

FPFWC Christian Development

April 4, 2020

Lesson #1 – A Word of Faith

Scripture Focus – Mark 11:12-26

ICE BREAKERS –

1. Why does Jesus tie God's forgiveness of us with our forgiveness of others?
2. How does this passage challenge you to reexamine your faith and your prayer life?

Key Verse:

²¹ And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. ²² And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. ²³ For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. ²⁴ Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11:21-24 (KJV)

LESSON COMMENTARY

11:12-14. On the next day, Jesus headed for Jerusalem. **He became hungry**, but spied a **fig tree in leaf** with no fruit on it. He said, **May no one ever eat fruit from you again!** The disciples later called Jesus' words a curse (cf. [v. 21](#)). Although **it was not the season for figs** ([v. 13](#)), by the time a fig tree is in leaf, it should have fruit on it, even if it is unripe. Hence, this fig tree, despite its leaves, was actually barren. Jesus was demonstrating the danger of spiritual hypocrisy as evident in the temple leaders: all the trappings of religion (leaves), without true transformation (no fruit).

3. The Cleansing of the Temple (11:15-19)

11:15-16. They **entered the temple**, and Jesus **began to drive out those who were buying and selling** (cf. [Jn 2:13-16](#), which occurred earlier). Jesus dealt with **money changers** and those **selling doves**. Their exorbitant prices were not in keeping with the spirit of the temple. Jesus also stopped those carrying **merchandise through the temple**, using it for shortcuts.

11:17-19. The temple was to be a house of prayer **for all the nations** (cf. [Isa 56:6-7](#)). They had turned it into **a robbers' den** (cf. [Jr 7:11](#)), making what should have been a place for prayer and worship, a place of merchandise. When **the chief priests and the scribes heard** what Jesus was doing, they recognized He was claiming greater authority than the high priest. But **they were afraid of Him** because of the multitude who viewed Jesus as Messiah. To keep their power the chief priests and scribes had to destroy Jesus. That evening Jesus and the disciples returned to Bethany.

4. The Judgment Fulfilled ([11:20-26](#))

11:20-21. On Tuesday morning, Jesus and His disciples passed the fig tree now withered from the roots up. No one would ever eat its fruit again (cf. [v. 14](#)). Peter said, **Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.**

11:22-26. Jesus encouraged the disciples, **Have faith in God.** Besides the lesson of spiritual hypocrisy, Jesus used the cursed fig tree for a second lesson, specifically, on the power of faith. The key to this teaching is the object of faith. The focus of faith must be on the sovereign Lord, not on faith itself. Since He was standing on the Mount of Olives, Jesus' hyperbole becomes clear. He was referring to that mountain and the Dead Sea, visible fifteen miles away, when He said the person of faith could say **to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea.'** A "mountain" pictured an obstacle in one's path (cf. [Zch 4:7](#)). Prayer can remove great obstacles. Therefore He said, **all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.** But everything must be right with the Heavenly Father, which includes a forgiving spirit. Problems between individuals must be confronted and forgiveness sought. [Verse 26](#) is not in the best manuscripts, but is the logical outcome of [v. 25](#) (cf. [Mt 6:15](#)).

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary