

THE CRISIS PARABLES...

Jesus saved a few shocking stories, known as “Crisis Parables”, to startle people. They evoke the mood of being alert and staying vigilant

LUKE 12 PARABLES...like Matthew, Luke clusters parables in 1 chapter where he sandwiches “3 crisis parables” in between other material.

- 1. RICH FOOL...a person asks Jesus to settle a family inheritance dispute. He refuses, “who made an arbitrator over you” The only APPARENT CRISIS is the awkward request. He warns against greed, and tells a story of a RICH MAN, whose land has produced so well that he needs bigger barns. His 1st thought, **Self, I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones to store grain I’ll say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for years Eat, drink, be merry. God says, “Fool, this very night your life is required of you.****

The conversation he was having with himself, the conversation that God will one day have him, are different conversations.

- 2. FAITHFUL STEWARD...Jesus drops a one-line parable, similar to Matthew’s UNPREPARED BRIDESMAID, who let their oil lamps burn out before the Bridegroom’s arrival...**

BE DRESSED FOR ACTION, HAVE YOUR LAMPS LIT, BE LIKE THOSE WHO ARE WAITING FOR THE MASTER TO RETURN

In Luke, Peter, ever clueless, is confused by Jesus’s words. Jesus, almost exasperated by it, replies...

Blessed is one whom Master finds at work when he arrives

- 3. WEATHER WARNINGS...Jesus now turns to weather patterns **When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say, IT IS GOING TO RAIN, or the SOUTH WIND BLOWS, you think that it will be scorching hot. Hypocrites. You can interpret weather, but not the signs of your times.****

This isn’t about the weather, but the need for God’s people to stay alert and to be vigilant at all times.

THE BARREN FIG TREE...in Luke 13, we get hit by another crisis. Jesus hears a report from an unnamed group: Pilate massacred Innocent Jews who worshiped in Jerusalem Temple. He could read their anxiety.

Do you think that these Galileans suffered because they were worse sinners than others? The 18 who died when tower fell: were they worse offenders than those in Jerusalem?

READY TO CUT TREE DOWN

Many Jews linked **suffering/sin together**. He didn't **debunk** their **thinking**. He had a larger point: **death is inexplicable**. We can be in **the wrong place at the wrong time**; life can be **unfair**. Our status on **earth is impermanent**. He wasn't trying to **scare them** but **challenge them**. Strike one for Jesus: **no explanations**, just **wisdom**. It prompts Luke's version of the **FIG TREE**. A man comes looking for **fruit**. This isn't a **WILD FIG TREE** growing **randomly**; it is **HIS TREE**, planted in **his vineyard**, where it **takes up space**, and **uses up resources**. It has grown **so bushy** that it is **putting grapevines** at risk. It must go, not because **it is bad** but because it is **SUPPOSED TO BE GOOD**, to **bear figs**. Impatient, he tells his **Gardener to cut it down**, who **begs** for a **year reprieve**, time to work with it. We aren't talking about **FIG TREES** but **fruitfulness/faithfulness** of a **higher quality**. The longing to **BEAR FRUIT**, to **live lives that matter**, is **embedded in us** as deeply as the **desire to eat and be loved**. Living productive lives **doesn't happen automatically**; it requires **alertness, a dedication to duty**, the willingness to make tough choices.

THE UNJUST STEWARD...the UNJUST STEWARD is shocking. A steward, trustee of his **owner's money**, protects him from being **implicated in lending issues**, yet he treats **the money** as if it were **his**. He **cooks his boss's books** and **embezzles funds**. An **AUDIT** is done; the **Steward is fired**. We have a **crisis**. Unemployed, he calls **his boss's debtors** together and lowers **their debt**. He has "**friends with benefits**" who'd **be obligated** to help him in **his tough times**. When Master hears of his plan, he is **impressed by his ingenuity**.

SONS OF THIS AGE ARE MORE SHREWD THAN THE SONS OF LIGHT

The word, "**shrewd**" means "**keep, artful, astute**". Why use a **CON ARTIST** as a **ROLE MODEL**? This isn't really about **MORALITY** but **APATHY**. Call him **SAVVY**, but when **confronted by a crisis**, the steward **ACTS**. He refuses to let **tragic events** unfold without **acting**.

PROCRASTINATION...Jesus puts his finger on a **sensitive nerve**: the need to be **DECISIVE**. In our hearts, we know that we can't **blame others** for what **we've failed to do**.

We procrastinate, delay hard choices. Someday we will do things that we've always planned to do:

Wasting our potential isn't acceptable to Jesus. We can't drag our feet or play it safe. We are called to follow, not to dawdle. God wants us to do what we can, while we can, as long as we can.