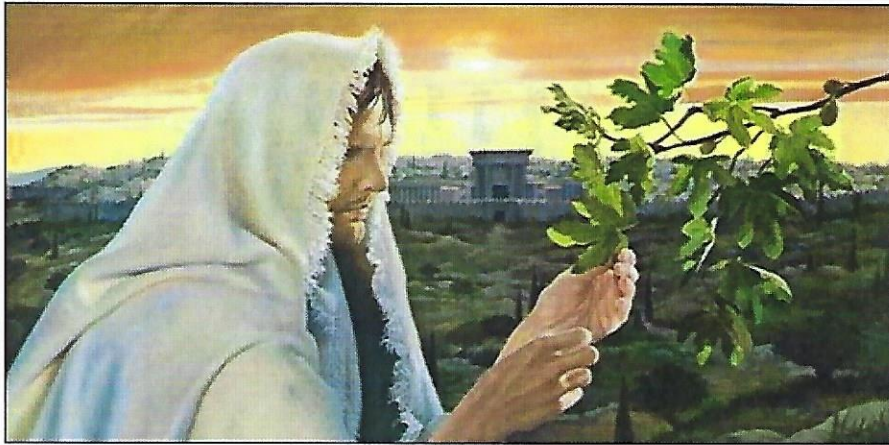


March 24, 2019

## Third Week of Lent

### Parable of the Fig Tree



#### Readings for the week of March 24, 2019

Sunday: Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15/Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8, 11 [8a]/1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12/Lk 13:1-9

Monday: Is 7:10-14; 8:10/Ps 40:7-8, 8b-9, 10, 11 [8a, 9a]/Heb 10:4-10/Lk 1:26-38

Tuesday: Dn 3:25, 34-43/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9 [6a]/Mt 18:21-35

Wednesday: Dt 4:1, 5-9/Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20 [12a]/Mt 5:17-19

Thursday: Jer 7:23-28/Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9 [8]/Lk 11:14-23

Friday: Hos 14:2-10/Ps 81:6c-8a, 8bc-9, 10-11ab, 14 and 17 [cf. 11 and 9a]/Mk 12:28-34

Saturday: Hos 6:1-6/Ps 51:3-4, 18-19, 20-21ab [cf. Hos 6:6]/Lk 18:9-14

Next Sunday: Jos 5:9a, 10-12/Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 [9a]/2 Cor 5:17-21/Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

“For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none.”

Luke 13:7

## The Judgement Will Come

Third Week of Lent – Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12; Luke 13: 1-9

In our modern culture, we don't like to think too much about the end of time or, for that matter, the end of our own life. The readings this week are a harsh indication that our lives are finite and our lives matter in terms of how dedicated we are to the will of God. God is the one always ready and willing to restore and renew the relationship with the hope that we will **"bear much fruit for the kingdom."** Whether we do or we don't...The judgement will come.

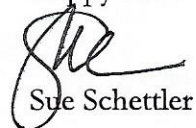
Moses encounters God in the first reading from Exodus. This mountain top experience is an example of God's great desire to be in relationship with the people of the world. **"The Lord said, 'I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore, I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.'**" Here is a people enslaved and in search of life. Moses has encountered the living God in a profound and dynamic way. God sends Moses back to the people to offer the goodness that only God can provide.

St. Paul speaks to the people of Corinth about the temptation of ignoring what has happened to their ancestors. Saved by God in the desert, few made it to the Promised Land. St. Paul emphasizes that the same temptations that plagued their ancestors can cause the people of Corinth (and us) to **"desire evil things."** Paul says, **"There, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall."** If this is the case, then how can any of us be reassured of eternal life?

The answer lies in this week's gospel, and Jesus' parable of the fig tree. Jesus portrays God as both the landowner and the gardener. The landowner comes in search of fruit from the fig tree. He says, **"For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. So, cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?"** God, who is also the gardener in this story, replies, **"Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future."**

We, as Christians are called to bear fruit for the Kingdom. What does that mean? It means we are called to live in right relationship with God and others. We are to proclaim the message of Christ to others. And most importantly, we are called to continually repent those things that get in our way of doing God's will. Whether we do or we don't is our choice. The fact remains that the judgement will come. A right relationship with God requires our daily dependence on God and a firm conviction to right our wrongs. As the psalm proclaims this week, **"The Lord is kind and merciful."**

Happy Lent!



Sue Schettler