Two sudden, terrible events of Jesus' time are told – Pilate's brutal assault on Jewish pilgrims inside the Jerusalem temple grounds, and the collapse of a tower under construction killing its workers. Today Jesus might have referred to a turf war among drug dealers which kill innocent bystanders, or a devastating earthquake in Chile or Haiti. “Don't get caught up in the old argument about the sin among those who died, for no one fully lives the Kingdom of God,” Jesus might say today.

Jesus continues, “Don't wait for a tragedy to occur, when it is too late to seek what is already available.” Turning one's life to Jesus' Way cannot be delayed. Here is the meaning of Ash Wednesday when promises are made to give up not only 'things' but also unholy attitudes so as to be in preparation for something more.

Then comes the story of the unproductive fruit tree. Complains the gardener: “I have done everything possible to get this tree to bear fruit, but it doesn't. Let me cut it down!” “No, no,” says the owner, “Do all you can for one more year.” Jesus is compassionate even as he “Calls it as it is.”

So this scripture ends. “ Don't wait. Let go of the old ways, live Jesus' Way and bear fruit now. You will be cultivated by God.” Continue your Lenten spiritual journey of letting go your old ways and taking on Christ's Way. Now! You are in Good Hands. The end result? New Life, in Jesus!

Prayer: God of infinite goodness, through the ages you have always sought to claim and reclaim your people, even as many saw no urgency. Renew for me your call to repentance, surround me with witnesses to aid me in my journey, and grant me the Spirit to shape my life anew, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.