PARABLES

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

September 27, 2026
Luke 13:1-9 | The Parable of the Fig Tree | Pastor Brent Foster



Begin by reading Luke 13:1-9 aloud. *You do not need to cover every question. Give the group room to listen, reflect, and respond honestly.*

Opening Conversation

- What is a close call you experienced or witnessed? Did it change anything about the way you thought or lived afterward?
- Why do you think we find it difficult to talk honestly about the brevity and uncertainty of life? When has that reality caused you to reconsider what matters most?

Exploring Luke 13

- The crowd brings Jesus a tragedy involving political violence, and Jesus adds an unexpected accident. What assumptions about suffering does Jesus confront in verses 1-5?

Continued on the other side.

- When tragedy happens “out there,” we can distance ourselves, speculate about causes, or look for someone to blame. Why are those reactions so common? How does Jesus redirect the conversation?
- Jesus refuses the conclusion that the victims were worse sinners. How can we respond to tragedy with humility and compassion while still allowing it to examine our own lives?
- Read Luke 12:54-59. What do the pictures of reading the weather and settling with an adversary add to Jesus’ call to repent? Where are people often careful about temporary matters but careless about eternal ones?

Repentance and the Fig Tree

- In your own words, what is repentance? Why is it more than feeling guilty or trying harder? In what sense is repentance a generous gift and invitation from God?
- In the fig tree parable, what do the owner, the gardener, and the fruitless tree reveal about God’s justice, patience, and mercy? Why should God’s patience lead us to respond rather than delay?
- John the Baptist says, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Luke 3:8). What might that fruit look like in our priorities, relationships, habits, or treatment of others? Focus on examining your own life rather than measuring someone else’s.

Personal Response

- Pastor Brent used C. S. Lewis’s image of a lizard that a Ghost has learned to tolerate and protect. Why do we sometimes manage, excuse, or hide sin instead of surrendering it to Jesus? (Bonus: What are some other biblical themes of repentance and salvation we see in Lewis’s allegory?)
- Where might the Holy Spirit be “digging around” in your life right now? What is one specific act of repentance, trust, reconciliation, or obedience you can take this week? Share only what is appropriate for the group.
- How can this Micro Church support and pray for you as you take that step?

Prayer

- Spend a minute in silence, asking the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Then pray together, thanking God for his patience and mercy, confessing where you need to turn, and asking for the grace to bear fruit. If helpful, close by praying in pairs or groups of three for the specific steps shared.

Continued on the other side.

Excerpt from CS Lewis' "The Great Divorce" – The Lizard & The Stallion

I saw coming towards us a Ghost who carried something on his shoulder. Like all the Ghosts, he was unsubstantial, but they differed from one another as smokes differ. Some had been whitish; this one was dark and oily. What sat on his shoulder was a little red lizard, and it was twitching its tail like a whip and whispering things in his ear. As we caught sight of him he turned his head to the reptile with a snarl of impatience. 'Shut up, I tell you!' he said. It wagged its tail and continued to whisper to him. He ceased snarling, and presently began to smile. Then he turned and started to limp westward, away from the mountains.

'Off so soon?' said a voice.

The speaker was more or less human in shape but larger than a man, and so bright that I could hardly look at him. His presence smote on my eyes and on my body too (for there was heat coming from him as well as light) like the morning sun at the beginning of a tyrannous summer day.

'Yes. I'm off,' said the Ghost. 'Thanks for all your hospitality. But it's no good, you see. I told this little chap' (here he indicated the Lizard) 'that he'd have to be quiet if he came—which he insisted on doing. Of course his stuff won't do here: I realize that. But he won't stop. I shall just have to go home.'

'Would you like me to make him quiet?' said the flaming Spirit—an angel, as I now understood.

'Of course I would,' said the Ghost.

'Then I will kill him,' said the Angel, taking a step forward.

'Oh—ah—look out! You're burning me. Keep away,' said the Ghost, retreating.

'Don't you want him killed?'

'You didn't say anything about killing him at first. I hardly meant to bother you with anything so drastic as that.'

'It's the only way,' said the Angel, whose burning hands were now very close to the Lizard. 'Shall I kill it?'

'Well, that's a further question. I'm quite open to consider it, but it's a new point isn't it? I mean, for the moment I was only thinking about silencing it because up here—well, it's so damned embarrassing.'

'May I kill it?'

'Well, there's time to discuss that later.'

'There is no time. May I kill it?'

'Please, I never meant to be such a nuisance. Please—really—don't bother. Look! It's gone to sleep of its own accord. I'm sure it'll be all right now. Thanks ever so much.'

'May I kill it?'

'Honestly, I don't think there's the slightest necessity for that. I'm sure I shall be able to keep it in order now. I think the gradual process would be far better than killing it.'

'The gradual process is of no use at all.'

'Don't you think so? Well, I'll think over what you've said very carefully. I honestly will. In fact I'd let you kill it now, but as a matter of fact I'm not feeling frightfully well to-day. It would be most silly to do it now. I'd need to be in good health for the operation. Some other day, perhaps.'

'There is no other day. All days are present now.'

'Get back! You're burning me. How can I tell you to kill it? You'd kill me if you did.'

'It is not so.'

'Why, you're hurting me now.'

'I never said it wouldn't hurt you. I said it wouldn't kill you.'

'Oh, I know. You think I'm a coward. But it isn't that. Really it isn't. I say! Let me run back by to-night's bus and get an opinion from my own doctor. I'll come again the first moment I can.'

'This moment contains all moments.'

'Why are you torturing me? You are jeering at me. How can I let you tear me to pieces? If you wanted to help me, why didn't you kill the damned thing without asking me—before I knew? It would be all over by now if you had.'

'I cannot kill it against your will. It is impossible. Have I your permission?'

The Angel's hands were almost closed on the Lizard, but not quite. Then the Lizard began chattering to the Ghost so loud that event I could hear what it was saying.

Continued on the other side.

‘Be careful,’ it said. ‘He can do what he says. He can kill me. One fatal word from you and he will! Then you’ll be without me for ever and ever. It’s not natural. How could you live? You’d be only a sort of ghost, not a less abstract thing. It may be natural for him, but it isn’t for us. Yes, yes. I know there are no real pleasures now, only dreams. But aren’t they better than nothing? And I’ll be so good. I admit I’ve sometimes gone too far in the past, but I promise I won’t do it again. I’ll give you nothing but really nice dreams—all sweet and fresh and almost innocent. You might say, quite innocent…’

‘Have I your permission?’ said the Angel to the Ghost.

‘I know it will kill me.’

‘It won’t. But supposing it did?’

‘You’re right. It would be better to be dead than to live with this creature.’

‘Then I may?’

‘Damn and blast you! Go on, can’t you? Get it over. Do what you like,’ bellowed the Ghost: but ended, whimpering, ‘God help me. God help me.’

Next moment the Ghost gave a scream of agony such as I never heard on Earth. The Burning One close his crimson grip on the reptile: twisted it, while it bit and writhed, and then flung it, broken-backed, on the turf. ‘Ow! That’s done for me,’ gasped the Ghost, reeling backwards.

For a moment I could make out nothing distinctly. Then I saw, between me and the nearest bush, unmistakably solid but growing every moment solider, the upper arm and the shoulder of a man. Then, brighter still and stronger, the legs and hands. The neck and golden head materialized while I watched, and if my attention had not wavered I should have seen the actual completing of a man—an immense man...

What distracted me was the fact that at the same moment something seemed to be happening to the Lizard, At first I thought the operation had failed. So far from dying, the creature was still struggling and even growing bigger as it struggled. And as it grew it changed.... What stood before me was the greatest stallion I have ever seen, silvery white but with mane and tail of gold...

...In joyous haste the young man leaped upon the horse’s back. Turning in his seat he waved a farewell, then nudged the stallion with his heels. They were off before I knew well what was happening. There was riding if you like! I came out as quickly as I could from among the bushes to follow them with my eyes; but already they were only like a shooting star far off on the green plain, and soon among the foothills of the mountains...

‘Do ye understand all this, my Son? said the Teacher.

‘I don’t know about all, Sir,’ said I. ‘Am I right in thinking the Lizard really turned into the Horse?’

‘Aye. But it was killed first. Ye’ll not forget that part of the story?’

‘I’ll try not to, Sir. But does it mean that everything—everything—that is in us can go on to the Mountains?’

‘Nothing, not even the best and noblest, can go on as it now is. Nothing, not even what is lowest and most bestial, will not be raised again if it submits to death. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. Flesh and blood cannot come to the Mountains. Not because they ae too rank, but because they are too weak. What is a lizard compared with a stallion? Lust is a poor, weak, whimpering, whispering thing compared with that richness and energy of desire which will arise when lust has been killed.’

SCAN
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