

# Unless You Repent

Luke: All Things New



## Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



## Sermon Text

Luke 13:1-5



## Big Idea

When tragedy strikes it can be severely disorienting. We are often left wondering how we should interpret it, how we should respond to it, where is God in the middle of it, what is He doing or saying in it all? Our text leaves little room for doubt. He is calling us to search our own hearts and repent.

### Response #1: Denial

Sometimes we try to just numb our sense of the pain with things like drugs or alcohol. Other times we try to distract our attention away from it by busying ourselves with other more superficial pursuits. I hate to say it (I don't mean to spoil your Super Bowl Sunday), but sometimes, we just watch football. "I don't want to think about the pain, the hardship, the brokenness, so I think I'll just escape into this."

### Response #2: Triumphalism

There are some who refuse to think of death at all. And then there are others who think of it, but just don't fear it like they should. They think they can beat it—with their money, with their intellect, with their technology, with their science. The sense among this triumphalist group is that as creatures we are ever-evolving and will soon enough find a way to cure all human ills and beat even death itself.

### Response #3: Despair

Now, I suppose we should now swing things to the opposite extreme. For while some see the threat of death and respond with a triumphalist hope, others see it and slip into an almost nihilistic sense of Despair. These look out honestly at life in a fallen world and think: "What is the point? I'm not going to deny that death is coming. I'm not going to naively think I can somehow defeat it. I see it. I get it. But in the face of this impending reality, what's the point?"

### Response #4: Comparison

This response says: "Well, if such and such things happened to them, I imagine it's because they probably deserve it in one way or another. It is just God giving them their due. Those things happened to them and not to me because they are worse sinners than me." So we take what was intended to be a warning from God to us and we instead turn it into a moment of self-congratulating.

### Response #5: Repentance

Jesus is saying, when tragedy strikes others, don't waste your time trying to tease out why this or that is happening to them and not to you. Instead, let it be an opportunity for you to consider where you stand with God. For unless you stand rightly with Him, the same sort of judgments will soon befall you. These are not moments for comparison or self-congratulation, they are moments for self-reflection and repentance. Wake up and flee the wrath of God that is soon coming for all.

## Reflection Questions



- Which of the five responses above would you say is your typical response to the tragedies of this life? Explain. Why do you think this is the case? How does it play out for you personally?
- Has the suffering of others ever actually led you into a time of personal repentance as Jesus suggests it should here? If so, explain. If not, why do you think?
- "The call to repent is at once both a threat and an invitation. It is both a warning of impending judgment and an offer of free, unmerited grace." Do you agree with this? Why or why not? How are Jesus' words to the crowd here an offer of grace? How is this grace to you?