



ervice for Week 17rd -23rd
March 2025 3rd Sunday in Lent.
By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer

Loving God, you are always ready to show mercy and forgive. Teach us to receive your forgiveness and rejoice in the newness of life you long to bring, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.....

Amen

Bible Reading Isa 55:6-9

Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Second Reading Lk 13:1-9

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no!

But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' 'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. The vineyard owner said 'If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.' "

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Our readings today for the third week in Lent give us the reason why Jesus has, after his travels round the country with the disciples, gone to Jerusalem. Some people from Galilee, where Jesus himself came from, told him that Pilate the Roman governor of Judea, had killed some Galileans and defiled them. Jesus then reminds them about a time that a



tower in Siloam which was built inside the southeast section of Jerusalem's wall, collapsed and eighteen people died. Jesus' message to his fellow Galileans and the people of Jerusalem was that cruel acts of murder or death caused by natural disasters are not a punishment by God for sin. Everyone will die says Jesus unless they repent from sin. Jesus then goes on to tell them a parable about a fig tree that was not bearing any fruit. Jesus' message is about forgiveness, he is saying that God gives us time and the opportunity to repent, to be truly sorry for our sins and wrongdoing. Just as the vineyard keeper says he has waited three years for the fig tree to bear fruit but will nurture the tree and give it another year to flourish.

But there is also a another message in Jesus' parable. As in other verses in the bible, Jesus is using the fig tree as an analogy for the country where he is living Judea-now part of Isreal. Our first reading is from the book of the prophet Isaiah, where Isaiah is saying to the people 'Seek the Lord while he may be found' 'The wicked must change their ways and change their evil thoughts. They must turn to the Lord; he will have mercy on them and freely

pardon them. Words spoken by Isaiah some 700 years before Jesus came. So, Jesus is also telling the people he has come to live among that they have not listened to and followed the ways of their prophets. That despite God's patience over all that time they have not recognised or repented from their sins. That is why Jesus has come and has come to Jerusalem to bring them back to the message of the prophets that if they 'turn to the Lord, he will have mercy on them and freely pardon them.'

Jesus came in God to show them and us the truth about life and death. He come to demonstrate in a terrible but wonderful way that death is not the end for those people who were killed by Pilate, for those who died when the tower collapsed, or for you and for me. That like the tree that did not bear fruit we are all given the chance to ask God for forgiveness and if we do, we will bloom and be fruitful in this and in another- eternal life.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ touch my life with your healing forgiveness, and put a new heart and right spirit within me, so that I may truly love you and faithfully serve you, to the glory of your name. **Amen.**

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett