

Author: Enyedi György. A Hungarian-language copy was included in the 2nd Codex of Cluj (in Hungarian: 2. Kolozsvári Kódex) from the mid 1600's with the title: "Concio. Lucae XIII v. 6.: De poenitentia et longanimitate Dei."

In 2017 this Concio was transcribed into modern type and was published with the heading "83. (17.) beszéd (K2)" in: Lovas Borbála (2017) Enyedi György Prédikációi 1., pages 170 - 176. MTA-ELTE Humanizmus Kelet-Közép-Európában Lendület Kutatócsoport, Budapest. ISBN 978-963-508-852-2.

All copyrights remain with the respective publishers.

Rules applied during the translation:

The translation preserves the paragraph structure published in the contemporary Hungarian transcript.

Bible book, chapter and verses indicated in parentheses were added during the transcription process and preserved in this translation. Typically, such an addition immediately follows the chapter and verse citation Enyedi György provided. In some places the additions are placed in the text where the text of a Bible verse is spelled out by Enyedi György, but he didn't include the chapter and verse citation. Both types of additions allow the reader to follow the train of thought of Enyedi György selecting supporting quotes from the Bible.

All Bible quotations use the English of the King James Version, that is the 1769 modernized version of the 1611 original edition. The Bible quotes are written in italics to match the format of the original codex manuscript of the sermon. The abbreviated Bible quotes Enyedi György closed with the word "etc." have been expanded to their full length, as they were most likely delivered in full in his spoken sermons.

The translator wishes to acknowledge the copyediting assistance of Susanne Lakin.

UnitarianTorch contact: kokenyesi@unitariantorch.com

Concio. Lucae XIII v. 6.: De poenitentia et longanimitate Dei.

Sermon on Luke 13:6.: On repentance and long-suffering of God.

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Luke 13:6 KJV

The meaning of metaphors and parables might be unclear when they are about future events, but once the predicted events had come to pass, everyone can understand them.

That is the reason why Christ our Lord explain some of his parables. The meaning of some other parables became understandable after the resurrection of Christ, as Saint John writes in cap. 7. (John 7:33-35).

That is why it is easy to comprehend the meaning of our parable, because the event it describes had come to pass. As this was written for our education, it is necessary to contemplate it so we can see how it benefits us.

In this parable Christ our Lord tells us how the living God patiently and gladly awaits the repentance of the wicked, and how He punishes at the end those who daringly and recklessly remain ungodly. However, for us to better understand all that, we have to recognize that these words have three parts.

Written in the first part is how the owner of the vineyard cares for and guards his inheritance. In the second part we see why he was incensed and thought of revenge. In the third part we see the postponement of the punishment.

Concerning the first part (Luke 13:6): *A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none*, let us first recognize that God frequently calls the sons of Israel, the Jews grapes, as in Esa. 5. (Isaiah 5:1-2): *Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.* In Jer. 2. (Jeremiah 2:21) we read: *Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?* And in 4. Esd. 5. (4 Esdras 5:23) we read: *And said, O Lord that bearest rule, of every wood of the earth, and of all the trees thereof, thou hast chosen thee one only vine.*

Second, in the Scripture sometimes grapes mean not the people of Israel, but the providence and blessings that were provided and decreed for them. As in Matt. 21. 2.* (Matthew 21:33): *. . . There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard . . .* In that parable the Jewish nation is equated with the vineyard workers, and the blessings decreed to the sons of Israel the grapes, because it states that God will give to the other vineyard workers the grapes, the blessings, the inheritance decreed to the sons of Israel.

Third, in our parable the grape means the entire earth, all the nations who live on this earth, and the fig tree means the entire Jewish nation, the people of Israel among whom Christ our Lord was living and teaching. The reason for this is that God, through our Lord, wants to be on peaceful terms with the nations of the earth, wants to adopt us as His sons, and to share with all the nations the providence and blessings -- called

here the grape of God -- previously decreed only for the Jews, while the Jews are now compared to a barren fig tree. Another passage in Rom.11. (Romans 11:17-25) the Scripture compares the Jews to a truncated olive tree whose branches were cut off, and this comparison is similar to the previous one. Because neither the barren fig tree nor the branchless olive tree would bear fruit. Let us learn two things from these comparisons. First, let us recognize the Lord's love of His believers, as He calls them His very own inheritance. People love their own belongings best and more than someone else's, and in a similar fashion the Lord, by calling believers His vineyard and His inheritance, shows that He loves and cherishes His own, and there are many examples of this, such as in Joe. 2. (Joel 2:17): . . . *O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?*

Second, let us learn from this that God cares for and stands guard over the people of this world, and like anyone, He gives His attention to His inheritance, because only a truly dastardly person would not care and look out for their own vineyard, garden, or other possessions. The people are God's vineyard, His Inheritance, as we heard. Thus, indeed, He cares for them. Because you heard that the landowner comes, and looks for fruit on the fig tree, showing that He is not just casually looking around, but examining and searching for good fruit in us.

When we think about these let us be moved not to do anything ungodly or deceitful we would want to hide, because the landowner well knows the types of trees in the vineyard, and the types of fruit those trees bear. He knows when somebody takes up ground, though fruitless, as He cares for it and watches over it, and for a short while He waits for improvement.

Part 2.

Let us consider the second part of our parable (Luke 13:7): *Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?* First, let us consider here how long the landowner waited for fruit to appear on the fig tree. We read that it was three years. Some explain the three years as referring to the three years of ministry of Christ our Lord. Because once he was baptized by John the Baptist, and began teaching, he continued for three years in Judea and Galilee, as we know from the stories in the Gospels. His efforts were in vain, though, because very few accepted his teachings, and those who had the biggest need of his teachings, rejected them, so that is why the parable states that he was looking for fruit on the fig tree, but didn't find any. In other words, the landowner found nothing good in the Jews, which is true, because God visited His people through Christ, and examined them for the fruits He desired, and that lasted for three years.

But it is more appropriate if we interpret the three years we read in the Scripture as a properly long period of time, because while the Lord always waits, the wait is longer for some, and less for others depending on what suits His Highness best, and He never tells anyone the length of His wait but keeps it to Himself. When He says here (Luke 13:7): *Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none*, He is indicating that He has been coming for some time, and that He waited long enough. Through this waiting for repentance, and not immediately punishing the ungodly, He cautions us not to be too quick to punish other people, but to wait for them to become better, because our Lord says we can only become sons of God if we follow the actions of our Heavenly Father.

Second, let us understand that if we do ungodly things and God doesn't punish us immediately, we shouldn't think that God didn't see us or that He doesn't want to punish us. When we are not punished immediately, we should not encourage ourselves to continue doing ungodly things, as we read about the heathen king Dionysius of Sicily, who, after robbing temples of their riches, sailed on the sea with good wind and said to the others around him: "You can see now how God helps the thieves." As I said earlier, no one should be thinking like that, because while God is patient and might wait for long periods of time, though, eventually, He will repay everyone according to their deeds, just like the bandit king eventually was repaid, for he was chased out of his kingdom, and he went house to house as a beggar, and would have starved to death if he hadn't started teaching children to read. Therefore, if we do ungodly things yet don't feel the rod on our backs, let us not sink deeper into ungodliness, but, rather, knowing the merciful nature of our God, let us repent from ungodliness.

Third, let us learn from this that if we see that God doesn't immediately punish the deeds of the ungodly, wicked people; let us not lose faith, let us not be doubtful like Diagoras of ancient times who became godless because he saw that God didn't punish deceitful people. Let us not be so foolish, but let us understand the nature of our Lord, and see that while He is patient, yet, if not immediately, but eventually He will repay, as we heard that happening after the fig tree failed to bear fruit for three years (Luke 13:7): *Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?* Let us recognize here that God expects fruits, good deeds, from the believers. And those who want to live in His garden and vineyard will be watched by His Highness. Just as a good landowner doesn't tolerate useless trees in his plot, God doesn't tolerate barren people in the congregation of His believers, and He will not allow the continuation of their ungodly deeds. John the Baptist said this (Matthew 3:10): *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* Saint Luke says it as well in cap. 3. (Luke 3:8-9): *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

Second, let us learn from this that while God might wait for some time, He does not suffer the souls of the wicked, but pronounces judgement as we see (Luke 13:7) . . . *cut it down* . . . Also in Dan. 4. (Daniel 4:14): . . . *Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches.* Thus, the wickedness of the ungodly is not forgotten by God, even though He might delay punishment for some time. The wicked ought not delight in their possessions, because even if those possessions multiply to reach the sky, God will trample them and plant others in their place, so those others may bear fruit. In another parable Christ our Lord says that God will give the vineyard to other workers who will provide Him the fruits of the land.

From these thoughts let us learn not to become useless sons of God but have His Highness live with us all times and water us with the dew of heaven, because if we don't bear good fruit He will cut us down or leave us in the wasteland. The fate of the grapevine left in the wastelands is written, if you don't already know. God himself says it in Esa. 5. (Isaiah 5:6): *And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.*

Part 3.

In the third part of our Bible verse (Luke 13:8), we read: *And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year* . . . First, let us recognize here what great power and effectiveness there is in the supplication of the people working in the congregation of the Lord, because while we don't see how the Lord answered the keeper of the vineyard, it is likely -- knowing the merciful nature of God -- that He favored it, agreed with it and answered the supplication. We have many examples of that kind of action. Moses many times placated the vengeance of God toward the sons of Israel. Similarly, God acted on the supplication of Abraham and said that if he could find ten righteous people in Sodom, He would not destroy it. The Lord frequently says that He is doing this or that for David, for Jacob, for His servants, or for other believers. About His unpacifiable anger He says the following in Jer. 7.* (Jeremiah 15:1): . . . *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people.*

Second, let us acknowledge, based on the above examples, the wide-ranging mercy of God and His forgiving nature. As we saw, He pronounced judgement and ordered the tree to be cut down, but He delayed its destruction, hoping for a change for the better, because He swore that He does not want to see the destruction of the sinners, but their repentance and continued life. Such a delay is not a false promise that God would delay a punishment that He already decided to carry it out anyway at a later time, but God delays punishment to give a chance for repentance, in which case He will forget all previous transgressions, and withdraws the intended punishment as He states in Jeremiah, and many other passages of Scripture.

Third, the duties of the people working in the vineyard are explained here (Luke 13:8): . . . *I shall dig about it, and dung it*. We know that by digging the weeds the useless grasses are removed, and the soil is made ready to absorb moisture. The dung enriches the soil. One duty of the keepers of God's vineyard is to remove weeds by admonishing people about their transgressions.

The second duty is to enrich people by nourishing them with the true teachings of God. Now, because those are the duties of the workers in God's vineyard, no one ought to be angry at them; when they hear a teacher severely reprimanding them for their ungodliness or condemning them for their transgressions, that teacher is carrying out his duty. However, the digging and weeding is of no use if there is no good seed in the ground, so it is not enough to condemn transgressions, but good morals and teachings must be proclaimed at the same time, as good fruits - the types the owner of the vineyard wants - grow from those.

After explaining all that, let us use and apply the teachings to ourselves, because the words were written for our benefit, as right now we are the vineyard, the fig trees and the olive trees of God, since what God did to His previous vineyard – the Jewish people – as written in Isaiah (Isaiah 5:5): . . . *and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down*. In place of them God embraced the Gentiles, and - as Paul writes (Romans 11:17-24) - He grafted them in place of the cut-down branches and adopted them as His sons. And now He guards us and cares for us because we are His inheritance, and He sends us keepers of His vineyard, and rising early in the morning He looks for fruits on us. But haven't we become just like His previous vineyard and the fruit trees He complained about and then abandoned and cut down? Hasn't He pronounced judgment on us that we are also to be cut down?

You might say to this: I didn't hear that judgment! Well, you couldn't hear it if you don't have the ears to hear it or the eyes to see it, or the mind to comprehend it.

Don't you see the pestilence? Don't you comprehend the famine? Don't you see right in front of your eyes the poverty after God took away all our produce by the hailstorms we experienced? These are all signs of the whip and the judgment of an angry God. Haven't you heard of the war going on our borders and in neighboring countries? Don't you know that when the neighbor's house is on fire you are close to the danger, too?

From those events it should be easy to comprehend that the judgment on us is here, and we should thank the merciful nature of God and His patience that the punishment hasn't reached us. There are vineyard workers who are digging around us to make us better, and because of that, the Lord has delayed His punishment. But where is the expected result? Are we ever going to bring forth fruit? Because when the teachers dig around us, weed around us, and admonish us don't we become angry, and question why did they reprimand us, why did they preach to us, why did they call us out. And don't we mock them by saying that reprimanding is the teachers' job, and that they

reprimand those whom they dislike, and they take revenge on people by calling them out? Isn't that how digging around us has improved us?

And when the teacher fulfills his duty and teaches us about good morals and righteous living, don't we often say that teachers are supposed to talk like that? While it is true that talking like that is one of the teachers' tasks, but your God – whose blessings you enjoy in your life – is keeping you for your tasks as well, which is to accept and follow those reprimands and admonishments, and not to take them as a jest or consider it an empty chit-chat like a song on the fiddle. Because if you take it like that then you will be just as foolish after the reprimand as you were before, and then God will cut you down, and plant in your place someone better, whom He can nurture so He can take pleasure in them, and expect good fruits to be brought forth. Amen.