

w e e k 9 : “but what about...?”

Scripture to Read: Luke 13:1-5

1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Summary of Luke 13:1-5

When Jesus is told about a gruesome Roman atrocity, he asks a rhetorical question draws a broader lesson: tragic events are a warning that final judgment is coming to the entire world.

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation

“No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”
[Luke 13:5]

Questions for Personal Study and/or Group Discussion

- How would you react if foreign occupying forces slaughtered a group of worshippers on Easter Sunday? How would you feel if you were taking a group of travelers to a town under enemy occupation, and were told on the way that the local governor was known to kill Americans?
- These people aren’t simply reporting news to Jesus. Questions hover in the air as they tell of the shocking events. What might those questions be?
- What does Jesus mean when he says that all unrepentant people “will likewise perish”?
- What does Jesus mean by “perish”? Does it mean something that happens beyond physical death? Read and consider the following passages as you contemplate your answer: John 3:16; John 10:28; 1

Corinthians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:18; Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 25:46.

- What kind of theology of sin and suffering do you have? How do you respond when you hear about extraordinary tragedies? Does extraordinary tragedy signify extraordinary guilt?
- What kinds of questions should this short conversation with Jesus raise in your own heart and life?
- How might your life be different if you were thoroughly convinced that people without Christ are indeed perishing?

Notes and thoughts...

Pilate’s approval numbers: If the New Testament had never been written, we would still know that Pontius Pilate was a harsh and unpopular governor of Judaea. The Jewish historian Josephus lists several things he did which irritated and angered the local Jewish population. Sometimes he seemed to go out of his way to provoke them. He trampled on their religious sensibilities; once he tried to bring Roman military emblems (and their pagan religious symbolism) into the Temple area. Another time he “appropriated” money from the Temple treasury to build an aqueduct, and then brutally crushed the resulting protests.

The specific incidents concerning Pilate killing the Galileans and the fall of the tower in Siloam are not recorded elsewhere in Scripture. Nothing more is known about the Galileans, but Pilate had apparently put these people to death when they were trying to offer sacrifices—polluting the place, on top of the human carnage and tragedy.

John Piper’s observation: “Have you ever had an encounter with anybody like that? You come to them with a concern or with a puzzling theological question, and they look you right in the eye and say, “The most urgent issue is your own soul. If you don’t get right with God, you are going to perish.” No one ever spoke like this man. He was always blood-earnest about person commitment. When presented with a problem, he dealt with a person. His speech was salted with fire. Nobody slept through a conversation with Jesus.”

C.S. Lewis on the eternal significance of people: “It is hardly possible for [us] to think too often or too deeply about [the glory] of our neighbor . . . It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.” (*The Weight of Glory*, p. 14-15)

Tips for Parents with Young Children

The church meeting at your supper table. The following steps are “field-tested” ideas to help direct theological discussions between parents and their children while also building the children’s theological vocabularies so that they are increasingly familiar with biblical concepts. Remember: a brief, God-focused time together is better than a long, task-oriented time in which everyone is miserable.

Step 1. Eat with your entire family regularly.

Step 2. Mom and Dad sit next to one another to lead the family discussion.

Step 3. Open the meal by asking if there is anyone or anything to pray for.

Step 4. Someone opens in prayer and covers any requests. This task should be rotated among family members so that different people take turns learning to pray aloud.

Step 5. Discuss how everyone’s day went.

Step 6. Have a Bible in front of the parents in a translation that is age-appropriate for their reading level. Have someone (parent or child) open the Bible to the assigned text and read it aloud while everyone is eating and listening.

Step 7. A parent then announces the lesson’s “Word of the Day,” reading the corresponding definition and/or paraphrasing the meaning at an age-appropriate level.

Step 8. Use some of the discussion questions if your children are older (i.e., junior high and up) and/or the tips for young children if those are more suitable.

Step 9. Let the conversation happen naturally. Listen carefully. Let your children answer the questions. Fill in whatever they miss; lovingly and gently correct whatever they get wrong.

Step 10. If the Scriptures convict you of sin, repent as you need to your family, and share appropriately honest parts of your life story so the kids can see Jesus’ work in your life and your need for him too. This demonstrates gospel humility.

Step 11. At the end of the meal, ask the children if they have any questions for you.

The discussion questions and tips are offered to help you and your children grow in relationship with each another and with Christ. They are meant to be supportive and not constraining. Therefore, do not feel bound by any questions or pressured to follow the steps too rigidly. Follow the Spirit’s leading and don’t be a religious parent who is rigidly inflexible and who makes this time together drudgery rather than delight.

If you miss a night, or if conversation gets off track, or if your family occasionally just wants to talk about something else, don’t stress—it’s inevitable. For your children, the point is to learn what they are thinking about God, to help them know and love Jesus as God and Savior, and to teach them how to articulate and explain their Christian faith. For parents, the point is to instruct children and each other, thereby creating a family culture in which every member freely and naturally talks about God and prays to him

together. In short, the goal is that your family would open the Bible and grow in love for Jesus, one another, your church, and the world.

Finally, remember that family Bible study requires a sense of humor, so make sure to have some fun, enjoy some laughs, and build some memories.

Monday: Read Luke 13:1-5. Jesus is teaching us that all of us are extremely sinful. We are so sinful that calamities and disasters should not shock us as though something unwarranted were happening to innocent human beings. There are no innocent human beings. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "There is none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10). What should amaze us in our sin is not that some are taken in calamity, but that we are spared and given another day to repent. Thank God for giving us another day to love him and to turn away from sin.

Tuesday: Read 1 Peter 1:22-2:3. Peter says that we should put our sin away from us because it is bad. The word **repentance** is often used in the Bible to explain how we put our sins away from us. Repentance is very important because it show us that when we do sin we can ask Jesus to forgive us and he will help us to turn around and walk away from sin and be close to God.

- What should we do when we sin? *We should repent of our sin.*
- What is repentance? *Telling God and whomever we sinned against we are sorry, asking their forgiveness, and letting God help us to stop sinning and do the right thing.*
- Have you recently repented of any sin and stopped doing a bad thing? Explain.
- Parents, this would be a good opportunity for you to speak from the example of your own life in an appropriate way. Tell your children some sin you wrestled with and how Jesus helped you to repent of it and put it away.

Wednesday: Review what your children learned in Wednesday Night Connection. Spend some time together praying for FPC, its leaders, and your friends at church.

Thursday: In the passage Jesus emphasizes repentance. Talk about what repentance is: repentance involves believing God (Jonah 3:5) rather than the Satan's claim that more joy can be found in sin than in obedience. It is a "being persuaded" about the danger of going on in sin (Luke 16:31) and about the way of escape through repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47). It involves grief over past sins and present sinful tendencies. This is the significance of the sackcloth and ashes (Luke 10:13; Jonah 3:5). And it involves turning from evil ways (Jonah 3:8).

Friday: Thank God for the Scriptures, which tell us the way of salvation through believing in Jesus. Thank God for the people in your life who are concerned about your relationship with Jesus Christ, people who teach you of Christ and who pray for you.

Saturday: Quiz your children on Catechism questions or Bible memory verses they are learning. Pray that Phillip would have boldness in preaching the Word of God tomorrow. Also, pray for the Sunday School teachers and for the musicians and choir members who serve us each Sunday.

Sunday: Before you leave for church, explain to your children that their ministry at church is to welcome new children, help their Sunday School teacher, serve others, and worship God in the service. After church, discuss with your children what they learned and what you learned.