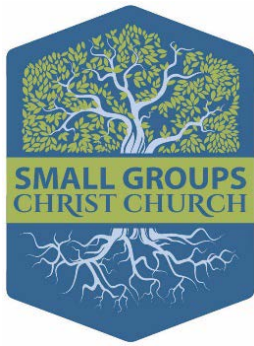


CHRIST CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

The Third Sunday in Lent – The Week beginning March 23, 2025



Read Luke 13:1-9:

At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.” Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Background:

Jesus challenges the traditional view that if something bad happens to you then it must be some form of punishment from God. Jesus rejects this idea and instead tells his listeners that any experience of hardship should be a reminder to us of the need to repent. This idea is then put beside the image of God as the gardener who wants to give his plants all the help they need to mature and bear fruit. This gospel also gets to the heart of what Lent is all about. True repentance is not about being obsessed with sin—it is about recognizing where God is at work in our lives and responding to him.

Talking Points:

- Can you remember a tragedy when there was bloodshed and violence? How did you respond? Why does Jesus reject the notion that victims of tragedies deserve their fate because of their sin?
- Jesus asks us to repent but does not punish the sinner. What does repentance mean to you?
- How is the parable about the fig tree related to the theme of repentance?
- Can churches as a corporate body repent as well as individuals?

Eternal God, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.