

God With Us

A Study of Matthew: "The Fig Tree Without Fruit"

Matthew 21:18-22

"And Jesus answered them, Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea', it will happen." (Matthew 21:21)

I. A Lack of Faith

- a. In this text, the fig tree symbolized the nation of Israel (Hosea 9:10,16). Jesus is emphasizing that their lack of faith has made them fruitless.
- b. Just as this specific tree had leaves but no fruit, so Israel had an outward religion, but no practical experience of faith resulting in Godly living.
- c. There was a tree, without fruit. There were a people, without fruit.
- d. Jesus was not angry at the tree, but he used it to teach several lessons to His disciples.
- e. In the parable of the *Fig Tree* (Luke 13:6-9), the gardener was given more time to care for the tree, but now the time was up. The tree was taking up space by not serving its purpose.

II. Fruit is the Product of Life

- a. A lack of faith will not produce the expected Kingdom fruit.
- b. Beloved be fruitful, by having an active relationship with Christ through prayer, study, service, and a living purpose. Have you directed your prayers to uproot anything displeasing to God?
- c. Even as we live in this world, Jesus expects our faith in Him, to enable us to impact this natural space. *But even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.*
- d. We are to pray with a confidence that aligns our lives with Christ. We are to pray for the spreading of the Gospel, we are to pray for the salvation and deliverance of others by trusting in God's will.
- e. Confident prayer not only withers fig trees, but it also uproots mountains. We are to pray against things that should not be, according to God's Word.
- f. There are *mountains* we can pray against, with the same amount of faith: pray against all evil, false teaching, false preachers, crime in our cities, disobedience practices, etc.

III. Understanding Jesus', It Will Happen (plan and will) (vv. 21-22)

- a. Prayer takes practice and it is essential to our faith. I personally believe that without prayer there can be no sustaining spiritual fruit in a believer lives.
- b. Prayer *roots* us to the Kingdom and *God's perspective*. In prayer we speak to God and we listen to and for His voice. In prayer we receive direction and confirmation of God's Word of how to proceed in life. Those roots allow the manifestation of spiritual fruit for all to see.
 1. A Godly perspective allows you to see light during darkness; it will strengthen you to carry that cross two more miles when you cannot physically take another step.
 2. A Godly perspective gives you peace when you are faced to deal with insensitive, disrespectful, and ungodly people that you love.

IV. Apply the Scriptures to Your Life

- a. Jesus described the disciples "little-faith" (8:26; 14:31; 16:8). Faith is what moves mountains. Jesus also is teaching, that it is not just the words you say, but the faith behind the words.
- b. When prayer thrives, churches live.
- c. A faithful prayer that is aligned with God's will move things out of your life and moves things into your life. It believes that God has the power to "do it" without knowing *how* God will "do it."
- d. Without prayer we are faithless and fruitless. Prayer was/is essential to Christ and His ministry. Therefore, for us today it should be essential to our daily living, just like breathing.