

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 28th February 2016

LENT THREE - THE GOSPEL INVITATION – REPENT OR PERISH

As we Gather

The people of Israel firmly believed that individuals who suffered did so because their sin was being punished (Job 4:7).

Reading Scripture **Isaiah 55:1-9** **Psalms 63:1-8** **1 Corinthians 10:1-13** **Luke 13:1-9**

Thinking Together

Jesus was regularly confronted with difficult questions / situations designed to trap Him. In Luke 13:1-5 He knew that if He ignored the information given to Him (v1) the crowd would think He condoned Roman behaviour, and if He defended those who died at Siloam (v4) He would be in trouble with both the Roman authorities and the Religious leaders.

Instead of discussing Pilate's sins, Jesus dealt with the sins of the people confronting Him. He said neither group should be blamed for their calamities - their death or survival had nothing to do with righteousness. Human tragedies are not always divine punishment, and it is wrong to pass judgement.

He knew that if the Jews went on behaving as they were behaving they were committing national suicide (vv4+5)

Do you see any parallel with South Africa today? Discuss (1 Corinthians 10:1-13)

Jesus went on to point out the logical conclusion to their argument – if God does indeed punish sin in the way they believed, they better repent, because all people are sinners. Being human we all have to die, but not everyone has to stay dead (Isaiah 55:6-9).

There are two kinds of people – the takers and the givers

Which are you? Discuss

God is gracious and long-suffering toward people (2 Peter 3:9), and does more than enough to encourage us to repent and bear fruit (Luke 13:6-9 Isaiah 55:1-9 Acts 13:32-34). It is always Jesus' way to give a second chance (John 21:15-17). We are judged according to the opportunities / privileges we have enjoyed and what we have done with them

Of what use are you in this world? Discuss

The parable told by Jesus is open ended – we are not told if the tree did eventually bear fruit

Look to your own life – what is the answer? Discuss

In Closing

This parable is quite clear that eventually there is a final chance, and we must not presume upon Christ's kindness and long-suffering – judgement day will finally come. We are invited to a life of abundant joy in Christ (Psalm 63:1-8).

Ask yourself – am I taking up space, or am I bearing fruit to God's glory?

PRAYER

God of infinite goodness, throughout the ages you have persevered in claiming and reclaiming your people. Renew for us your call to repentance, surround us with witnesses to aid us in our journey, and grant us the grace to fashion our lives anew through Jesus . Amen