SERMON NOTES: November 15, 2026

Fruitless Tree vs. Faithful Fruit

Matthew 21:18-22

I. The Hypocrisy of the Fig Tree - 21:18-19a

II. The Cursing of the Fig Tree - 21:19b

Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, “No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered. - 21:18-19

III. The Fruit of Faith - 21:20-22

Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, “How did the fig tree wither all at once?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen. And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” - 21:20-22

Life Group Study Questions

Fruitless Tree vs. Faithful Fruit

Matthew 21:18-22

1. Have you ever been discouraged to find out that something was not real or an illusion? What happened and what did it feel like?

2. Matthew tells us that Jesus became “hungry.” How is the genuine humanity of Jesus both surprising and encouraging?

3. Why would Jesus and the disciples expect to find fruit on the fig tree when Mark (11) tells us it was not in season? How is this tree guilty of false advertising?

4. Fig trees were a symbol of blessing in Israel and used throughout the O.T. as a picture of God’s favor. What is the significance of Jesus cursing this tree?

5. When Jesus cleansed the temple he was rejecting the false worship of Israel. What is he doing when he curses the fig tree?

6. Some take offense that Jesus would curse a tree. How does their offense show a warped and broken understanding of value and of God’s salvation agenda?

7. Jesus takes advantage of the Fig Tree to teach the disciples about the Fruit of Faith. How is faith the missing element in the Jewish people?

8. Faith is most strongly exhibited through prayer. How does the present place of prayer in your life either confirm or deny your genuine relationship with God?

9. The prayer of faith does not work as a means to get whatever you want. Rather, it is a means to further what God wants done for His glory. Are you praying in this way? Does your prayer life need to adjust?