

fall and the temple to be destroyed, permanently. At last, His patience would end. Today, we see the same: in nations, in congregations, and in individuals—continually and constantly failing to respect and appreciate the opportunities we have to repent: continually and constantly failing to respect and value the opportunity to come to God.

2PT 3.1-10 ~ *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” ⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. ⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

INVITATION

B.ILL—Man Born Blind—**JN 9.1-2** (Jesus encounters; people wonder: who sinned, him or his parents) *Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. (JN 9.3)* We see here, and even in the deaths in Galilee and the fall of the Tower of Siloam a reminder: how God can use and redeem even these terrible moments.

ART/Madonna Della Pieta/The Kingdom of Cain – Part 1

ART/Madonna Della Pieta/The Kingdom of Cain – Part 2

ART/Madonna Della Pieta/The Kingdom of Cain – Part 3

#648 [Exp-NTG]
07/12/2025

Galileans and Fallen Towers

PC X Pchd **BL – 07/13/2025**

LK 13.1-9

QUESTION: How ought we respond to tragedy?

TRN TO LK 13

INTRODUCTION

DISASTER/July 4th 2025 Texas Flooding/Summary of Flooding – Part 1

DISASTER/July 4th 2025 Texas Flooding/Summary of Flooding – Part 2

Our hearts break at the tragedy of the many lives cut short in Texas—made worse by the innocent victims from Camp Mystic. We can’t help but wonder...**how should we respond to these kinds of tragedies?** In times like these, we wish we could ask Jesus, directly.

BACKGROUND – the Presumption of the People: Suffering’s Cause (LK 13.1)

Jesus taught in many different circumstances: one on one, in small household settings, in the temple, and amongst thousands. As we come to **LK 13**, we find that Jesus is teaching amongst so many thousands that they were trampling one another just in the hopes of hearing Him. During this gathering, He would alternate between teachings to the crowds and teaching directly to His inner circle. As the people milled about, their memories started to flash back to a similar gathering in the recent past: a tragic one.

GALILEE/History/Pilate and the Water Supply Riots

This had happened recently enough that the memory was still fresh—perhaps there had been some people in that crowd who’d been there on that bloody and violent day because *There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. (LK 13.1)* Their unstated question seems familiar to us, today, in the shadow of our own recent tragedies: **why?**

ILL—Pointing Fingers (NOAA cuts, climate change, racism) Those are just a few examples of the wild and desperate finger-pointing you can find if you make the mistake of spending too much time watching cable news or browsing social media (another clear reminder of the value of just going outside from time to time). But while we think of these calls as ridiculous, they point to **the presumption of the people** about **suffering’s cause**. Today, we tend to point to big uncontrollable causes like pollution, social planning, and cultural wickedness. Then, they pointed to the wickedness of the individual.

ILL—Job’s Friends Response to His Suffering (they encounter their friend who’d lost everything; they can’t let it go: he must have done something) To that point, Eliphaz summarizes their assumption neatly: *“Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? (JB 4.7)*

EX: They come to Jesus seeking His input: perhaps they hoped He’d lay the blame at the spilled blood at the feet of Pilate. Perhaps they hoped He’d provide clarity of what sin had made these people deserving of their fate. Either way, they, like us, were focused on the **why**. **Why did such a terrible thing happen?**

AP: We understand that question. We see the same question repeated in blogs, on social media, on television, and around our living rooms. When I was younger in the faith, I found myself repeating that question, too. Countless hours of conversation and gallons of ink have been spilled asking the question—and in foolish answers to it. **What would Jesus say?**

BD: The Promise to all People: Judgment's Certainty (LK 13.2-5)

ILL—The Socratic Method (popularized by Socrates; the idea was to answer questions with questions; the goal is to engage the thinking of the hearer and lead them more effectively than just providing answers) It's one of my favorite methods of teaching, but it's very difficult to use—it's tempting to just **“shortcut”** and jump to answers. But when you can use this method, you'll almost always find improved success!

As we'd discussed, the question of the people had provided Jesus with a bit of a loaded question. If He blamed the people who passed, He'd risk turning them against Him. If He launched off on a diatribe against Pilate, He'd risk the charge of treason against Rome. It would have been easy for us to have fallen into the trap—but of course, He's far more wise than we are. So, it shouldn't surprise us to see that our Lord uses the Socratic method in **LK 13.2 ~ *And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?”***

EX: The directness of Christ's answer here would have been shocking. He cut directly to the core of their thoughts. When a person dies in a tragedy like Pilate's attack or like the floods in TX, our minds struggle to find the answer—to unpack and solve the **“why”** these people died and not those. Why those poor children and not the more **“deserving”** we could all readily name if asked. Jesus shone a spotlight on their inner, unspoken conclusion: **“You're struggling to figure out why Pilate's soldiers killed your father, and not your neighbor. Your son, and not your enemy. Your natural assumption is that they must have done something to deserve it. But does that make any sense?”**

LK 13.4 ~ *Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?*

JERUSALEM/Tower of Siloam/Fall of the Tower

EX: With both of these examples, Jesus was pointing to a natural assumption: suffering is God's judgment against the people. But deep down, they knew that both the people killed in the crowds and the people whose bodies were tragically crushed under the bricks of the tower of Siloam hadn't done anything worse than any other. So, **why them?**

They had determined the deaths in Galilee and at the Tower were God's judgment against a wicked people. Jesus knew otherwise. But He doesn't provide an answer to why. Because the real question they were asking wasn't really **“why”**. It is the same question we ask today: **“why not me?”**

Jesus knew something they didn't want to hear—and following both of these examples in **vs 3 & 5**, He provides a **promise to the people: *No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*** He reminds them of **judgment's certainty**—they were so focused on the miserable deaths at the hands of the soldiers of Pilate. Fresh in their minds was still the sudden and painful deaths of the victims

at the Tower of Siloam. But instead, their minds as a nation should have been focused on their repentance and God's coming judgment at the fall of Jerusalem. And their minds as individuals should have been focused on their own mortality and the certainty of their own death.

AP: When tragedy strikes, we want to understand why. But it's not just out of a morbid sense of curiosity. We want to know why it happened to them so we can be comfortable that it won't happen to us. But too bad. Because it will. It won't always happen in such a big and newsworthy manner. Perhaps it'll be a quiet death in a nursing home or hospital bed, or following a sudden stroke or heart attack. For, ***unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.***

2CR 5.10 ~ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

CONCLUSION: The Patience of the Father: Judgment is Coming Soon (LK 13.6-9)

People often talk about how tragically short life is—especially in light of tragedies like those in TX. To the people in the crowd, the deaths in Galilee and from the Tower in Siloam's collapse seemed the most pressing of circumstances. But to Jesus, there was something far more pressing than the deaths of the innocent: it was the repentance of the living.

The unsettling truth of human history is that, for some, life can be tragically long. So long that hours, days, and weeks pass without thought or self-reflection and repentance. That had been the case often in Jewish history. And it's often the case today, as well.

Sadly, we often fall into the same error that the people did at Christ's time and the **presumption of the people**—that **suffering's cause** is due to something we can control and something that we can predict. But that, isn't true—which is a lesson we should have long-since understand from Job's story. Jesus seeks to help the people to understand the lesson we ought to truly take from tragedy: His **promise to the people**—that **judgment is certain**. And that naturally flows to the final lesson on the **patience of the Father: judgment is coming soon** for all of us.

God's people had proven repeatedly their hesitance to truly repent. We see it in the wilderness, we see it in Judges, we see it in the Kings, we see it in the Prophets, and we see it in the 1st Century. And yet, God's patience remained. To illustrate this, Jesus provides a parable.

LK 13.6b-7 ~ *“A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’*

PARABLE/Barren Fig Tree/Harvesting Fruit

LK 13.8-9 ~ *And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. ⁹ Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’*

EX: Jesus shows the patience of God here: He had long waited—through the thousands of years of Biblical history—for His people's repentance. But sadly, history shows that he'd wait only 40 more years before, at last, allowing Jerusalem to