

# Unless You Repent

S. R. Luke 13:1 – 5

12 – 6 - 2020

## Introduction

### A. Comment

1. I certainly don't know any more than anyone else about what the future holds, but I am concerned about what I see coming our way.
2. No one will deny that religious freedoms have been under assault for the past couple decades.
3. Definitions of life, gender, marriage and other things have all been changed - some by legislation, some by social norms and practices.
4. These changes are beginning to dictate what we can and cannot profess, believe and practice from a religious standpoint.
5. These, combined with all the changes that have been imposed with the current pandemic and societal pressures, are disconcerting.
6. I think these things may just be the beginning of a larger assault and I am not just so sure that a lot of us are prepared to handle changes that may be on the horizon.

### B. Article in Focus Magazine by Russ Bowman

1. Kings, parties, dictators, movements...they all come and go, rise and fall.
2. Change is inevitable, and with that change comes new opportunities, new challenges, new atmospheres, and often new concerns – present circumstance notwithstanding.
3. The undeniable moral decline in the United States, along with what appears at times to be an intentional push for such, has many followers of Jesus concerned, but we should not panic.

### C. Political platforms, parties and polemics were rampant in the first century.

1. What turned the world “upside down” was the revolutionary teaching of Jesus and the adherence of it by devoted disciples. They accepted the risks of doing good in spite of the inherent dangers personally – politically or risks to their own health to care for the diseased. They were the first and only responders for the abandoned children and the population plagued by disease.

### D. The issue of human government and its impact upon morality and devotion to God is an old and discouraging one.

1. Even a cursory glance at the OT record exposes the influence of culture – and government, which is but a reflection of culture – on God's people.
2. Wicked kings and foreign nations time and again moved the tribes of Israel away from God.

3. In fact, that tendency serves as an interesting backdrop for God's plan to establish an eternal kingdom under the leadership of His Messiah.
  4. The reunion of God and His people within the government of a perfect and godly King is the impetus of the bible story, and particularly so after the rejection of God as King in **I Sam.8**.
- E. Godly individuals living in ungodly cultures – men like Abraham, Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel – found hope in the ultimate plans of God.
1. Yet they, like us, must have been concerned at what was happening around them.

**I. It may well have been this kind of concern that drives the context recorded in Luke 13.1-5.**

- A. It is hard to know exactly what prompted the mention of those Galileans who were killed by Pilate in the temple (v.1).
- B. And while we do not know the details of this massacre, it is not difficult to surmise that Pilate took the opportunity to underscore the power of Rome to quell any upstart rebellion on the part of the Galileans (who were reputed for such).
- C. Surely the oppression of Rome was a sore spot among Jews in the day of our Lord.
1. There is no question that politics is woven throughout the gospel narratives, and the political climate of the day surely weighed on them as it does us.
  2. Thus, the issue at hand should not be surprising.
  3. Certainly it is possible that those involved are posing a theological question (“Why the injustices of life?”). But it seems more reasonable that this question tests the reaction of this perceived Messiah to the atrocities of the Roman government that He is expected to overthrow.
  4. And, if indeed the inquiry/mention is politically motivated, it makes the response of the Lord all the more telling, and helpful to us.
- D. ***“Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?”*** (v.2).
1. The idea that physical suffering was a symptom of spiritual status seems a clear misconception in the age of our Lord.
  2. Witness the question of the apostles regarding the blind man in **John 9.2**, and the events/discussions which ensue.
  3. In essence, Jesus asks this question, “Do you think those killed by Pilate deserved it because of their ungodliness?”
  4. Our Lord's question is fascinating to me, especially if the subject was politically driven.

5. Rather than take the opportunity to hold a make-shift political rally, decrying the present regime and promising to restore justice and victory to God's chosen people, Jesus uses the occasion to prompt reflection upon what is a much more significant concern – **our status before God**.
  6. "Pilate killed those Galileans. It was horrible.
  7. But think about their souls – were they worse sinners than everyone else? Were they worse sinners than you?"
- E. *"I tell you, no; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."* (v.3).
1. Rather than capitalizing upon the political susceptibility of Pilate and Rome and all things temporal, the Lord looks to what is spiritual, and to the harsh eternal destiny of unrepentant sinners.
  2. There is a statement of judgment here – *"you will all likewise perish"* – and the key word is "likewise".
  3. "You will perish as they did. They failed to repent, and died in that condition.
  4. So will you if you do not amend your ways." The mention of the tragic accident in Siloam (v.4-5) merely underscores the issue, namely that the events of life should cause us to think of the life beyond.
  5. Whether its politics, pandemics, or happenstance, the Lord would have us prompted to penitence.

## II. Repentance is at the very foundation of our restoration to God.

- A. While it is true that a just man lives by faith (**Hab.2.4; Rom.1.17**), that faith is to drive us to a change in will that impacts every aspect of life.
- B. "Change your mind" is the plea of God throughout the ages.
- C. Yahweh pled for repentance at Sinai (**Ex.19-20**);
- D. Moses called Israel to such upon the plains of Moab (**Deu.30.15-20**);
- E. Joshua cried for it at Shechem (**Josh.24.14-15**);
- F. Jeremiah at Jerusalem (**Jer.25.5f**);
- G. Ezekiel in Chaldea (**Ezek.18.30-32**);
- H. John the Baptist at the Jordan (**Mt.3.1f**); and Jesus here. (Luke 13)
- I. The demand of God that we change our will and bring it into alignment with His has been all but dismissed in our modern culture – even among those who claim affiliation with Christ.
- J. Society in general has forsaken God's standards of morality, honesty, integrity, justice, and righteousness.
  1. Athenians (Acts 17:30-31)

2. Felix (Acts 24:24 – 27)
- K. And that cultural environment has permeated modern religious teaching so that issues such as divorce, gender roles, sexual promiscuity and perversion, materialism, modesty, and doctrinal integrity are met with a blind eye in most churches that call themselves “christian.”
  - L. Even among the most conservative of religious groups, the selfishness of the human will is manifesting itself more and more boldly.
  - M. It is this trend – minds that are not directed by the will of God – that has this country (and every country) in the clutches of Satan and the moral depravity he incites.
  - N. Until or Unless we repent – starting with me and mine – Cason Lane and Murfreesboro. There is little hope for a national revival.
  - O. (2 Chronicles 7:13 – 14) National revival starts with me in my home.
    - 1. It then moves to the local market place of ideas.
    - 2. As long as we cower in our homes and disdain those who may imperfectly try to stand for Christ and the freedom he brings to all who submit to Him, we can only anticipate a coming judgment of God.
    - 3. As long as minds will not submit to the truth of God regarding gender roles, promiscuity and perversion – lust for things and use of people as object – the patterns of God regarding how, when and where to worship together – we cannot be surprised at the use of government to afflict its subjects.

**III. We must not be convinced that the right persons in the right places in our government will make all of the difference.**

- A. Will good influences in high places help? Certainly.
- B. But is human government the answer to moral decline? No.
- C. Instead, the answer is that supplied by Jesus.
  - 1. “Yes, Pilate killed those people. It was wrong.
  - 2. But have you thought about their souls?
  - 3. They weren’t any worse than you. They died unprepared – unrepentant.
  - 4. And you will too, if you don’t change your ways.”
- D. May God help us to have eyes that see beyond the here and now, and hearts that are humble enough to turn from ourselves and to our King

**IV. Conclusion: “You are writing a gospel. A chapter a day. By deeds that you do, by words that you say. Men read what your write, whether faithless or true. Say, what is the gospel according to you.”**