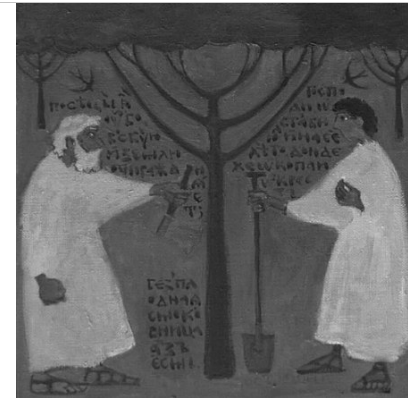


Third Sunday in Lent
Year C - RCL

Skaneateles, New York
January 27-28, 2004

Mark Vitalis Hoffman
Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg



Repentance and the Barren Fig Tree

<http://www.galleries.ru/cherkasova/picture.asp?artist=cherkasova&PicNo=16>

Luke 13:1-9

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

²He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.

⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them-- do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

It is impossible to locate these events with any historically known events. Pilate's cruelty was well known. Note that the underlying issue here is, "Why do people suffer?"

Luke 13:1-9

⁶ Then he told this parable:

"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ So he said to the gardener,

'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?'

⁸ He replied,

'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

How does this parable answer the observations made in verses 1-5?

Comments

- Is Jesus' message one of repent or perish?
Turn or burn?
- Is it a reminder that bad things happen to everyone? That everyone is going to perish regardless?
- So what are you going to do about it?

Comments

- Do you find the parable to be encouraging or threatening?
- Is it a picture of a gracious or judging God?