

Sermon Notes:

Passage: Mark 11:12-14, 19-21

Is this story about Jesus anger? Is it about faith? What is going on?

This story is actually set in the last week of Jesus life before He is crucified. The story before is Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem where people are declaring him king. The story in between is him going to the temple and declaring judgement on it.

The fig tree represents Israel. In the Old Testament the fig tree often stood as a symbol for the nation of Israel . **Hosea 9:10**

Cursing the fig tree was Jesus's way(metaphor) of saying that nations spiritual leaders had become spiritually barren before the Lord. They had the form of religion but not the reality. They knew the right words to say, but their hearts were far from God.

Essentially, the tree was a picture of **false advertising**, having leaves but no figs.

What is the application to this? God is looking for fruitful lives, not just the appearance of fruit.

God is never put off by our sin. What he is put off by is our pride

Passage: Mark 11:22-25

Jesus made it clear that prayer must be offered in faith, and faith must be in God. Faith is trust, confidence, and reliance

Jesus is really encouraging us here that when we have faith in the God. In the miracle maker. Really anything is possible. He is a God of miracles.

I don't think that he is saying. 'If you pray hard enough and *really believe*, God is obligated to answer your prayer no matter what you ask.' That kind of faith is not faith in God; rather it is nothing but **faith in faith, or faith in feelings.** **(Wiersbe)**

“the purpose of prayer isn't to get man's will done in heaven, but God's will done on earth.”

forgiveness for those around me is also connected to answered prayer.

God is concerned about our earthly relationships here. When we hold unforgiveness, grudges, hard feelings it creates a block between us and God.

Fruitful Lives and Effective Prayers: Study Notes

1. fruit in the right place.
2. faith in the right place
3. relationships in the right place

Life Group Discussion

(feel free to use any or all of these questions)

Warm Up:

1. Have you ever had an experience of buying something or doing something that you thought was going to be great but turned out to be terrible? Share your experience with the group.
2. Share with the group a goal or dream you would like to accomplish this next year?

Study & Discussion:

Read together: Mark 11:12-14, 19-21

1. At first glance when you read this story what would be the major themes or ideas in it? Take a look at Mark 11:15-18, and Mark 12:1-11. This is the context it is written in. Does this change your thoughts of what this is about?
2. Has religious hypocrisy effected your life or the lives of those around you? how? In what ways have you ever struggled with religious hypocrisy in your own life?

Read together: Mark 11:22-25

1. Do you believe what Jesus is saying here? why or why not?
2. When it comes to prayer what reasons do you see in this verse or other places in the bible that would point to reasons why you don't receive what you ask for.
3. looking at verse 25 why do you think that Jesus would add this on to the conversation.

Prayer:

1. Is there someone outside the group you would like prayer for today?
2. What mountain or miracle would you like to receive prayer for today?
3. Is there a person that you need to forgive?