

**THERE'S STILL TIME // Luke 13:6-9**

*Message from the series, The Gospel of Luke*

It's possible to attend church as merely part of the mechanical routine of life. It's possible to *feel* Christian due to Christian routines without having experienced true life change. It's possible to be in the church but not of the church.

We must examine ourselves: have we experienced regeneration (i.e. new birth, conversion)? This is not about pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps—it's asking, has God changed my heart, and, as a result, is my life bearing fruit from the inside out?

**Main Idea: The profession of faith assumes the production of fruit.**

**Four points of spiritual sobriety to move us from the religious mechanic to real, spiritual life:**

**1. God seeks fruit. (v. 6)**

In John 15, Jesus explains that he is the vine and we are the branches—if we stay connected to him, we will bear fruit. A lack of fruit is evidence that something has gone awry with our connection to the vine. Fruit is not something we can produce of ourselves—it is the work of God in and through us. Our role, as this text demonstrates, is repentance. God is at work in us and so we become perpetual repenters.

**2. Time tells health. (v. 7)**

Someone might ask, “Do you think I'm a Christian?” But we cannot assess someone's salvation based on a short period of observing their life. We must look at the whole narrative of life—is it characterized less by sin and more by the grace of God? This is the evidence of fruit produced over time.

There will be no fruit if there has been no life change. The tree is dead, in need of regeneration. Jesus' kindness, his patience with unfruitful trees should move us to repentance.

**3. Manure helps growth. (v. 8)**

The vinedresser fertilizes the tree; Jesus fertilizes our life. This will often look like trials and challenges in our life. The reality is that God loves us, so he sends this manure, this fertilizer into our lives to help us grow and produce fruit. Out of love, he digs up our soil and disturbs us out of our complacency. Pray a bold prayer, “Lord, fertilize me.”

**4. Complacency kills you. (v. 9)**

Going to church Sunday after Sunday is a dangerous thing—if we aren't careful, it can become the religious treadmill of life, lulling us into lukewarm living. Lukewarmness in the Christian life is evidence you are not actually a Christian. Praise God there is a “fourth year”—a final opportunity to grow before being cut down.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Are we bearing fruit? What does this fruit look like? Do we tend to see it as the product of our own efforts or as God's work in us?
2. Why should we consider the long view of someone's Christian walk as evidence of regeneration?
3. Do we tend to thank God for life's manure? Have you experienced difficulties or seasons of disruption that moved you out of complacency?