

The Time to Repent is Now

1. **During Times of Tragedy**
2. **During Our Time of Grace**

The Time to Repent is Now (TRN)

- You consider self procrastinator? Put things off last sec? Smiles! Lot people procrst; know smthg imp, wait til last sec to do. HS, dorm, breakfast from caf, stuffing bagel, classroom – last sec! Col, friend brush teeth while walking, spit thpst before building – last sec! My guess: many us may like being prepped well in adv, but maybe more than few us, from time to time, procrstors.
- But some things in life just can't put off; just too imp. Today J: your faith in Lord, life of rpntnc, too imp put off. Can't procrst your Xianity; toy with eternity; sluff off salv. Today J speaks urgent summons: TRN!
- What mean repent? Narrow: turn from sin / to God – turning. Broad: being Xian – truly confessing sins to God, apol for them; trusting Lord forg, believing him Sav; turning away those sins to live godly life. Those 3 aspects of Xianity (apol; trust; living godly life) all wrapped up in rpntnc. Today, J calls on us live that life of rpntnc, right now; don't procrst/put this off. TRN!

*During Times of Tragedy (TT)*

- Esp during TT. In this G, J talks re TT. Were 2 recent trags, fresh people's minds. 1st: vs. 1; what's that?! Made news: some people from Gal offering sacr at temple in Jrslm; for whatever reason (myb in trbl w/law; myb wrong place/time), Pilate sent in soldiers to kill while making sacr – grusom, horb trag! 2nd news story: vs. 4a. Freak acctd; building collapse that claimed innc lives; another horb trag!
- When horb trags take place, very oft people tend think it's direct result some spec sin. Someone did smthng wrong; God pun them for it. Makes sense, right? What people here thought; vs. 2, 4b. What J' discs thought when met man born blind in Jn 9: **“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind” (9:2)**. And when we go thru TT, very oft what we think too. We ask: “God, why me? What I do? Punishing me? It's bec that, isn't it? You're still mad me for that, aren't you? I thought you were forgiving; don't you love me? God must not love me!” See: downward spiral into despair, when Satan convinces us that TT (in our lives, or others) are God's pun for some spec sin.
- But we have be very careful re that line of thinking. It is true: all trags are result of sin. We do live in fallen world; consequcs of sin are everywhere. Sin is reason we have: death/disease, hatred/war, pain/suff, guilt/shame. But cannot assume (unless written in Scripture) that spec trag is direct result of spec sin. With man born blind, J: **“Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him” (Jn 9:3)**. Those works/God beyond our undstng. God just doesn't tell us why does what does; and it's dangerous to try guess why does what does.
- Example: movie Sully (engine failure; Hudson R.; could've killed; but all surv). However, in news last 6 mos, seen plane crashes in Indonesia & Ethiopia claimed lives all on board. Horb trags. Should we assume that passgers on flights crashed more sinful than those survd “Miracle on Hudson?” J: no, don't make that assmptn, that horb trags are direct result some spec sin. Instead (J' main point): during TT, turn to J in rpntnc! Remem: rpntnc is whole life of Xian (apol, trust, living). Rpntnc connects you to Christ. And if in Christ, book Rom: **“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (8:1)**. J wants us repent, bec rpntnc connects Xians to J/his love.
- That's why today J: TRN, esp during TT. 2x: vs. 3b, in hell, bec no rpntnc = no faith = no heaven. So God uses TT (in world, my life) to prompt me to repent. Like this: plane crash in Africa; tornado in AL; syngog shooting in Pittsburg; pers trag in my own life – “Lord I repent” “Lord, be w/me; forgive my sins; strenthn my faith.” That's attitude J urgently calls on us to adopt. TRN! Esp during TT.

During Our Time of Grace (TG)

- Also during TG. J tells this parable re fig tree. Basically: God has vineyard; in that, we are the fig tree. And he wants fruit from us; wants see fruits of rpntnc, faith, godly living – reason he planted us in vineyard in 1st place, so we'd prod fruit. But when says **vs. 7b**, he's threatening to end our TG. That phrase TG: period time during which you can prod fruit. It's your lifetime, your time on earth; can't prod fruit before born; can't after dead. So: TRN, during TG...
- Bec your TG won't go on forever. You know this: someday, we're all going die; no getting out that. Our TG will end. And for those who don't repent, don't prod fruits of rpntnc/faith/godly living that God seeks – they'll be cut down, just like J says here; and just like JB: **“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance... The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” (Lk 3:8-9).**
- This is stern, urgent warning vs a lazy, lackadaisical, indiffnt attitude toward God/grace. “Agh! Church, religion, repentance – deal w/ all that later; worry re that some other time; I've got more imp things do.” No! God wants fruit from every fig tree in his vineyard; that include you! And if you do not prod the fruits of rpntnc/faith/godly living that God seeks, then you're as good as firewood. God's patience will come to end; your opportunity to repent will pass you by; you'll be firewood.
- God, have mercy on us: for our unfruitfulness, indiffnce, lax attitudes, for caring so little re what's most imp in life. Lord, forgive us for not: repenting, turning to you daily, taking faith seriously.
- But God is so patient with us! **Vs. 8.** J cultivates/fertilizes our roots with his L/G, thru working of his HS in means grace. He waters us with baptism; nourishes us with Supper; prunes away dead branches; shines sunlight of his grace upon us. **“The Lord...is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pt 3:9).** Doesn't want you end up as firewood. And so gives you a TG; and he's with you during that TG to help you live a life of rpntnc/faith. So don't take God's grace for granted; don't procrst your rpntnc. TRN, during your TG.

Don't Procrastinate

- Don't know whether you're procrstor or not. Maybe you wouldn't admit it if you were. I didn't start writing this sermon until this morning. JK! **Vs. 3b.** J not joking around here; this is serious. TRN: TT & TG. Don't put this off; don't procrst what's most imp in life. Take your life of rpntnc seriously. Put your faith in your cruc/risen Savior, JC; live your life for him. And he will bless you with true rpntnc.

Luke 13:1-9

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. ⁷ So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ ⁸ ‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”