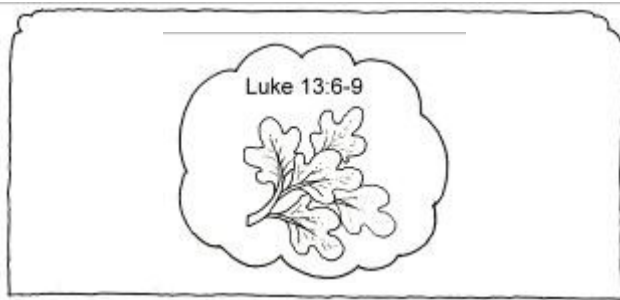


THE fig tree with no fruit

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By Jill Kemp

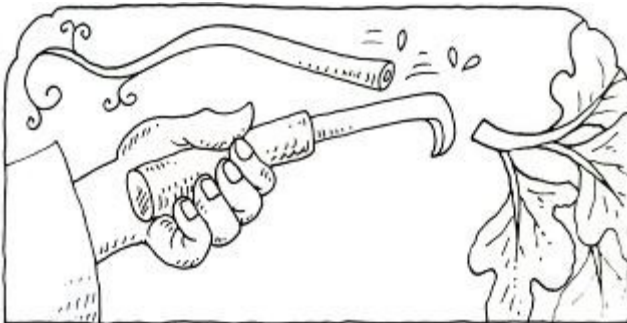
Illustrated by Richard Gunther



Based on a story Jesus told: A farmer planted a fig tree in his vineyard. It grew big and had plenty of leaves. For three years he waited for it to have figs, but there were none.



"This tree doesn't bear any fruit," the farmer said to his gardener. "Cut it down and plant something else." "Sir," the man replied, "Give it one more year. I will dig around it, feed and water it and it may fruit."



The gardener got a sharp knife and pruned the tree hard. He cut out all the dead wood and the thin, useless branches off the leafy, fig tree.



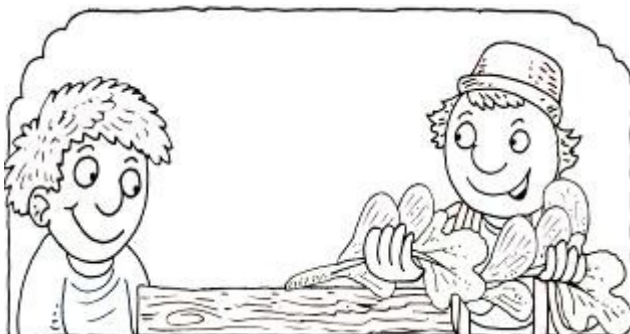
The fig tree was much smaller when he had finished and only a few strong branches were left. The gardener knew that soon the tree would grow new shoots.



Then he dug around the fig tree and feed it with rich compost to make it grow and watered the roots well. With time and sunshine he hoped for plenty of fruit.



The next year, when the farmer came to look at the fig tree, the gardener showed him how much fruit there was since he had pruned and fed it. The tree was laden with figs!



Jesus told this story to show us that God uses the hard things that happen to us to build our character. Some things take hard work and patience.



The Bible is full of God's wise words. If you are thinking about ending something, put in some hard work and be patient. You might find it is worthwhile.