

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Oct 26th 2013

The parable that Jesus tells today has long been one of my favorites. In Jesus' time it was widely believed that if bad things happened to a person that it was direct punishment from God. A child born blind, for instance, was suffering for some horrific sin committed by his parents.

Even today, I carry vestiges of that sort of thinking. When something goes wrong I find myself saying: "What did I do to deserve this?" Now the truth is that sometimes I did do something to deserve it, but usually in an earthly manner. I was unclear in a conversation with someone, and now the results of my unclarity are coming to pass. But in the Biblical sense, I probably didn't do anything to deserve it. It's not likely God's retribution for an uncharitable act five years ago.

It's sometimes difficult for us to understand how radical Jesus' message was. In essence he's saying: "Just because you escaped some misfortune that was visited upon your neighbor doesn't mean that in God's eyes you are the better person. And just because sorrow has visited your life doesn't mean that you are lesser in God's eyes."

In the end it's the greatest message of hope ever conveyed. It's never too early; it's never too late. We are all like that barren fig tree waiting for us to let God into our lives so that we can bear fruit.

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