

# Follow – Walking in the Way of Jesus

Anger & Forgiveness

Mark 11:12-25

Pastor Ben Hall – Saanich Baptist Church

April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026



What's the difference between discipleship and religion? Discipleship is different from religion, because it refuses to be bound to time and place. It is about PROXIMITY (to God in Christ) and PROACTIVITY (with others in fruitfulness and forgiveness).

***“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations... but you have made it a den of thieves.”***

| God's Intent     | Israel's Practice |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Prayer           | Exploitation      |
| Nations included | Nations excluded  |
| Worship          | Corruption        |

An Example of False Security

- It looked like the place of God's presence
- It functioned like a guarantee of God's favour
- But it had become detached from fruitfulness

You can't be defensive and be a disciple. When Jesus confronts the temple, the leaders don't pause... They don't REFLECT... They don't REPENT. They DEFEND. Because defensiveness is what happens when something we trust is threatened.

You cannot be DEFENSIVE and be FORMED by Jesus at the same time.

**JESUS MAKES WORSHIP ACCESSIBLE** – At the cross, Jesus removes every barrier between us and God.

- ***“But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:13)***

**Q:** Do I approach God freely, or do I subtly believe access is earned?

**JESUS MAKES DEVOTION DELIGHTFUL** - At the cross, Jesus does more than forgive sin. He restores relationship:

- ***“And we have seen and testify... so that you also may have fellowship with us... with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3)***

**Q:** Has devotion become image management rather than delight in God?

**JESUS MAKES FAITHFULNESS FRUITFUL** - Through the cross, Jesus secures the fruit our effort never could.

- ***“I am the vine; you are the branches... the one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit.” (John 15:5)***

**Q:** Do I actually pray with expectation, or just talk about faith?

**JESUS MAKES FORGIVENESS POWERFUL** - Through the cross, Jesus frees us from the anger of injustice by entrusting judgment to God

- ***“Do not avenge yourselves... but leave room for God's wrath...” (Romans 12:19)***

**Q:** Is there an injustice I am still holding onto instead of entrusting to God?

**Date: April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Series: Follow**

**Title: Anger & Forgiveness**

**Primary Passage: Mark 11:12-25**

**Secondary Passage:**

**Big Question: What's the difference between discipleship and religion?**

**Big Idea: Discipleship is different from religion, because it refuses to be bound to time and place. It is about PROXIMITY and PROACTIVITY.**

**Keywords: Leaves, Fruit, Worship, Anger, Righteous, Self-Protection, Defensive, Replace, Forgive.**

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### **GOING DEEPER – Life Application Questions**

What did you do this week that took faith to accomplish?

In Mark 11:12–25, how does the fig tree interpret what Jesus does in the temple?

What does this reveal about the difference between outward religion and true discipleship?

- Where might your life look “full of leaves” but lack real fruit?
- What would it look like to move from appearance to authenticity this week?

Jesus says, **“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17)**. What had Israel turned it into, and why was that such a serious distortion of God’s intent?

- In your own life, do you approach God with proximity (nearness and access) or performance (earning and proving)?
- What is one practical way you can move toward God more freely this week?

When Jesus confronts the temple, the leaders respond with defensiveness (Mark 11:18, 27–33).

Why do you think they react this way instead of repenting?

- Where do you tend to become defensive when challenged, corrected, or exposed?
- What would it look like to replace defensiveness with repentance in that area?

Jesus shifts from the withered tree to teaching on faith, prayer, and forgiveness (Mark 11:22–25).

How do these connect to a fruitful life of discipleship?

- Do your prayers reflect real dependence on God, or are they occasional and reactive?
- What is one step you can take to grow in proactive faith this week?

Jesus commands forgiveness in the context of prayer (Mark 11:25; Romans 12:19). How does entrusting justice to God free us from anger?

- Is there an injustice or offense you are still holding onto?
- What would it look like to release that to God and trust His justice this week?

Where is Jesus inviting you right now to move from religion to discipleship, from managing appearances to living in proximity to God and proactivity with others? Spend some time praying through it, asking for opportunities to live with a different intention.