

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ Fig Tree, Faith, and Forgiveness

Last time...the 2nd day of the Final Week

Jesus cursed an unfruitful fig tree

Jesus cleansed the Temple for a 2nd time

Both lessons are cause for the American Church and each of us to take a long hard look
in the mirror

This time...on the 3rd day of the Final Week, Jesus teaches the 12 about the fig tree, faith, and
forgiveness

We will be in Mark 11 and Matt 21

Mark 11:20-26

Let's start by reviewing the cursing of the fig tree by Jesus (v12-14)

This fig tree had leaves, but upon closer inspection by Jesus, had no fruit

There are different kinds of fig trees in Judea/Israel

On one type, figs appear in the spring before the leaves appear

On several other types, leaves appear first and then figs in summer or autumn

Leaves being outward display of beauty and figs being desired fruit...

- a. Desired fruit first and then outward display of beauty
- b. Outward display of beauty first and then desired fruit

Jesus would know the difference

At Passover, Jesus saw this tree, a fig tree that was the "figs (spring) then leaves" type

He expected this fig tree to have fruit, but it had none

Jesus cursed the fig tree that

- was all leaves and no fruit
- was all outward beauty (leaves) and no substance (fruit)
- was not bare but was barren

This, as with all of Jesus' teachings, is a spiritual lesson

The fig tree: Israel

Hosea 9:9-10 (NK) They have deeply corrupted *themselves*, as in the days of Gibeah: *therefore* he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time: *but* they went to Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto *that* shame; and *their* abominations were according as they loved

Joel 1:6-7 (SK) For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast *it* away

The desired/expected fruit: faith in their God their Savior

Gen 15:6

Heb 11:6

John 6:28-29

Righteousness by Faith = actions, doing vs saying

Leaves being outward display of beauty and figs being desired fruit...

- Desired fruit/faith first and then outward display of beauty – Israel
- Outward display of beauty first and then desired fruit/faith – the nations

Is 27:6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit

Is 42:6 I the LORD have called thee (Messiah) in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles

Is 43:12b therefore ye (Israel) *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God.

Ps 96:10a Say among the heathen *that* the LORD reigneth

Is 43:15 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King

Is 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified

Matt 3:10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
(Forerunner of the Messiah to Pharisees)

Context is, as always, essential to rightly dividing the Word of Truth

Fruitless “figs then leaves” tree:

The day after His Triumphal Entry, Jesus is saying Israel had a
outward display of beauty/praise
but is barren of fruit (faith in their King and Messiah)

This is why He wept/wailed/sobbed over the City (Luke 19:41)
The Husbandman expects fruit
This tree (Israel) has no fruit...and is cursed

And His disciples heard what Jesus said to that fig tree, so now, 24 hours later...

v20 in the morning...dried up from the roots:

The next day (v19), the 3rd day of the Final Week, Jesus and the 12 are
headed back to Jerusalem from Bethany, taking the same path they did
yesterday

They saw the fig tree cursed by Jesus yesterday;
they had no problem identifying it
The tree is dried up from the roots (in midst of trees with lots of green leaves)

Questions:

1. How did it get dried up?
Trees wither “out in”...from leaves to branches to trunk to roots
This tree dried up “in out”...
from roots to trunk to branches to leaves...
By the spoken word of the Creator, NOT by the natural process
2. How would they know the tree was dried up from the roots?
They would not (they cannot see the roots) but the Author
(Holy Spirit) would see and know
3. Why did they not notice the tree’s condition yesterday evening when they returned to Bethany (v19)?
2 different paths are used
 - down Mount of Olives: short, direct...easier descent
 - up Mount of Olives: long, winding...easier ascent

v21 Peter...the fig tree...is withered away:
Peter speaks, as is usually the case

Matt 21:19b-20

“presently” = soon

“marveled” = wondered

They have never seen this before

“How soon”...not months or years (natural) but 24 hours (supernatural)!

“withered away” = shriveled, dried up (obviously, not healthy)
caused by...no water

Does not mean “dead”

Both a sick tree and a dead tree will look dried up and lifeless without any
traces of green foliage

We cannot distinguish between a sick tree and a dead tree just by looking
at it.

We cannot see the roots or inside the tree anymore than we can see into a
person’s heart

1 Sam 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his
countenance, or on the height of his stature; because
I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man
seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance,
but the LORD looketh on the heart

According to Scripture, the cursed fig tree is dried up, withered away

The cursed fig tree is Israel – withered away, spiritually dried up, no signs of
spiritual life

Life comes from the roots

John 15:1-8

Jesus Christ is the Source of Life
Israel does not have faith in Jesus Christ,
is not rooted in Jesus Christ

But Israel is not dead, for God is faithful to His promises to AI&J

- a. Israel will be a part of God’s new work, the Church/Body/Bride
 - Acts 2:17 I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh
 - Acts 2:31 (prophets) spoke of the resurrection of Christ
 - Acts 2:32 we all are witnesses
 - Acts 2:33 having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost

John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

Acts 2 The Holy Spirit upon...Jews
Acts stops on missionary journeys: first to the synagogue

Rom 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith

Rom 9-11 They did not seek righteousness by faith
They were stumbled by Jesus Christ
They have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge
Trying to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God (by faith in Jesus)
But God has not cast away His people which He foreknew

b. Israel will be saved, will be as God formed her to be
(in DoL, when are His witnesses after Bride is snatched)

Joel 2:23-32 outpouring of Living Water,
The former (Acts 2) and the latter (DoL) rain

Zech 12:8-10 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David *shall be* as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

Israel will be saved by...

v22 Have faith in God:

...faith, in God, in the God of AI&J

Hab 2:4

Gal 3:10-14 written to Jewish believers drifting back into the Law

Righteousness/Acceptance is by faith, not by works, for both Jew and Gentile

“have” = to hold as a possession
a possession given...a gift

Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith

We do not manufacture faith (or grace) within ourselves
Faith does not start in us, it starts in the Giver of every good perfect gift

With faith being the principle of the spiritual lesson...

v23 For: Because, the reason behind v22

I say unto you: Thus saith the Lord

whosoever: anyone

shall say: speak to, command

this mountain: Mount of Olives

removed: lifted up and taken away

and thrown into the sea: general, unspecified

shall not doubt in his heart: absolutely zero doubt, no hesitation/wavering/questioning

but shall believe...which he saith shall come to pass: have faith, the expected fruit of a fruit tree

(Matt 21:21 also says, “**not only do this which is done to the fig tree**”),

he shall have whatsoever he saith: it will be

How are we to understand this?

The principle is faith...but is this hyperbole (a figure of speech not to be taken literally)?

If this is hyperbole, what is the spiritual value of hyperbole?

Key to understanding this saying is: shall not doubt in his heart

Matt 21:21 says "have faith **and** doubt not"

Doubt is...unbelief, imperfect faith

In a previous teaching on faith, Jesus said to the father of a demon-possessed boy,

Mark 9:23-24

Our faith needs help from Jesus for all things to be possible

Our faith is imperfect, our faith is being perfected...in Christ

Eph 4:11-15

Matt 5:48 **Be ye therefore perfect , even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect .**

Col 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear (any here no longer fearful ever?)

John 17:23 **I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.**

Back to the current teaching on faith...

Had anyone done this to the Mount of Olives?

Has anybody done this to the Mount of Olives?

It is still there, it has never left there

It is "needed" in the future

Acts 1:9-11 with Zech 14:4

By our imperfect faith, could we do v23?

No, we have been given a measure of faith

Our faith is not doubt-free and is smaller than a mustard seed

Matt 17:19-20 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, **Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you**

If we could, who would get the glory?
The one who “did” it
Talk about bragging rights in the kingdom of God!!!
God will not share His glory

By faith, could Jesus do that?
Absolutely, Jesus is the Author and Finisher, Beginning and End,
of faith...perfect faith
Heb 12:2 Note: *our*

The Creator and the creation are on “speaking terms”

If He did, Who would get the glory?
The Father
John 5:19 Jesus did what He saw the Father do

The principle is faith
Faith is the fruit God expects
The just shall live by faith

By grace are we are saved thru faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of
God, not of works lest any man should boast
What is the gift of God?
Grace and faith...and salvation
All are perfect gifts that come from God to us by Jesus Christ

Thru Whose faith are we saved by grace – our faith or the faith of Christ?

We are saved by grace thru the faith of Christ (Matt 3:17, Matt 17:5)
Gal 2:16, 20 \ *TR/Majority vs Alex/Minority*
Gal 3:22 \ *Antioch/evangelism vs Gnosticism*
Phil 3:8-9 /
“in” is our faith, opening the door to steal God’s glory
“of” is sound doctrine

Again, our faith needs help from Jesus for all things to be possible
Our faith is not 100% doubt-free, therefore is imperfect

God has given us a measure of faith, and a choice as to where to invest our
measure/gift of faith
The Father has given us His Son, His Spirit, and His Word,
that our faith and hope would be in Him vs Self (1 Peter 1:18-21)

Could this be Jesus' point with v23?!

His faith

For His Father's glory

We are given...and have/hold onto...a (small) measure of His faith

We are exhorted to invest our measure of faith in Jesus vs ourselves

Herein lies the bankruptcy of the Word of Faith movement

We get, we have because of our faith

We don't get, we don't have because we lack faith

Shipwrecks believers with false doctrine e.g. Judy

This is Marketplace Christianity – crafting a doctrine to cater to the flesh
vs the spirit

Rom 8:6, 8 carnally minded is death, spiritually minded is life
the flesh cannot please God

Why I prefer the Christ-centered TR vs the man-centered Alex translations

Jer 26:3

Word-for-word (why we teach this way)

Not so much as one word diminished/diluted/edited/"shaved off"

God's high view of Scripture...word-for-word

vs thought-for-thought (man's words)

or paraphrase (What God really meant to say is this)

James 3:1

v24 Therefore: Since the preceding is true

I say unto you: Thus saith the Lord

What things soever: Anything

ye: plural you, disciples/followers/believers, those who v22 (Have faith in God)

desire: ask

Ps 37:4-5 desires = requests

When ye pray, believe that ye receive: ask believing God, not doubting God

The lesson is a spiritual lesson...not carnal

Jesus is NOT giving us a blank check to indulge our flesh,
We are not given to hide behind a false doctrine of "faith"
The principle is faith
For the glory of God and our eternal good

John 6:63 Jesus' words are spiritual; the flesh profits nothing
Ex 20:17 Thou shalt not covet (worldly things)
1 Cor 12:31 Covet spiritual things
1 Cor 12:9 faith is a spiritual gift
Luke 11:9-13 indwelling/sealing AND baptism/empowering
Gal 5:18-23 flesh vs spirit

v25-26 when ye stand: "perseverance" vs an upright position on our feet

forgive: like God forgives, Ps 103:8-12, and forgets

if ye have ought: ANYTHING

against any: ANYONE

that your Father which is in heaven: to leave no doubt as to Who our Father

may forgive you your trespasses: errors, faults, offenses, slip-ups, sin

But if you do not forgive: if you choose to not forgive EVERYONE of EVERYTHING
(forgiveness is a choice and an action, not a feeling)

neither will your Father forgive your trespasses

Jesus teaches of the abject importance of forgiveness...to us

Our forgiveness of all others is to be as broad and as deep as God's forgiveness of
us – His only Begotten hanging cursed on a Cross

Matt 10:8

A VERY important question: Is there anything and anyone you have not
genuinely forgiven?

Prov 18:24a with forgiveness, our greatest need and greatest desire/request

Application

3 things our Father wants from us

1. believe Him...have faith in God

Invest the measure of faith given you by God in His Son
Jesus is our only hope to be saved from God's justice

2. our sin

so He can nail it to the Cross of Jesus Christ
so Jesus can cover it with His shed blood (only acceptable payment)

that is the love and grace of God
(His) Love covers a multitude of sin...all the sins of whosoever believes
That Love draws sinners...to invest their measure of faith in Jesus Christ

Share The Love

Forgive EVERYONE of EVERY offense
Be as generous with forgiveness as God is!

3. Matt 16:24