

Let's take a moment to examine a powerful and sobering teaching from our Lord Jesus Christ, found in Luke 13:1-5 (NKJV):

"There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.'"

□ What Was This All About?

In Jesus' day, this story was headline news. Pilate — the Roman governor — had ordered the slaughter of certain Galilean Jews while they were offering sacrifices at the temple. Their own blood was mixed with the blood of the animals they were offering to God. That would have been seen as not just a political atrocity,

but a spiritual desecration.

Why did Pilate do this? Scripture doesn't tell us his exact motives, but historically, Pilate was known to be a cruel and politically paranoid leader (see Luke 3:1; also supported by external Roman historians like Josephus). Perhaps he feared an uprising or suspected the Galileans of sedition. Galilee was often seen as a hotspot for revolutionaries.

Regardless of the reason, the act was brutal, and the people who witnessed or heard about it naturally began to speculate: *"Maybe those people were especially sinful... Maybe God was punishing them."*

But Jesus flipped their assumption on its head.

□ The Theology Behind Jesus' Response

The crowd assumed that tragedy = divine punishment, a common Jewish belief based on Deuteronomy 28-29, where blessings followed obedience and curses followed disobedience. Even Job's friends thought this way: if you're suffering, you must have sinned (Job 4:7-8). But Jesus makes it crystal clear:

"Do you suppose they were worse sinners?"
"I tell you, NO."

He then gives another example — 18 people killed when a tower collapsed in Siloam (possibly part of a Roman aqueduct). Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem? Again, no.

Jesus corrects a dangerous theological misunderstanding: not every tragedy is a direct punishment for personal sin. Sometimes people suffer simply because we live in a fallen, broken world (Romans 8:20-22).

But here's the striking part: Jesus doesn't explain *why* bad things happen. Instead, He gives a warning:

"Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (*Luke 13:3, 5*)

✠ What Does "Likewise Perish" Mean?

The Greek word used here for "perish" (*apollymi*) means to be utterly destroyed — not just physically, but spiritually and eternally. Jesus is not only talking about *physical death* — He is pointing to eternal separation from God (see Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:5).

In other words, the question is not, "Why did they die that way?" The question is, "Are you ready if your life ends suddenly?"

Jesus was making a call to personal repentance — not to satisfy curiosity about someone else's judgment, but to provoke self-examination.

Romans 3:23 (NKJV): "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

So Jesus is saying: *"Don't look at their tragedy and assume they*

deserved it. Look at your life, because if you don't repent — you too will face judgment."

□ Modern-Day Application

Let's bring this closer to home.

When disasters strike — earthquakes, floods, fatal accidents, pandemics — we sometimes think, *"Those people must have done something wrong. Maybe God was judging them."* But Jesus says, "No." Instead, ask yourself: *Have I repented? Am I right with God?*

Think of:

- The Kagera earthquake
- The hailstorm in Geita that killed many
- The MV Bukoba tragedy

- The 2020 pandemic
- Or even the tsunami of 2004 that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives

Do we really believe that all those who died were worse sinners than us? No.

But unless we repent, we too may perish — not just physically, but eternally.

□ God's Patience is Not Permission — It's an Invitation

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV):

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

The fact that you are still alive is not because you're better than the one who died yesterday. It's because God is giving you time

to repent — time to turn to Him, receive forgiveness, and bear fruit worthy of salvation (Matthew 3:8).

□ Have You Repented?

If you were to die today — suddenly, without warning — would you be ready to stand before God?

Are you born again? Are you trusting in the finished work of Christ on the cross?

John 3:3: "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This is not a call to fear — it's a call to faith. God is calling you today:

*"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord,
"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow..." (Isaiah 1:18)*

Conclusion:

Jesus used a tragic news story to preach repentance — not because those victims were worse than others, but because their death was a warning to the living.

The message is timeless and clear:

"Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Come to Christ while there is still time.

Today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Don't wait for another tragedy to ask the right questions — make the right decision now. Be blessed

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