

# Peace in Repentance

Luke 13:1—9 (v. 5)

## Introduction

In *The Rookie*, police officer, Lucy Chen, commented to her partner, Sgt. Tim Bradford, about the senselessness of the death of an elderly lady who was hit by a criminal that had been fleeing them in his car. Tim replied, “If you try to ascribe logic to evil, you’ll go crazy.” But that’s the way we are wired. When something bad happens, we ask, “Why?” Sometimes, like with the AIDS outbreak of the 1980’s, there were people who said, “It is a judgment from God.” The truth is sometimes bad choices have bad consequences. That could be seen as a temporal punishment. But many times, bad things happen to us because we live in a fallen world.

## Sin and Death

Before the fall, there was no death in the world. God is the Creator of life, not death. With the fall, sin entered the world, bringing with it disease, disasters, destruction, and death. Everyone dies because of sin, one way or another. It doesn’t matter whether the cause of death is murder, a tragic accident, illness, or old age. Even the one who dies peacefully in their sleep at an old age is dead because of sin.

## Evil People and Disasters

But we still ask, “Why?” That’s was the issue in our Gospel lesson. The people mentioned a group of *Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices (Luke 13:1)*. Not only were they murdered, but they were also further humiliated by having their sacrifice desecrated with their own blood. Jesus reminded them of the eighteen who were killed when the Tower of Siloam fell on them. One tragedy caused directly by a sinful man. The other, an accident caused by living in a fallen world.

## Repentance Is the Answer

Just because these folks died horrible deaths, doesn’t mean they were worse sinners than other people. Jesus was saying that these deaths, tragic as they were, were not necessarily judgments. But death waits for all. In both cases, Jesus says, *“Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (v. 3, 5)*.

## Off the Hook?

Does Jesus mean that if we repent, we’re off the hook and nothing bad will happen to us?

## Bad Things Still Happen

To answer that question, all one must do is look around. Bad things still happen. But tragic events take on new meaning. Jesus points out that *tragic events are to be occasions for self-examination and reflection on our sinful frailty* (**LSB, note p. 1743**). The **Explanation of the Small Catechism** gives us advice on how to handle tragedies. *We need to repent of our sin, trust God's promise of forgiveness in Christ, care for those who are suffering, and pray for God's restoration of all things when Christ comes again* (**Explanation of the Small Catechism, Apostles' Creed, Q 137**).

## Life in Repentance

The death we avoid through repentance is the second death. In this passage, repentance is used to describe a person's entire conversion – confession, forgiveness, and regeneration. In repentance, our sin is taken away and we are made right with God. The fear of eternal death is removed, and we are at peace. **THAT'S PEACE IN REPENTANCE**. No matter what happens in this world, we have peace that we will not face the second death, the eternal death.

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*And the peace of God,  
Which surpasses all understanding,  
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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