



A Spiritual Encouragement Message

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Jesus' Message on Catastrophes

On one of those occasions that Jesus was teaching His disciples in front of the multitudes (Luke 12), some of the Jews present tried to avoid Jesus' messages by pointing fingers and commenting on the suffering of others who they considered worse sinners receiving a form of curse by punishment and judgment. So they told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices (Luke 13:1).

Jesus knew what they were thinking so He answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:2-3). Jesus was obviously alerting them of the soon horrific Roman destruction of their nation along with Jerusalem and their temple. Insisting on His point, Jesus even added an allusion to another catastrophic event to emphasize His message of repentance to all alike. "Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:4-5).

Jesus also added a short parable, which was the simplest form of general teaching in their culture. This was to make them aware of their constantly unfruitful condition, in the most possible fertile ground, in God's holy land, as well as their many wasted past opportunities. Jesus said, "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vine dresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down'" (Luke 13:6-9).

Jesus did not sugarcoat his message, He did not water down His teachings. More than ever now, our current situation with this deadly pandemic can help us understand and listen to those valuable warnings of our Lord. During this present invisible and contagious coronavirus among us now you and I see all people, even our loved ones as if they are possible zombies

sort of speak. So that should give us a glimpse of imagination of how God sees or culture full of sin and our lives possibly influenced by it to some degree. Just remember the Jews, they were God's chosen people and they assumed they were right, especially the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In contrast to their convenient assumptions, Jesus came and told them they were not right with God and their time to repentance was coming to an end. But those stiff neck Jews ignoring their poor relation with God, they were yet expecting a Messiah to restore their physical kingdom and to boost their economy and bless them.

In a similar manner, we could possibly be now so accustomed to His abundant grace to a point that it seems we assume we deserve it. We sing "Amazing Grace" and lately in a contradictory way we could be showing more amazement by suffering and death than by His grace. By His mercy and grace is that we still exist and live. Luke emphasized that in Jesus' calling to repentance. Each calamity should remind us to repent and to escape the eternal punishment by obeying Christ who loves us enough to cleanse us with His blood.

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