

# **Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Gospel of Luke, Session 22, Prophetic Call to Repentance, Luke 13**

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This is Dr. Daniel K. Darko in his teaching on the Gospel of Luke. This is 22, Prophetic Call to Repentance, Luke 13.

Welcome back to the Gospel of Luke lectures in the Biblical e-learning lecture series.

Here we continue on the teachings of Jesus from Luke chapter 13. In Luke 13, the material continues directly after Jesus' teaching that I called a call to decision; if you remember, Jesus' call for a discipleship that will require loyalty may affect even relationships depending upon how people look at discipleship. Here, he turns into what I have called a prophetic call to repentance, borrowing some of the language of Luke Timothy Johnson, who portrays Jesus as a prophet who is declaring prophetic oracles.

In the prophetic call to repentance, I read from chapters 13:1 to 17, and in this particular hour or this particular lecture, we are going to try to cover chapter 13 in the broadest sense as much as possible. There are some present at the very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Or those eighteen on whom the tower of 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. And he told this parable: 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 manoir. Then, if it should bear fruit this next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it.

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues in the suburb, and behold, there was a woman who had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She had bent over and could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, Woman, you are free from your disability.

And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on

the suburb, said to the people, There are six days in the week, six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, not in the suburb there.

Then the Lord answered him, You hypocrites, does not each of you on the suburb untie his ox or his oxen from the manger and lead it away to water it? Or ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the suburb there? As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that he did. Verse 18. He, Jesus, said, therefore, What is the kingdom of God like? And what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of master seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.

And again, he said, To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in a tree and measures of flour until it was all leaven. There are a few things to highlight in the prophetic call to repentance here in the ministry of Jesus. First, let's clarify tense.

What is the meaning of the word repentance, and why should I consider it in the language of Luke Timothy Johnson to be a prophetic call? First, in the prophetic call, it is a tradition of prophets to call people to repent or perish, as we see that echoes in the early part of the paragraph I read. That people must repent at the hearing of God's will. God's word.

God's call for change. In a prophetic language, something is always present at the end. If you do not repent, this consequence will ensue.

That is what we find in this passage. The last thing I want to clarify before we go on to look at this passage a bit more closely is the word repentance. The word repentance is a very, very important word in prophetic discourse as well as the teachings of Jesus.

To repent is not a simple way to say I just convert or I change and go that way. Repentance has so many faceted dimensions to it. Repentance basically means to say I hold on to this belief or this conviction, and I make a radical change that is not only cognitive but also a change of will.

And that change of will can actually be prompted by a sense of guilt that says what I have done is wrong. I changed my will. It does not end there.

Repentance also requires a change of conduct in the way people live. So it is not only cognitive activity that alters how a person feels about an issue or the volition of an individual, but it also translates into actual conduct. One who repents, therefore, changes their way of life.

Notice I did not say just change of behavior. They have a change of mindset. They have a change of purpose and disposition towards life, and consequently, it affects conduct.

Jesus calls for repentance here in a prophetic tone, calling people to hear what the kingdom is about and the need to heed to the words of the kingdom. Here, we find some initial prompting that will cause Jesus to talk about this by sound. Jesus set up two cases as an example for his audience to note and to pay attention to.

Jesus is very particular in reminding them of two incidents which we don't have additional information about. He mentioned one of those incidents with Pilate. I'd like to submit to you that Luke's mention of Pilate may not be a coincidence because he talks about judgment associated with Galileans. Can you guess who a Galilean is? Jesus.

Who else are Galileans? The disciples of Jesus. And where are these Galileans going? They are going to Jerusalem. In Luke's plot, Jerusalem is where Pilate will make the ultimate decision for the death penalty of Jesus.

So, Luke reminds us about a tradition in which some Galileans were involved, and some were involved in the Pilate tradition. But we don't want to be oblivious to the fact that Luke's use, Luke is a very skillful rhetorician and skillful writer. So his mention of Galileans and Pilate seems to be echoing some of the things that are going to be going on by the time we get to the Passion Week.

He also mentions some 18 that were killed in the Tower of Siloam, reminding the people that when people did what was wrong, did they not suffer the consequences thereof? Yes, they did. If that is so, should they think for a minute that they would escape the consequences of their behaviors if they do not repent? You see, I told you in the previous lecture that Jesus was delivering this seemingly harsh call to discipleship. Here, he gets into the prophetic tone and calls specifically to repentance.

I'd like to suggest that the parable of the fig tree should speak to the audience in a way that's supposed to be very interesting. Now, we have this same parable in Matthew 21, and we have it in Mark 11. Luke's rendering is very interesting because when the harvest came up, the master saw that the fig was not bearing fruit, and after three years, he came again and again and again.

He implies that that tree deserves punishment and that the audience of Jesus who is listening to this parable knows the answer. He had already talked about the Galileans and Pilate. He had talked about the 18 with the tower of Siloam, who deserved their due punishment.

And then he comes and say, for three continuous years, the fig tree was not bearing fruit. And he suggests that the right thing to do is judgment is to cut it down. Notice how Luke narrates the account in fine detail.

Luke says that the fig tree is not just bearing fruit and not satisfying the people's needs. No, Luke says the fruit, which is the tree that is not bearing fruit, is actually wasting the soil, wasting the land, wasting the manure from the land. In other words, it is drawing energy for resources from the source and wasting the resources because it is actually at the right place to be able to grow and bear fruit.

But notice something else in Luke's narrative of this particular parable. Luke said the vine dresser was able to convince the owner to say, don't cut it yet. In other words, if you are listening to the parable of Jesus calling for repentance, you deserve it. If you don't change your ways, you deserve to be perished.

But the vine dresser came in and said, oh no, don't cut it yet. And the master was persuaded by that. He said, okay, we give it another year then.

And in this other year, there is an opportunity to bear fruit. But if it doesn't, then the judgment can follow. In this parable, Jesus is bringing out the clearest statement, the articulation of the kingdom of God in the clearest time.

People should turn from their sins and accept the message of the kingdom of God. No tree is going to be left standing to waste the land. A powerful imagery that Jesus brings here.

You see, one may be expecting, one may be looking for one thing from the fruit, but the vine dresser says, I am committed to work on what it takes to bear fruit. And if you are in the audience, Jesus knows that you are familiar with parables, so you are thinking with images. Change your ways while judgment is being anticipated.

Judgment will definitely come when the next time of assessment comes into bear, and then we see another incident here where something else will come up in the next passage. Something will happen in the synagogue.

A woman who has suffered for 18 years will come to the synagogue on the Sabbath. As we saw in chapter 7, this woman is not reported by other synoptic writers; if I recall correctly, the woman shows up, and the woman experiences healing. We are told that Jesus calls and pronounces that the woman is healed and goes on to lay hands on the woman for her to receive her divine healing.

When she received her divine healing, the ruler of the synagogue got upset. Notice what the ruler of the synagogue will do. This ruler of the synagogue will not direct his accusations or statements to Jesus.

He was upset about Jesus' healing, but he turned to the crowd and said, guys, I don't want you here on the Sabbath. There are six days to work. Come here those six days, and you may meet this Jesus man.

He may do all your healing and release that you may think about. But by the way, I don't want you on the Sabbath because being healed on the Sabbath disrupts her Sabbath protocol, and it is working. That is not good.

Is that not interesting? That is a clever way to take your feelings towards the weak. Jesus is the one who did the healing. But you will see in this account that a woman's healing is going to cause all these things to play out.

But Jesus is going to turn out as you look at the Greek text carefully. He would direct the synagogue ruler and refer to him as a hypocrite. Some translations turn the language of hypocrisy to everybody in the room. But if you look at the text carefully, it seems to suggest that Jesus is saying you are a hypocrite.

Why is he not a hypocrite, according to Jesus? Number one, the count on the fact that Jesus is the one doing the healing. You have an issue about healing. Whom do you approach? Jesus.

Why do you go to the crowd? Hypocrite. Don't do that. Now he's a hypocrite, according to Jesus, on another count.

The fact that he knows that as a Jew, they are willing to release their domestic animals on the Sabbath to be refreshed. But Jesus said the woman in question is not a Gentile. The woman in question is a daughter of Abraham.

The woman in question is a fellow Jew. The woman in question deserves to be free. And so he drew back to the man and said, with your own interpretation and understanding, how domestic animals, even animals, need to be released to be refreshed.

Don't you think a daughter of Abraham needs to be released? And this is where it gets concerning from satanic bondage. Jesus turned her crooked posture that has come as a result of her ailment into saying that Satan is responsible for causing her condition. He also said that he had come to the synagogue to release this woman.

You see, using this to assert what is going on in the kingdom of God is so Jesus, in his way of doing things, will continue to challenge and challenge the people to see the

world the way that could baffle their minds. Before I go on here, let me clarify something about this woman being demon-possessed. I have often been asked in church leadership contests when I'm training leaders or sometimes in a classroom, could Christians or Jews be demon possessed? I don't know.

I am not God. But all I know is that whether this woman has been oppressed by Satan or has been entangled by Satan one way or the other, Jesus was setting her free as he said in the Nazareth manifesto that the spirit of the living God is upon him and he has come to set the captive free. The woman may not be possessed, but maybe he was oppressed by Satan.

I don't know. I am not immune from being oppressed by Satan by virtue of being a Christian. All that Luke wants us to understand is this.

Jesus is doing the kingdom business. And as usual, he went to the synagogue to teach, and there he found this woman. The woman has suffered for 18 good years, and Jesus said he had suffered at the hands of Satan.

Before we go to surmise what else has been going on, Luke has told us several times that Satan is an arch enemy to the kingdom of God, and part of the kingdom's mission is to destroy the works of the devil. If I may quote 1 John, a different test entirely in this regard, as John will put it in John's time, for this reason, the son of a man appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil. It seems to me that that is what Luke is trying to push forward here.

Then, Jesus will move on to talk about the influence and impact of the kingdom of God using two images. The master seed is a very small seed that can end up to get a tree to grow and grow massive. The influence of one small seed.

He then goes on to talk about the influence of yeast. I should be first to confess to you I like to cook, and baking is one of those things that I find challenging. I have never been successful at getting the yeast right with the flour.

If I felt recently, I was exploring something with my children, and I thought I had measured the dry yeast perfectly and it's supposed to just work as I wanted, and I put it in a bread maker. I started a machine. The first observation came when I saw what looked like something horrible in the bread maker, and we had to go back.

I had to add a little bit more liquid. That is the first indication I couldn't get it right. And then I thought, oh, now everything is going well. It's supposed to be right.

And that was the closest I'm talking about, maybe a week ago or less, that I was coming close to just getting the yeast and the proportion of the yeast and the flour right. But you see, what Jesus is doing here is to draw the audience into the kitchen

of a woman baking, knowing that a lot of male audience may be like me who don't even know how to cook and get the yeast right. But understand that when the right person is doing it, the yeast is powerful and influential.

It is able to introduce these enzymes that will infect the flour and get the flour to bloat and grow into a size before it is baked into the bread that we like. The influence of the yeast must be looked at, and the influence of the master seed must be looked at in comparative terms or in analogical terms in relation to the influence of the kingdom of God. It starts from what looks very insignificant and extends to something that is very, very big and influential.

Jesus lays this foundation in Luke chapter 3 to remind them that the prophet has come calling to repentance. Yes, when the prophet calls for repentance, he calls people to resist sin. And when he gets to the synagogue, his mission does not only include forgiveness of sin; he sets people free who are trapped in demonic stronghold.

And if people know what is good on the Sabbath to release their domestic animals, yes, the Son of Man will release those who are held in bondage by the devil. The kingdom is starting in a small way, but it's going to grow in a massive way, as his last two stories will show. In chapter 13, verse 22, Luke continues; he went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem, still on his way towards Jerusalem.

And someone said to him, Lord, will those who are saved be few? And he said to them, strive to enter through the narrow gates. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. For once, the master of the house rose and shut the door.

And you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door saying, Lord, open to us. Then he will answer you, I do not know where you come from. Then you will begin to say, we ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.

But he will say, I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me all you workers of evil. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

When you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets of the kingdom of God, but you yourselves cast out, the people will come from east and west and from north and south and recline a table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last, and some will be first, and some will be last. Here is a familiar teaching of Jesus as we saw elsewhere in his teachings, not particularly in Luke.

So, what I'm going to do here is just to walk you through some basic outline of things that Jesus is highlighting here regarding what is going on in regard to this kingdom. First, on the question of salvation. Jesus makes this conceptual transition, Luke

makes this conceptual transition, excuse me, from the mustard seed and the yeast into the metaphor.

If the few are making a difference and would make a significant difference, then it serves almost like a segue into the question, are only a few people saved? Notice that Luke wants you to be aware that Jesus is still on the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. So, he wants to make sure that you capture that very well in this narrative as he moves on. The other thing to note in this passage here is the question of anticipated salvation.

The question seems to suggest that perhaps this questioner or the person asking the question is interested in knowing the extent or the size of the remnant of Jews that may be allowed in the kingdom of God. But notice how Jesus explains with the parable. He sets the scene in a place of a very big house using a narrow gate, not away.

Instead of highway, elsewhere, I think in Matthew, you see here a gate into an estate. And in that gate, you have a narrow gate that will lead into the house. But as Jesus explains, is the owner of the house that determines the conditions for admission.

We know that Jews have always talked in the second temple of Judaism about eschatological banquets with the Messiah. But the invitation here is not worth it. The invitation is to come so that one may be able to participate in this, but it is time-sensitive for those who are ready to participate.

The eschatological imagery here or the end-time imagery here is not worthy. Jesus is suggesting in this parable that even those who are listening to him will come to a place in the eschaton when they have visible access to see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God and not be able to see. Don't ask me what does that mean about heaven and hell.

I don't know what it means, but Jesus image is to bring them closer to the understanding of the fact that in the eschatological state of bliss, you would have Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other people, and those who would not hear the prophetic words would not be able to enter. That he wants to make clear. On that basis, he could challenge them to respond to the teachings of the kingdom.

Another thing to highlight from that passage is how Jesus highlights the fact that those who would claim to have an association with him will not still find a place in the eschaton. Even those who dine with him, if there were some Pharisees with him, or those who are traveling with him, those who may have dined with him if they don't heed to the message of the kingdom, will not find a place in the kingdom of God. They will regret it.



Because when they see their forebears, they will desire to be there and will not be able to make it. Notice the imagery that resonates in the background. When Jesus said he had come to bring division, where even a father and son will be divided, husband and wife, if they do not prioritize the kingdom.

From this conversation and setting up the tone of the kingdom as a prophet, Jesus goes on to touch on an event with Herod, talk about Jerusalem, and what Jerusalem has done to God's prophets. Highlighting that yes, in his prophetic ministry, calling them to repentance and inviting them to participate in the kingdom, he understands that Jerusalem has not been innocent in dealing with God's people, and yet, he has come and has so much interest in the welfare, well-being of Jerusalem. I read from 31.

At that very hour, some Pharisees came and told him to get away from here. Of course, they are fed up with him and his teaching. For Herod wants to kill you.

You see, don't miss this line here. Pharisees came up here to ask Jesus to leave. In some cases, they don't like what he's teaching, but here they say, we want to save you.

Herod wants to kill you. I will elaborate on that a little bit as to what some scholars have to say. Some think that this is not a genuine call.

Somebody like me thinks that is a genuine way to ask Jesus to escape. He said to them, go and tell that fox, referring to Herod, behold, I cast out demons and perform kills today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my cause. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today, tomorrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.

Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathered her brood under her wings, and you were not willing. Behold, your house is forsaken.

And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Five key things I want to highlight quickly here. Some Pharisees came and informed Jesus about Herod's assassination plot.

Here, I draw your attention to the fact that some scholars have suggested that the Pharisees don't have real and genuine interest in Jesus. Coming to inform him about Herod's plot was another way to subvert the ministry of Jesus, to ask him to get away from the region because they are very uncomfortable about him. Some scholars have also suggested that no, these Pharisees were genuine.

You note that the expression here in Luke is unique. Luke did not say the Pharisees here in this account. Here, he said some Pharisees, seeming to suggest that these Pharisees actually came in good faith to ask Jesus to escape, knowing that Herod was plotting to kill him.

As you read and follow different commentaries and books, you may come across the other view. But I work with the view that the Pharisees had Jesus' life interest at stake here. Jesus orders them to go.

But look at the language Jesus used in reference to Herod. He calls him Fox. He calls Herod Fox.

A fox that is exercising his authority. He wants them to know, or he wants them to tell Herod that he is a fox. But he should be informed that he, Jesus, is right here exercising authority.

He is casting out demons. His authority is used in those ways. Herod can do whatever he likes, but Jesus knows what Jerusalem does to prophets.

And he's heading to Jerusalem for just that. He is not afraid of death. Jerusalem is the city that kills prophets.

Yes, Jesus is heading there. Luke set up chapter 13 to say Jesus is on his journey to Jerusalem, and he's going to remind his readers that yes, Jerusalem is known to be a place where prophets die, and he's heading there and he's not afraid. He's doing what the prophets do.

He's proclaiming the kingdom of God and inviting all those who would hear to come and participate. He agonizes though about Jerusalem. He agonizes about Jerusalem as a hen would care for her chicks.

He agonizes for Jerusalem because Jerusalem is a place where good things could be. But the people did not seem to accept and recognize what God wants to do among his people. Jesus is heading towards Jerusalem.

Oh, how he wishes that God's people would understand the prophet of God who came in. The question in suspense to the audience is this: will Jerusalem kill her prophet Jesus, or will Jerusalem welcome the prophet and join with Psalm 118 26 and say, blessed is the one who came in the name of the Lord? Jesus understands that between chapter 12 and chapter 13 of the gospel of Luke, the message that was presented in different ways in the Sermon on the Mount is very, very difficult for people to hear.

He is likely to suffer for that. But a prophetic ministry of Jesus will not end unless he calls people to repentance and unless he explains to them the scope of the kingdom of God. Occasionally he provokes when he calls people like Herod Fox, when he named Jerusalem and accused people who live in Jerusalem to have historical precedence of killing God's prophets.

And yet he does this not unintentionally. He does this to show that the message of the kingdom of God is countering everything the people know about. It's countering the wishes of Herod.

It's countering the wishes of God's people in the Jewish capital that the Jewish establishment itself, his own people, will not understand the nature of the kingdom. But you see the kingdom of God calls for repentance and a good way, a new way of living. Those who would heed will have the benefit of dining, celebrating, and feasting with their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Notice that Luke wants to make sure that one understands the ministry of Jesus in light of Second Temple Judaism. Christianity is not different from Judaism. Those who heed the kingdom of God would enjoy fellowship with the fathers of the Jews, the patriarchs of the Jews.

You know, as you follow these lectures, I don't know how you have felt so far with the previous two lectures and this one. Because Jesus delivers some of the harsh, strong statements of the kingdom of God in these passages. But is that not why he came? He came to love.

And sometimes love requires that sinners are called into repentance. Sometimes, love requires that people who are overly involved in wrongdoing are called out so that they may change their ways. Because look at the other side of things, though.

When people desist and move away from what God requires of us, we hurt God's world, and we hurt God's people by the very conditions of life and the state of mind we have as a way of living. I pray that as we continue these lectures, you never give up, realizing that at the heart of this is God's love for you and me. And an extended invitation for us Gentiles also to come and participate in the kingdom of God.

Would we heed to the prophet's call to repent and so come and participate in the blessings of the kingdom? I want to be a part. I hope you are. May God help us stay strong while we yield to the message of the kingdom so that in the totality of what God wants of us, even as striving and struggling Christians, we will seek to be faithful for his name's sake.

Thank you again for listening, and I pray that you learned something from this series. Continue the series because you will hear the tender heart of Jesus in the process,

how he came for the outcast and the poor, and how he came for the marginalized. The kingdom of God is a package.

Please don't miss out. Continue this lecture series, and I know you'll be blessed. God bless you.

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