

## THE TRAGEDY OF USELESSNESS

### INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: [Luke 13:6-9](#); [John 15:1-7](#). From Roy H. Enoch (08-21-1994).
- B. Some Xians think that they are an asset to the Lord whether they do anything or not.
  - 1. They may think that their "name" or "sparkling personality" is an asset.
  - 2. Some may believe that their attendance occasionally is enough.
  - 3. They would not think of treating an employer as they treat the Lord who died for them.
- C. In these parables, Jesus describes His attitude toward someone who is not bearing fruit.
  - 1. He does not call spectators for his battle against sin.
  - 2. He does not ask for people to come to his vineyard for name recognition or to be entertaining.
  - 3. He is not seeking ornaments for an assembly, or one to simply be counted.
  - 4. He wants people who want to please Him because they love Him.
- D. Uselessness a repulsive thought and a pitiful sight.
  - 1. It is also a miserable way to live.
  - 2. Inactivity is depressing and little respected.
  - 3. Uselessness, like usefulness, is a learned behavior that can also be changed.
  - 4. If you are not dedicated and active in the Lord's work, consider becoming active and faithful, and consider the consequences each way.
- E. This lesson is to study what Jesus taught about that which is useless.
  - 1. The tree had a purpose at that place.
  - 2. The tree failed to meet its purpose.
  - 3. The consequences are given as well as a remedy.

### I. THE TREE HAD A PURPOSE AT THAT PLACE.

- A. The man had it planted there (Lk. 13:6).
  - 1. The space was limited and the plants would be selected carefully by the owner.
  - 2. It would probably be walled for protection, cultivated, pruned and fertilized to make it more productive.
  - 3. The tree was not here by accident.
- B. Jesus taught a similar lesson about the Vine and Branches (Jn. 15:1-7).
  - 1. He is the "true vine" (not the only vine) (15:1).
  - 2. The Father is the caretaker of the vine (15:1).
  - 3. Men are branches in Him (15:6).
  - 4. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away" (15:2).
  - 5. "...and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (15:2).
  - 6. Branches must stay in the vine to live and bear fruit (15:4).
  - 7. "If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned" (15:6).
- C. The fig tree was planted in the vineyard to bear fruit (Lk. 13:6).
  - 1. He came looking for figs on it.
  - 2. Its purpose was not to look pretty or for shade.
  - 3. Our purpose in the church is to glorify God in our lives and to do the Lord's work.
    - a. He has freed us from the slavery of sin with its certain death and eternal suffering.
    - b. We should have enough gratitude to want to do what pleases Him.
    - c. We are to be His slave and a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).
    - d. We are to bear spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22).
    - e. We have every spiritual blessing in X (Eph. 1:3).
    - f. We are protected from temptation that we cannot bear (1Cor. 10:13).

## II. THE TREE FAILED AND JESUS DESCRIBED THE CONSEQUENCES.

- A. The tree utterly failed in its purpose.
  - 1. It invited its own destruction (Lk. 13:7). (What fruit have we borne in the last three years?)
  - 2. Branches who do not bear fruit are taken away by the Father, the vinedresser (Jn. 15:2).
  - 3. God does not make us work for Him (Col. 3:23).
  - 4. Jesus said that he had to work while He had opportunity (Jo. 9:4).
  - 5. We must do likewise.
- B. Jesus frequently spoke of the consequences of uselessness.
  - 1. This tree was to be cut down (Lk. 13:7).
  - 2. Branches in Him who do not bear fruit are taken away (Jn.15:4).
  - 3. At the judgment, men who do not visit the sick, care for the needy, visit those in prison, will be rejected (Mt. 25:31-46).
  - 4. Jesus described the "Foolish Virgins" as those who did not make preparations before the Lord came and they were left out.
  - 5. When Elijah ran from Jezebel and hid in a cave, God asked, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1Kgs. 19:9-18).
    - a. Elijah was doing nothing.
    - b. God told him what he needed to do.
- C. The tree that was not bearing fruit was worse than useless.
  - 1. It took up space and used up the ground.
  - 2. It was a hindrance to the fruitful plants and in the way.
  - 3. It was a parasite that was harmful.
  - 4. Jesus described the lukewarm church of Laodicea as nauseating (Rev. 3:16).

## III. JESUS GAVE THE REMEDY FOR USELESSNESS.

- A. "Dig about it and fertilize it to see if it would become fruitful."
  - 1. Many negligent church members should be reminded of our love and concern for them and encouraged to be more fruitful.
  - 2. If you are not dedicated to the Lord's work, consider the consequences.
    - a. Jesus said, "Cut it down; why does it use up the ground" (Lk. 13:7).
    - b. Jesus had just said in Lk. 13:3: "...unless you repent you will all likewise perish."
- B. The Lord has blessed us so richly, how can we not be dedicated?
  - 1. He left heaven to come to earth to suffer and die for us.
  - 2. He showed us how to do the Father's work and put it first.
  - 3. He instructed the apostles to teach us His will.
  - 4. He has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness through this knowledge.

## CONCLUSION.

- A. There is much work to be done in the Lord's vineyard.
- B. He has blessed us so abundantly, we should desire to know how we can please Him.
- C. The attitude expressed by the question, "Do I have to?" is one of ingratitude and laziness.
- D. We are much happier dedicated to service, rather than pleasing ourselves.
- E. "To the Work, To the Work."