

# Jesus Curses a Fig Tree and Clears the Temple

## Mark 11:12-25

by David Servant

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*Jesus' actions in cursing the fig tree and clearing the Temple demonstrate the importance of faith and forgiveness in our relationship with God.*

**Scripture:** Mark 11:12-25, John 2:13

**Topics:** "Faith And Prayer", "Holy Spirit"

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### Description

David Servant delves into the final week before Jesus' crucifixion, emphasizing its significance in human history as the most important week. He explores the incident of Jesus cursing the fig tree, explaining that Jesus, as a human, relied on the Holy Spirit for supernatural knowledge. Jesus used the fig tree to teach His disciples about the power of faith and the importance of believing in God's promises. Additionally, Jesus' actions in cleansing the Temple highlight His holiness and righteousness, showing that trusting God's promises and forgiving others are crucial for answered prayers and spiritual cleansing.

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### Transcript

Keep in mind that we are reading about the final week before Jesus' crucifixion. The Holy Spirit must want us to know more about that week than any other week of Jesus' life, because the four Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, devoted almost one third of their combined writings to it. It was the most important week in human history.

The incident of Jesus cursing the fig tree has raised some questions. First, why did Jesus, upon seeing the fig tree from a distance, need to get close to see if it had any figs? If He was God, why didn't He automatically know the tree was fruitless, since God knows everything?

The answer, as you hopefully already know by now, is that Jesus stripped Himself of omniscience when He became a human being. Any knowledge He possessed that could be categorized as supernatural was given to Him as God might give it to any of His servants---through the Holy Spirit's gift of the word of knowledge. Unless God revealed something to Jesus, He had to obtain information like anyone else. It was too early in the fig season for figs in the region of Jerusalem, and Jesus discovered that the fig tree was fruitless.

So why did He curse a fruitless fig tree that was fruitless because of the season? You can be certain Jesus wasn't angry at the tree and certainly wasn't holding the tree responsible for its fruitlessness. Trees aren't people, and God isn't holding them accountable for their actions!

Some people think the fig tree was representative of fruitless Israel, and that Jesus cursed it as a foreshadowing of God's soon-coming curse. Perhaps that's true, but the Bible doesn't say. More likely, Jesus was using the fig tree to teach His disciples a lesson about faith. The next day, they were amazed that the fig tree had withered, and Jesus explained to them the power of faith in God. If they would believe and not doubt in their hearts, they could speak to mountains and make them move! Jesus went on to explain that faith was an important key to answered prayer.

We must understand that faith can only be born from God's promises, and unless we have a promise from God that He wants an actual mountain moved, we couldn't have faith to move it. But there are many "mountains" for which we do possess promises, and, with faith, we can move them by speaking to them. The key is not to doubt in our hearts, even when it appears as if our mountains aren't moving. They will move if we believe God's promise.

When Jesus cleared the Temple of those who were buying and selling there, it was the second time He did so, the first being about three years earlier (see John 2:13-17). Again, He was angered that a place that God had intended to be a place of prayer had been turned into a marketplace dominated by dishonesty. With a right only God possesses, Jesus acted as if He owned everything and cleaned house. That's our Jesus---not just loving and compassionate, but holy and righteous.

Q. When we trust God to keep a promise, does what we believe for always come to pass instantly?

A. No, not always. According to Mark's Gospel, the disciples didn't notice that the fig tree had withered until about twenty-four hours after Jesus had cursed it.

Q. If we want our prayers to be answered, according to Jesus, what is even more important than having faith?

A. It is more important that we first forgive others, otherwise we have no assurance that God will forgive our sins.

Application: Jesus is still cleansing temples today, purifying them of sin and making them pleasing to God. Has He cleansed your temple?

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