

## Focusing In

March 2010

Unless you repent, you too will all perish. Luke 13:5

We live in this constant tension of contrast, no better illustrated than in the season of Lent. In Canada we have just experienced the taste of Olympic victory and joyous celebration while on other parts of the globe earthquakes have devastated people's lives and brought death to so many. On a smaller scale, we live the daily paradox that life is beautiful, but life is hard – sometimes very hard.

We also live in the tension of knowing our God of love is also our judge and Luke 13 helps put this reality into perspective, lest we lean too heavily one way or another. In this passage, there appears to have been two tragedies that people were talking about around the water cooler. Pilate mercilessly massacred Galileans on a spiritual pilgrimage and a wall collapsed killing 18 innocent bystanders. The question arises for them as it has for us regarding Haiti and Chile – did these people deserve this tragedy???

Jesus responds with a resounding NO! Don't think that there is any reason that this horror was brought upon them by an angry God or that they deserved punishment. HOWEVER – also do not believe that because your life is good, that God is rewarding you and blessing you because he happens to think you are wonderful. Repent of such thinking!

Lent is a time when we are called to repent of bad theology and foolish thinking. It is the call to throw away such meaningless words as “deserve” or “earned” or “rights and privileges” and instead embrace the reality of grace and the call to be fruitful. YES God loves us deeply and completely and YES God anticipates and even expects that His constant outpouring of love will bear much fruit in our lives. He expects that his act of love will bear fruit and that fruit will be evident in his beloved.

And so in Luke 13: 6 – 9 we are given the beautiful picture of a gardener who dotes over a fig tree, kneading the soil and feeding the roots and pruning branches – pouring out his love for this creation in faith that it will soon bear fruit - that it will fulfill the purpose for which it was created. It is a wonderful image of grace. “One more year – let me tend it one more year!” Oh, how he loves us and wants us to develop to our full potential – love bearing forth love in rich abundance.

But what if we do not bear fruit? What if we ignore the love and goodness of God? What if we prefer to work out of our own sense of accomplishment and self-deserving reward? Those are the wrenching questions of Lent. What if we shut love out?

Perhaps the time we spend in reflection and prayer will reveal an answer.

By grace alone,

Faye Reynolds, Director of Women's Ministry, Women in Focus, CBWC