

Refuge City Church — July 26, 2020
“The Gospel of Mark” (Mark 11:12-33)

Introduction

- LAST WEEK: The Triumphal Entry and the veiled purpose of who Jesus truly is and why He came.

Scripture Reading (Mark 11:12-33)

Verses 12-14

12 On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. **13** And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. **14** And he said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

- On the journey back to Jerusalem, the day after His triumphal entry, Jesus finds himself hungry.
- The fact the tree had leaves, but no fruit, provides us an understanding that the tree has lost its purpose; a fig tree will bear its fruit, *then* sprout full leaves.
- The cursing of the tree will become evident later.
 - **John 15:5-8**, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”
 - The ‘fruit’ [**proof of love, commitment, and being a disciple of God**] of an individual’s life is representative of internal purity and righteousness.
 - The tree [**individual**] was giving the impression it had something it truly did not possess.
 - The tree was not cursed for lack of fruit. Rather, for giving the impression that it did.

Verses 15-19

15 And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. **16** And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. **17** And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?’ But you have made it a den of robbers.” **18** And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. **19** And when evening came they went out of the city.

- In one sense, Jesus' triumphal entry was symbolic of what our Servant-King rode in to Jerusalem to do.
 - Publicly proclaim Himself, and eventually sacrifice His life for the salvation of all.
- In a second public display of His 'kingly' authority, He cleanses the Temple of "robbers"; those deceiving others for profitable gain.
 - Those buying and selling in the Temple were doing so to take advantage of the thousands of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast.
 - This was done in the 'Court of the Gentiles'. An outer courtyard where the majority of people would be allowed to congregate and pray in the Temple complex.
- **Isaiah 56:7**, "these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."
- Who were the ones that allowed the people to be taken advantage of?
 - The very people who claimed authority over the Temple and should have been accepting of all people **[Pharisees, Priests, Elders]**.
 - While claiming to be righteous & blameless, they were being deceitful & greedy.
 - They were allowing the people to be preyed upon, rather than allow them to pray.
 - Jesus made the connection for them that our prayer is our offering to the Lord.
 - **Psalms 141:2**, "Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!"
- Jesus, through a very public display of authority was cleaning house to show who the Temple belonged to.
 - When the entrenched political elite allowed for abuses to take place in God's house, there was zero hesitation by Jesus to correct the error.
- The hatred for Jesus increases all the more, as more and more people are witnessing His authority and true identity. He has become an imminent threat to the 'powers that be'.
- **PERSONAL APPLICATION**
 - **I Corinthians 6:19**, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?"
 - **QUESTION:** What have you allowed to take place within you that is in direct violation of who you are created to be?
 - What deceit, lies, lust, greed, etc. have you welcomed in?
 - What needs to be turned over, run out, and removed?
 - **WARNING:** A house swept clean only clears the path for more sin. Once swept, the house needs to be filled with the presence, knowledge, and fruit of God.

Verses 20-26

20 As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. **21** And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” **22** And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. **23** Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. **24** Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. **25** And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

- On the next day, they pass by the cursed fig tree.
- Jesus provides proper perspective
 - Rather than focus on the reason for the curse, He turns their attention to the source of our strength = **Prayer**.
 - Prayer & Forgiveness were common teaching points for Jesus.
 - **Matthew 6:12-14**, “and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,”
 - **Matthew 7:7**, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”
- God is our source of strength! Without Him we can do nothing.
 - **What we ask in faith, according to God’s will, will be done by God’s grace.**
 - **James 1:6-7**, “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;”
- **IMPORTANT:** Forgiveness of others is a part of being in God’s will.
 - This serves as a reminder to the importance of the Lord’s Prayer.
 - **Luke 11:2-4**, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us...”
 - A solid reminder of the purity we ought to seek on a daily basis.

Verses 27-33

27 And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, **28** and they said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?” **29** Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. **30** Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.” **31** And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ **32** But shall we say, ‘From man?’—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. **33** So they

answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

- The authority of Jesus questioned.
 - By who’s authority did He have the right to cleanse the temple?
 - In true teacher **[authoritative]** form, Jesus puts the burden of proof on His detractors.
 - If John was from God, then what He claimed was true **[Jesus was the Son of God]**
 - If that’s the case, why did the Pharisees not believe John?
 - They weren’t seeking the truth. They were seeking to destroy.
- Their leadership and true intent exposed. As Jesus always did in ministry, He exposed their heart; full of hypocrisy.
 - The truth had already been prophecies, revealed, taught, and proven. Why provide it again?
 - They knew what they believed, but chose to reject both John and Jesus to ‘save face’ and their position amongst the people.

Response/Conclusion

- Spend time in prayer/evaluation of our heart and relationship with Jesus.
 - What needs to change?
 - What facade have you placed in front of what should be sincere fellowship and discipleship with Jesus?
 - Have you been living a cloak of religious practice, rather than seeking deeper relationship with Jesus?
 - What needs to be removed from your life that is causing you to deceive yourself and others about who you are and what you believe?
- We ask you God to reveal to us now what needs to be removed so that we can be free to abide in you, and be the representative you need us to be to a lost world.