

The nation of Israel expected a King to set them free from the oppression of Rome and restore the glory of David.

Jesus came to set us free from the oppression of sin and regenerate the glory of God in us.

This passage reveals the **Word of the King** to establish His people

This miracle – *the cursing of a fig tree* – seems *strange* and maybe vindictive on the part of Christ but in reality it was *strategic* in the training of the disciples. It is both warns us and proclaims the right path to take. It is an acted-out-parable.

Biblical Setting

On Sunday. morning of Passover week, Jesus rode into the city on a donkey colt to a Messiah’s welcome, was acclaimed the Son of David. ([Matthew 21:1-11](#)).

On Monday He came into the city again and cleansed the Temple of the sacrifice merchants and moneychangers ([vv. 12-17](#)).

Now on Tuesday, He entered Jerusalem for the third time since coming up from Jericho. From Mark we learn that the encounter with the fig tree involved two successive days. Jesus cursed the fig tree on the morning He entered Jerusalem to cleanse the Temple, and it was on the following day, Tuesday, that the disciples noticed that the tree was “withered from the roots up” ([Mark 11:14, 20](#)). Matthew condenses the two events into one account, which He mentions only regarding Tuesday.

I. Fruitless Profession

18-19

Explanation – Jesus was hungry and expecting fruit

Fig trees produce fruit before leaves so a leafed-out tree should have fruit (edible well before harvest time)

The tree was cursed because it was falsely advertising fruit

A. Fruit trees are expected to produce fruit

It is the way they are known *Matthew 7:17-20 A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.*

B. Disciples are expected to produce spiritual fruit

John 15:16-17 You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other.

We do this by abiding (obeying) in Christ

Galatians 5:22-23 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

This takes place when we are filled (controlled) by the Spirit

C. Disciples are known by the kind of fruit they produce

Matthew 12:33 “A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad.”

II. Faithless Prayer

20-22

A. A telling question – How

Amazed they wanted to know how – maybe how can I do it. Often people want a quick fix – Just a few words – magic

B. A truthful answer

If you have faith and do not doubt – you can move mountains. This is not the first of last mention of such power

Matthew 17:20 *“You don’t have enough faith,” Jesus told them. “I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.*

John 14:13-14 *You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it*

“We can only believe for a thing when we are in such union with God that his thought and purpose can freely flow into us, suggesting what we should pray for, and leading us to that point in which there is a perfect sympathy and understanding between us and the divine mind. Faith is always the product of such a frame as this.” (Meyer)

C. A tragic weakness

Why are prayers not answered?

1. Lack of connection with Christ. – true faith is a product of our relationship with Christ
2. Errant motives

James 4:1-4 *What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don’t they come from the evil desires at war within you? ² You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can’t get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. ³ And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.*

How can these promises be true?

1. Abiding in Christ and His word

John 15:7 *But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!*

2. Allowing the Spirit to fill your mind and heart

Romans 8:26-27 *And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will.*

We live in a time where our world needs to see God

That will happen as we produce the fruit of the Spirit

That will be made real to others and to ourselves by faith filled prayer.

Is your life fruitless in comparison to your profession?

Repent and by faith ask God to Lord of your life

Are your prayers void of faith?

Turn over control of your life to the Holy Spirit

Prayer

Please send prayer requests to Mary mary.clelland@mcf-online.de so she can send them out to the whole congregation

Now send greeting to as many people as you normally greet at the end of the service