

# CURSE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE Text: Mark 11:12–24

## *Having a Fig Leaf of Religion Will Not Produce the Fruit of Righteousness*

### Introduction:

1. In our series on the Miracles of Jesus we've seen His compassion & His power
    - a. He's given sight to the blind, healed the sick, cast our demons and even raised the dead
  2. **But this Miracle is Completely Unique from the Other Miracles of Jesus in that: It's the only miracle of destruction that Jesus preformed recorded in the Gospels.**  
And since it is the only miracle of destruction—it would help us to find out why
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## I. A BARREN FIG TREE

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### A. WHY DID JESUS EXPECT FRUIT FROM THIS FIG TREE? (Mk 11:12-13)

#### 1. Mark Mentions that It Was Not the Season for Figs...

- a) In the area of Palestine the Fig Tree did not just have 1 season for figs
- b) NKJ: *"for it was not the season for figs"* (13).
- c) leaving the impression there was only one season for figs
- d) But the literal Greek means *'It was not the right time of the year for figs'*,

#### 2. But why would Jesus Expect Figs when it was not the right time?

- a) There was the early growth that was edible, called Flower Figs, and when they fully ripen they become mature figs.
- b) These flower figs were also considered a delicacy...

"Jesus was hoping to find some flower-figs to eat. But as sure as the law, "No flowers, no fruit," He knew, as does any fig grower, that, because there were no flower figs, there was also not going to be fig production later on in August." (Fowler)

- c) The fact that there were no flower figs meant that this tree was not going to produce fruit even when the time came to have fruit.

### B. WHY DID JESUS CURSE THIS FIG TREE (v.14)

#### 1. It Wasn't Because He was Hungry and Frustrated that there was no fruit...

##### —He could Have Miraculously Created the Fruit!

- a) Jesus could have just as easily created fruit—rather than curse the fig tree!
- b) Something more is going on here...

#### 2. The Vine and Fig Tree Were Spiritual Symbols of Israel (Hosea 9:10).

##### a) Jesus Told a Story about a Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6–9)

- (1) The Owner of the **Vineyard** = God
- (2) The **Fig Tree** = is the Nation of Israel
- (3) The **Vinedresser** = the Lord Jesus Christ > who wept over Jerusalem
- (4) The **Three Years** = Point to Jesus 3 Yrs of Ministry (13:7)
- (5) The Vinedresser **interceding** = is loving patience of Christ who died for our sins
- (6) The Order to **Cut Down the Tree** = God's Judgement on Israel

### 3. The Curse of This Barren Fig Tree was a Symbolic Spiritual Lesson

- a) A Barren Fig Tree is a Barren Faith... a Fruitless Fig Tree is Fruitless Faith
- b) Jesus Had Come to Israel Expecting the Fruit of Righteousness but instead He found the barren leaves of a ritual religion
- c) A people who honoured God with their lips but their heart was always far from Him

## C. WHY THEN DID JESUS CLEANSE THE TEMPLE? (v.15–19)

### 1. Jesus came to the Temple expecting Spiritual Fruit—but what did He Find

- a) “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’ (v.17)

### 2. Jesus Came Expecting Spiritual Fruit—but found leaves of Ritual Religion

- a) Annas was the former high priest and he held power as a puppet high priest
- b) His son-in-law Caiaphas was now high priest, but the corruption was run by Annas
- c) They had turned the Temple into a Money Making Machine that was closer to a Casino than a Holy Temple

### 3. The Temple was to be a House of Prayer for all nations—but they found a way to Rip Off the Worshippers of all nations!

- a) To sacrifice an animal from a lamb to a dove, the temple inspectors would reject your sacrifice and force you to buy theirs
- b) But to buy theirs was to pay five times the price or more!
- c) And to Pay you had to exchange foreign currency to Temple currency
- d) At a rate of Five Times or More!

## D. WHY DID JESUS CURSE A FIG TREE & CLEANSE THE TEMPLE? (20-24)

### 1. BECAUSE JUDGEMENT IS COMING!

**The Cleansing of the Temple Explains The Cursing of the Fig Tree!  
and the Cursing of the Fig Tree Explains the Cleansing of the Temple!**

- a) The Fact that the Cursing of the Fig Tree takes place Before and After Jesus Cleansing of the Temple is No Accident!
- b) It was a Prophetic Warning of Judgement!

### 2. As Jesus was Led to Golgotha carrying His Cross...

- a) Women were following Him and Weeping....
- b) But Jesus Lamented their future suffering—not his own! (**Luke 23:28–31**)
- c) Don't Weep for Me! Weep for yourselves, and your children!
- d) The time is coming when you are going to say Blessed are the Barren!
- e) When you cry, Let the Mountains Fall on us! and the Hills cover us!

### 3. The Nation of Israel was Destroyed by the Roman Army in AD 70 To Become a Desolate Ruin

- a) Even Josephus, who was Jewish, Knew of the Corruption of the Rulers in Jerusalem
- b) and Josephus was an eye witness of the Horrible Roman siege of Jerusalem...

“I cannot but think that it was because God had doomed this city to destruction, as a polluted city, and was resolved to purge His sanctuary by fire, that he cut off these its great defenders. . . .”  
(Josephus, Wars VI, 2,1; VI,4,5; IV,5,3)

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## II. IMPLICATIONS OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

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### A. A TREE IS KNOWN BY IT'S FRUIT—OR LACK OF FRUIT

1. **Jesus taught this principle... (Luke 6:43–45)**
  - a) You Can't Hide it—and You Can't Fake it
  - b) Out of Your Heart and Out of Your Mouth and Out of Your Life Reveals Your Fruit
  - c) Our Thoughts and Words and Actions Betray the Condition of Our Heart
2. **A Tree is Known for For It's Fruit — Your Heart is Known By Your Life...**
  - a) Do You Have a Critical spirit—or a Merciful spirit?
  - b) Do You Have an Angry spirit—or a Joyful spirit?
  - c) Do You Have an Envious spirit—or a peaceful spirt?
  - d) When Others See You—Do They See... LOVE? JOY? PEACE? PATIENCE?  
KINDNESS? FAITHFULNESS? GENTLENESS? SELF-CONTROL?
3. **God Gives Two Reasons Why Many End Up with a Barren Faith (Jer. 2:13)**
  - a) They Turn their Backs on God—the Fountain of Living Waters
  - b) They Put Their Faith and Trust in the Broken Cisterns of the World
  - c) And Their Faith Dries Up and Withers away
  - d) The Man of God is Like a Tree Planted By the Waters (Psalm 1)

### B. A FIG LEAF OF FAITH CANNOT PRODUCE THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS!

1. **When Jesus came to the Fig Tree—it only had leaves, but no fruit...**
  - a) This was the Problem of first century Israel...
    - (1) Jesus Went to Israel expecting the fruit of Righteousness...
    - (2) He went to the Temple expecting to Find Spiritual Fruit
  - b) They Honored God with their Words—but their hearts were far from Him
2. **When Adam and Eve Sinned—they tried to hide from God...**
  - a) and Sewed Fig leaves together to cover their nakedness—the shame & Guilt of Sin
  - b) But God was Merciful and provided a covering for them...
  - c) Animal skins that necessitated the shedding of blood to atone for sin
3. **But A Barren Faith is like Covering Yourself with a Fig Leaf of Religion...**
  - a) Just enough to Hide our Guilt and Shame from Ourselves...
  - b) But Nothing is hidden from God!

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give account*. (Hebrews 4:13)

4. **A Fig Leaf of Faith Will Not Cover Our Sins—only the Blood of Christ Can**

### C. FAITH CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS!

1. **A Fig Leaf of Faith Cannot Produce the Fruit of Righteousness...**

**But Notice What a Strong Faith Can Do! (v.20–24)**

  - a) The Prayer off Faith Has the Power to Change Your Life
  - b) To Change Your Future

- c) To Change Your Eternal Destiny
- d) Your Faith NOW will Echo Into Eternity!

**2. BUT DON'T FORGET THERE ARE SPIRITUAL LAWS OF PRAYER...**

- a) IT MUST BE A PRAYER OF FAITH (v.22-24)
- b) IT MUST BE A PRAYER FROM A HEART OF LOVE (v.25-26)
- c) IT MUST BE A PRAYER THAT IS WITHIN THE WILL OF GOD (1 John 5:14–15)
  - (1) Even when Jesus prayed for the cup of suffering to pass...
  - (2) He prayed, “but not My will, but Thy will be done.”

**3. THE PRAYER OF FAITH CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS...**

**But the Greatest Mountain that Needs to Be Moved is Within You...**

**a) It's Not Your Power—it is His Power—but He Offers it To You**

- The Power to Be Forgiven
- The Power to Forgive Others
- The Power to Be Free of Condemnation and Guilt
- The Power to Be Free from Fear and Anxiety
- The Power to Have the Peace that Surpasses Understanding
- The Power to Have Your Prayers Heard by the Creator of Universe!
- The Power of the Gift of the Holy Spirit
- The Power of Patience
- The Power to Live Forever

**4. Think of the Power God Provides—SPIRITUAL POWER...**

- a) that brings light into darkness
- b) Living water to a dry soul
- c) Love that comforts the broken hearted
- d) Forgiveness to heal old wounds

**CONCLUSION:**

**1. Faith doesn't make things easy—but it makes it possible**

**2. This is the Same Power of God That He Used...**

- to Speak the Universe into existence
- to Raise Jesus from the Grave
- is the Same Power God Uses to Save You!

(Ephesians 1:19) “that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power <sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*