

## Mercy Extended

### Scripture Reading — Luke 13:6-9

*“Leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it.”*  
—Luke 13:8—

We are all fruit trees planted in God’s garden. But we are useless if we do not fulfill the purposes of our Creator. God has a right to examine us, to investigate our fruit-bearing history. He has a right to expect us to be fruitful.

In this parable the landowner comes yearly to investigate the fruitfulness of his vineyard. After several years, it was obvious that the fig tree was useless; it did not bear fruit. So the owner wanted it cut down.

Do you know anyone who is just “taking up space”? Maybe you are like that. Some lives are so dominated by selfishness that there is no fruit remaining to benefit others. They are stone dead, dried up; all that remains are the ugly branches of criticism, cynicism, and pessimism.

What a scary thought that God’s own people can become like that. But the caretaker holds out hope: “I’ll dig around it and fertilize it.” Jesus is not finished with the deadest of human beings.

I know that God isn’t finished with me. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, so life can return to a barren tree. Maybe you have given up on people—or on yourself. The caretaker says, “Give it another season.” Begin again and fertilize your relationships. Pray; offer someone a word of encouragement; nourish a friendship that has withered. God extends his mercy to us every day so that we can live for him.

### Prayer

*Lord, extend your mercy to us and renew us. Fill us with new life by your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Christianity](#), [Doctrine](#), [New Life](#), [God](#), [Jesus](#), [Holy Spirit](#)

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