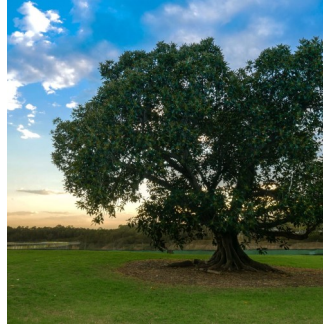


Facing the Truth



Annie

Scriptures:

Matthew 21

Mark 11-12

Luke 19-20

John 12

John 15:8

The crowds had gone home, picked up their coats from the ground, leaving the palm branches strewn along the roadside. They had shouted until their voices became hoarse and their emotions spent, clamouring around the man who they believed was going to save them from their oppressors. Then He had made His way through the temple courtyards, clearing out the traders, rebuking them for how they had lost sight of the Holiness of the One whose temple this was. And once again the blind, the lame, the sick came flocking to Him, and He healed them.

Oh, my goodness, this really was too much for the Pharisees, the leaders and elders of the Temple. Their grumbling and criticism became outright confrontation as their indignation spilled over and they fired at Jesus "Don't you hear what they are saying?". And when Jesus simply pointed them back to scripture, they took themselves away from Him, again Jesus had confounded them in front of the people, and this would have irked them all the more.

After this confrontation, Jesus went back to Bethany where He lodged for the night, but the next morning we are told of an amazing miracle turned parable that the disciples had clearly witnessed. Although the chronology differs in Matthew's and Mark's relaying of this event, the essence of what happened cannot be ignored. We learn that a fig tree that was apparently in leaf had no figs hiding under its leaves to feed the hungry travellers, whereupon Jesus cursed the tree and it withered away.

There are many instances in the Old Testament where fig trees are spoken of in the context of representing the nation of Israel, so for Jesus to curse a fig tree that had plenty of leaves but no fruit, precludes any doubt that He was using this as a parable for the nation as had the prophets. The leaders and elders gave the outward appearance of religious observance and adherence to the law and the prophets, but what Jesus sought was fruit, true fruit as evidence of the Life of God in all they did.

When the disciples questioned Jesus about the fig tree withering away so quickly, Jesus gives them an answer that, on the surface, doesn't seem to fit with the parable that the miracle of the withered fig tree portrayed. He spoke of the faith they must have to perform such miracles, *"Assuredly, 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 also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. **22** And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."*

Yet, within these words lies the foundation for what Jesus knew lay before all believers, the disciples who had walked with Him during His ministry, the crowds who had heard, seen and believed, and all believers down through the ages. We will all face mountains of pain, struggle, despair, even mockery and derision as we walk the narrow way, and it will require us to place all our faith in the Hands of the One who walked the lonely road to Calvary, knowing that, in His Hands, our faith will move those mountains. We will, as the disciples did, also face the indignation and anger of those whose lives are, like the fig tree, all leaves and no fruit. There will be those who see a relationship with God as an outward show and a profession of religion, but who bear no fruit of Holy Spirit in their way of life, just as those Jesus confronted in His ministry. What God desires is to see fruitfulness as we surrender to the enabling power of Holy Spirit in our daily walk.

In John 12 we hear what is, I am wondering, the expansion of what Jesus said to the disciples that day. Jesus begins to speak of what He was going to face, that unless the grain of wheat fell into the ground and died, the Fruit that God desires to see as the result of the saving death and resurrection of His Son, can never appear in our lives.

The miracle and the parable of the fig tree, is timed to perfection, the depth of its meaning for us as believers is vital to our understanding of God's purpose for our lives.

“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. ”

Prayer: Abba Father, may the Fruit of Holy Spirit, so dearly bought for us at Calvary when Jesus brought salvation and redemption in His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, flourish in our lives. May we humbly rejoice and give thanks that You chose us before we were formed, and called us at the perfect time for Your Purpose and Your Glory alone. We praise Your Name Lord Jesus, Amen.