

Monday: Day of Authority

JESUS' FINAL WEEK - 3

"My Temple is to be a place of prayer for all nations," but you have turned it into a den of robbers.
— MARK 11:17
LIVING BIBLE

For this reason I tell you: When you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it, and you will be given whatever you ask for. And when you stand and pray, forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive the wrongs you have done.
— MARK 11:24-26,
LIVING BIBLE

Jesus cleansed the temple and cursed the fig tree, two “unusual acts” for One who came not to judge but to save. Those who live in Palestine know that if you see a fig tree with leaves, it should have fruit. According to the *NIV Study Bible*, fig trees around Jerusalem normally begin to get leaves in March or April but do not produce figs until their leaves are all out in June. This tree was an exception in that it was already, at Passover time, full of leaves.

Jesus curses the tree, not just for its fruitlessness, but also for its falseness. The tree was professing to have something it didn't. A person whose life is “nothing but leaves” is in danger of judgment, for Christ seeks fruit (Matthew 7:15-20).

WELCOME

When you see something wrong, are you more likely to act without thinking, or think without acting?

WORSHIP

Ask one of the men in your group to come prepared to lead everyone in a period of worship this week. Read Hebrews 12:22-29 as a way of calling your group to a reverent and yet, celebrative attitude as you begin.

WORD

Read Mark 11:12-25

1. What made Jesus so angry about what he saw in the temple (see Isaiah 56:1-7)? What does this tell you about Jesus? His mission? Does this have any implications for you? If so, what?
2. Why does Jesus curse the fig tree, especially when it wasn't even the season for figs (vs 14)? What spiritual application was Jesus trying to make?
3. How is it possible to get so caught up in “doing religion” that you replace faith in God as a source of fruitfulness?
4. Is there ever a time when you could have been characterized like that fig tree—false and fruitless? What kind of fig tree are you right now?
5. Specifically, what “fruit” was Jesus looking for (vs 22, 25)? Are you cultivating faith in your prayer life at the moment? Are you weeding bitterness out of your life? Explain.

WORKS

Would you be ready for inspection if the Lord were to pay a surprise inspection today? What are you becoming? The question isn't, “Are you *doing* more?” The question is—are you honestly seeking to become more what God wants you to be on the inside? The good news is that if you are honestly seeking to become something on inside, it *will* show up in your life (Mark 4:20)!