

Sit a moment and think about fig trees.

Jesus told 2 stories about fig trees. Jesus' world was largely agricultural so it isn't a surprise that Jesus used imagery about fig trees in his stories. Fig trees usually fruited twice a year in May-June and August-October.

Luke 21:29-33 – *The Fruitful Fig Tree*

He told them this story: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

This parable is not too complicated to understand. It is a helpful reminder of how to live well in the world – certain events have inevitable consequences; therefore, certain actions or events almost always signal what will happen next. People who are able to see the significance of what is going on around us are essential for wise living in complex times.

The only complication is the timing of the 'harvest' which Jesus said would happen before the current generation was gone. Jesus may have been referring to the near-future destruction of Jerusalem (which did happen in the lifetime of some of Jesus' listeners) or perhaps the end-times when Jesus would return again in glory. It is possible he may be referring to both events, some Biblical scholars believe that a prophecy can refer to more than one event.

To think about some more...

Can you think of anyone who seems to be able to read and understand the significance of events in our current troubled times?



Luke 13:6-9 – *The Fig Tree that hasn't fruited yet*

Then he told this story: “A man had a fig tree growing 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 fertilise it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

The point of the story is to focus attention on the change which is needed in the fig tree. The message for the listener and later readers is therefore that they need to change. Jesus' always emphasises to his listeners that inner and outer change is needed in their lives. God will allow us time and will provide help but change is necessary if we are to bear fruit.

To think about some more...

What 'fruit' do you see developing in your own life and the lives of others you know?



(Developed from a paper by Sr Janet Cooper for the MWA)