

Repentance = Life
Luke 13:1-9

The word “repent”, according to the dictionary means to feel regret or sorrow and to amend one’s ways because of those feelings. The Greek word used in the New Testament for repent is “metanoeo” which has a primary meaning of changing one’s mind or direction. I believe the way it was used by Jesus in the scripture for today is reflective of the Greek translation of repent. In Luke 13:1-9, Jesus speaks of repentance and then gives the parable of the unproductive fig tree. In putting these two together (call to repent + the parable of the fig tree), Jesus shares a glimpse of the kingdom of God that is both among us and yet to come. This is a far cry from the use of repentance in classical Christianity that often induces a sense of guilt and requires an action of some sort to make amends for our mistakes. I believe Jesus was trying to present repentance as a way of life, turning from the things that hurt and destroy toward the things that heal and unite. In the parable, the fig tree has been taking up space in the vineyard for three years without producing fruit. The vineyard owner orders it cut down but the gardener seeks to give the tree one more year to bear fruit. In our need to repent, or change the direction of our lives, Jesus is calling us to become fruitful, to bear the love that God wills for all human beings and to share that love with others. It’s easy to judge the beggar on the street corner and keep our car window up. It’s a joy of the kingdom of God to share some of our love and resource by giving the beggar something; not giving only out of the need to help someone else, but giving as a response to God’s love that we feel within our heart. In this finite, brief life, we

waste a lot of the most valuable treasure we have, time, in worry, fear, unforgiveness and guilt. Jesus has told us that “where your treasure is, there also will be your heart.” (Matthew 6:21) When each of our lives is finished, let it not be said that we just took up space and wasted the treasure given to us. Let it be said that we grew, we blossomed and we produced fruit, the fruit of God’s kingdom that is among us now.