

Parable of the Figs

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of March 2, 2019.

By Lenny Cacchio

LEE’S SUMMIT, Mo.—A voice reached out: “What do you see, Jeremiah?”

“Figs,” I answered. “The good ones are very good, but the bad ones are so bad they cannot be eaten” (Jeremiah 24:3, NIV).

In this passage from the book of Jeremiah, God makes an interesting and perhaps counterintuitive observation about the people of Judah. He compared them to two baskets of figs—one basket of very good figs and one basket of very bad figs. They were so bad that they were inedible.

As the parable and explanation unfold, Jeremiah came to understand that the good figs seemed to be cursed because they represented the people of the nation whom the Babylonians had taken captive. They had been deported to a strange land, while the bad figs were the ones who had remained in the land.

In this we see an application of a principle that appears both here and elsewhere in Scripture.

When Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery, it seemed at the time like a curse. Although the brothers had meant it for evil, Joseph explained to them many years later. He said: “You meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20).

This sentiment is echoed here in Jeremiah 24:5-6.

Jeremiah 24:5-6 (KJV)—“Like the good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land.”

Sometimes changes that God forces on us are painful.

- The Babylonian Captivity vs. those who stayed in the land.
- Joseph’s unplanned trip to Egypt vs. his brothers’ continued normal lives at home.

Those two examples might be extreme examples, but the principle is the same.

Sometimes, we need to be forced into unfamiliar, uncomfortable, even trying situations—for our own good or even our own protection.

Maybe a forced change of employment will force you to stretch yourself.

Maybe a move to a different part of the country—or even a different part of the world—is a move that will place you in a better position to serve.

Maybe changing your physical location is best, both physically and spiritually, for both you and your family.

Too often, merely staying where you are will cause you to get “cooked in the squat.”

Look upon these changes as opportunities and hidden blessings. That very well might be what they are.

Meanwhile, I recommend that you view a clip on the Internet by Zig Ziglar about getting “cooked in the squat.”