**“Turned”**

Ezekiel 33:7-20

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9

 Lent 3, March 19/20, 2022

“And Jesus 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 vinedresser, “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 if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.””

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

**Parables** are a **unique way that Jesus unpacked how He said that, in Him, “the Kingdom of God was at hand”**. I’ve heard parables described as “**earthly stories about heavenly realities**” and (this one that I like) as “**stories in the Bible that sound like pleasant yarns but keeps something up its sleeve that pops us and levels us flat**”. Either way, they are stories “**descriptive**”, that “**describe**” “what happens as **God’s re-establishing Himself as the King above (and reigning over) all men**. It’s **God kingdom acting in this world**.

**Text**

“Jesus told **this parable**: ‘A man had a **fig tree planted in His vineyard**’”. With those words only, there we have the **full Gospel**. “The Man / a Man” is (in parables) always God the Father who’s credited even by the Son as the Source of all things, both grace and expectation. God is Good (and Goodness is defined by Him) and He **expects Good**, and the only way people can be part of that Goodness is to be a **part of Him**. “And Jesus told this parable of the Kingdom of God in action: ‘A **Man (God, the Father)** had a **fig tree** (**a person or many people, yet also always one person, too**) **planted** (and here’s **Baptism’s reference as it is all through Scripture)** **noticeable here since** **trees don’t plant themselves**. It’s **God who has them embedded / joined to His Son / planted**) in **His vineyard**.”

One **can be** l**iterally** **embedded** or “**planted**” (it is **literal** and **of the right word**) to say that one’s “planted” into the soil and property / domain of what is, literally, anything, and in our Baptismal rite you may have noticed that we **acknowledged** **that reality** as “we are all conceived and born (**planted** lingo) sinful and are under the power (into the soil and domain / vineyard) of the devil **till** **Christ claims us as His own**”, **planting us, then, into the Father’s Vineyard and Kingdom / into His domain and property from where we were not**.

“**Disciples**” (“**fig trees planted into His Kingdom then expected to act like it**”) were those that Jesus described in His parable. They were **made / planted Goodly and Godly / started** as part of the **“all nations” that are to be started that way**, which includes our children and the entire mission field / **ALL**) by being **embedded and properly planted), “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”**.

“Jesus told this parable: ‘A Man **had a fig tree planted in His vineyard**’”, and I pray that **this first Gospel sentence “pops up and levels all of you flat” as parables of Jesus were meant to by Him**. God “**loved the whole world by** **sending His Son (and embedding Him into it / planting Him here) to** **die for it so that it might not perish but, instead have eternal life**” … that’s John 3:16. The world got bought back (or “redeemed” with Jesus’ blood) to be, then, planted into that and the Lord’s Kingdom (“baptized” as Paul says in Romans 6) “into Christ Jesus / His death”, Baptism plant one into that / Christ and God’s “vineyard” / His Kingdom / His domain. It’s what Romans 6 tells us happens as we’re baptized / planted in God’s “vineyard”.

If we get no further than this today (“popped and leveled flat” by that in this parable today), then it’s a wonder day. With just that one gets the full Gospel proclaimed to them from cross to baptismal font, from **THAT GOSPEL-IN-GENERAL FOR THE WORLD TO THE GOSPEL-PERSONALLY FOR ONE BAPTIZED TO THEN BELIEVE**.

It’s from **that** “**popping and levelling of us all flat**” by impact that Jesus moved, then, beyond there to **describing life DISPLAYED planted in that Kingdom**.

**God EXPECTS THINGS of those “fig trees” planted / baptized into His vineyard**. The “**fruit**” of the Kingdom of God’s “fig tree” is the **humility of knowing that planting as not our doing but of grace and Him as patient with us as we try to show ourselves as appropriate products of where we’ve been planted**. It’s **why** the other texts (in Ezekiel and 1st Corinthians) were coupled with this parable … that we **not look like we’re mis-planted and unrepentedly barren, embarrassing our gracious God, looking shabby in the lush vineyard, provided-for but “EMPTY” and not caring that are so**.

Jesus (in His Great Commission to His people) continues that, after baptism, “we be taught to observe (and really do so) all that He’s commanded (look like one planted in God’s Kingdom, abundant with fruit like humility and repentance and the desire to look appropriate for where we’ve been planted.

God’s quoted with this intention in Ezekiel: “I’ve **made of you** a **watchman for the house of Israel**”. He **expects that diligence in that**. There are those **expectations by God of Katherine and Jackson properly planted this weekend**. A vow we’re making is to **help them that** and **live up to that ourselves,** **humble and desirous of the glorious look appropriate to the vineyard, not shabby, but vibrant**.

Which returns us to the parable. The “Man” (God, the Father) came **seeking fruit on the fig tree that He planted in His vineyard and found none, saying to the Vinedresser (Jesus who’s the intercessor and caretaker of our salvation): “Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree” (three years of Jesus’ among His people and the entire time of God caring for His own taking them from Egypt and planted them in the Land Promised) “seeking to see fruit on this fig tree. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?”**

## Application

Where the Lord Jesus is still **interceding for us today**: Jesus (the Vinedresser) says to His Father “Sir, **let it alone this year also,** **until I dig around it and put on manure**. Then if it should bear fruit next year, **well and good**; but if not, you can cut it down.”

**We’re in that “year”**. It’s the one **of extended grace** while God looking for humility and repentance. And “**turning the soil / manuring” is Jesus’ activity still around our roots (in His Father’s soil), His upsetting of our “status quo”, turning our soil and reminding us all the while of our “planting” in the “Father’s vineyard” and His desire for us**.

We (Katherine and Jackson and you and I “planted” / baptized) must be “**turned**” and **“re-turned” by Jesus, showing “fruits of repentance” in humility and display of faith and activity**. May this be our **reminder for today**. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.