

GOSPEL PEARLS

Fear of death?

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Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." Then he told this parable: "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.'" (Luke 13:1-9)

During our lives on earth, we don't necessarily need to have the best of everything in order to be happy. Rather, we must ask God for the wisdom to get the best out of everything that happens to us. Earthly life is not our final state of existence and there's no going back to it once we die. If all our attention, worries and desires are concentrated in this earthly life it is because we put ourselves above God. Indeed, there is an increasing tendency to eliminate the word "death" from our language, even from obituaries, so that we don't think we'll have to depart from this earth eventually. But if death scares us so much, it is because we do not truly believe in eternal life. We should really have nothing to fear, other than losing our friendship with God.