

NOTHING BUT LEAVES

MARK 11

Text:

Introduction:

We are walking with Jesus and His disciples through the last week of His earthly life. It is amazing that Jesus was able to pack so much activity into a seven day period of time. He accomplished much during those seven days and not a single moment was wasted by our Lord.

We have seen over and over the Lord's compassion on the multitudes, as well as individuals, but this single event was designed to teach us about the judgment of God that was coming on the nation of Israel. They had rejected their Messiah and they were about to pay a terrible price.

This is the only recorded miracle of a destructive nature.

While this text speaks primarily to Israel, there is also a word of warning here for all people. The Lord Jesus wants us all to know that He is examining our lives. He wants us to know that He is looking for genuine spiritual fruit in our lives. When He finds that fruit, we

are blessed. When He does not find it, there is a high price to pay.

Notice:

1. THE CHARACTER OF THE LORD

Nothing disgraces the character of Christ.

Malachi 3:6

⁶For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8

⁸Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

As Jesus and His men travel from Bethany back into Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus becomes hungry.

This simple truth has little to do with the message but it is a truth that needs to be considered.

A. His Character is seen in His Humanity (vs. 18)

When the Lord rode into Jerusalem on the back of that little donkey, the Bible says in verse 3:

Mark 11:3

³And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

It amazes me that the Lord could ever need anything. After all, He is God. He is the Creator. He is the Lord of Glory.

Yet, when Jesus was born in to this world, He laid aside His heavenly glory for a time to live in this world as a man.

The One Who made all things became dependent upon the things He had made.

- The Creator became a helpless infant, dependent upon His mother for everything.
- He owned all things, yet He possessed nothing. He created the stars, yet He had nowhere to lay His Own head.

Matthew 8:20

²⁰ And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

- He fashioned everything there is out of nothing, yet He had to borrow a boat from which to preach His Gospel.
- He created every drop of water that exists in the world, yet He cried “I thirst” as He was dying on the cross.

John 19:28

²⁸ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

- He created every tree, but He died on a borrowed cross.
- He created every rock, but He had to borrow a tomb in which to be buried.
- He used the clouds as His chariots, yet He had to borrow a donkey on which to ride.

Psalms 104:3

³ Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

All of these things are clear evidence of His humanity. When Jesus was born into this world, He remained fully God, but He became fully man.

Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- The Lord experienced hunger

Mark 11:12

¹² And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

- The Lord experienced thirst

John 19:28

²⁸ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

- The Lord experienced weariness

John 4:6

⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour.

Mark 4:38

³⁸ And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

- The Lord experienced pain

Mark 16:20

²⁰ And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Isaiah 52:14

¹⁴ As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

Isaiah 53:4-6

⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he

was wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- The Lord experienced rejection

John 1:11

¹¹ He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

John 7:3-5

³ His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. ⁴ For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. ⁵ For neither did his brethren believe in him.

- The Lord experienced loneliness

Matthew 26:56

⁵⁶ But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

B. His Character is seen in His Disappointment (vs. 12-13)

Mark 11:12-13

¹² And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: ¹³ And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not *yet*.

The word “haply” does not mean happily. It means to draw a conclusion.

Here was a perfectly healthy looking fruit tree with its leaves.

On a fig tree the leaves come on the tree after the fruit is produced. They serve as a shelter for the ripe fruit from the direct sunlight and the wind and rain. This is the only type of tree that I’m aware of that works this way. All other trees the fruit comes after the leaves.

Here is the lesson for us:

- There is only one type of person that can produce fruit. That person is a Christian.
- He does not expect lost people to produce fruit. The one who cursed this fig tree gave these words in John 15:5:

John 15:5

⁵I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

There are also many churches today that are not producing fruit. They have the look but have no substance.

- We have opinions without faith

- We have regret without repentance
- We have made resolutions that have produced no action
- We pray to be faithful but we do not work to be so

This has led many to reform who are not regenerated.

2. THE CONCLUSION OF THE LORD

As we stated earlier; One of the peculiarities of this tree is that the fruit comes before the leaves. No other fruit tree that I know does this. Apple, pear, or peach trees have their leaves come on first and then you see the flower and then the fruit.

This tree was sick or it would have had fruit.

Any church or Christian that has no fruit is sick.

Many today think that fruit is seen in attendance, buildings and offerings, but that is nothing but leaves.

The Lord knew that this tree was not well but rather sick.

3. THE CURSE OF THE LORD (VS. 19)

Matthew 21:19

¹⁹ And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

When we hear the word “curse”, we think of calling someone something a bunch of four letters words. Knowing the character, conduct and conversations of the Lord, this would have never occurred.

Notice how fast the hand of judgment fell. It happened immediately.

This tree was anemic. It lacked fruit.

4. THE CONSEQUENCES FROM CHRIST (MARK 11:21)

Mark 11:21

²¹ And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

Here this tree stood for the by passers to behold.

What lesson is there here for us?

- Even though this was tragic, it is more tragic that there are countless churches all over the world that are closed.

Even worse, there are churches who look fruitful but when Christ inspects the fruit, it is nothing but leaves.

Close:

May we learn the lesson from this tree with nothing but leaves.

The Lord expects to find fruit.

May our lives and this church never disappoint of Savior.

