

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Glen Weber's Sermon on April 12, 2015
"The Cursed Fig Tree"**

[In today's sermon, Senior Pastor Glen Weber recounts the story of Jesus cursing the fig tree and then shows the spiritual lessons we need to learn from the story.]

Notes:

Introduction:

- Three weeks ago, Ron Kelly was preaching about the last seven days of Jesus' life and death.
- In that sermon, Ron mentioned that a future sermon about Jesus' actions cursing the fig tree would be helpful to us. So here it is!

- So, why on earth would Jesus curse a fig tree?
- Was He that ticked off?
- Or is there more to the story?

Pax Romana:

- Augusta had declared the Pax Romana in 27 B.C. and it lasted until the 3rd century.
- Thanks to the Pax Romana (the Roman Peace), there was relative peace and prosperity in the Roman Empire – including Palestine.
- Sometimes the Roman army had to oppress people in order to bring peace or to maintain it.
- As we see from Paul, Peter and others, citizenry were free to travel extensively within the Empire and enjoy life.

- The Jewish leadership (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, etc.) had a strong grip on Judaism and were quite contented with their situation especially with the Roman Government.
- Now the average Jew was a bit unhappy with the situation and felt oppressed.
- Jesus Incarnation came during the time of Pax Romana.

- The Jewish leaders wanted to keep this status quo with the Romans – so that is why they killed Jesus and Stephen, and were trying to kill Paul, who they felt were upsetting the status quo.

The fig tree:

- Jesus had entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, then departed back to Bethany.
- On Monday of His last week, as he is leaving Bethany, Jesus sees a fig tree.

Mark 11:12, The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13) Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.

- Jesus sees a fig tree in leaf and goes to find fruit on it.
- But, it was not the season for figs, and Jesus knew that.
- Perhaps He was hoping for an early fig or two.

14) Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”

- Jesus declares the tree will never produce fruit again.

14b) And his disciples heard him say it.

- He makes sure the disciples hear His comment.

Modern day analogy:

- Pastor Glen commented on the various fruit trees that were in his back yard of the Robert’s home he was renting and living in for about 7 years.
- The orange, lemon and plum trees all blossomed and bore fruit, except the apricot tree.
- It blossomed but never bore any fruit.
- So pastor Glen asked permission from Jim Roberts if he could prune the apricot tree.
- Once pruned, it did produce apricots.

Cleansing the Temple:

- Then Mark writes in verses 15-19 that Jesus calls for the Temple to be a house of prayer, cleanses the Temple and kicks out the money changers, etc.

The Withered Fig Tree:

Mark 11:20, In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots.

- Jesus and the disciples see that the fig tree has quickly withered.
- Since it has withered from the roots up, that is why it happened so quickly.

21) Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

- Peter points out that Jesus’ curse had worked!!
- So, did Jesus lose His temper over a fig tree?
- Had He somehow lost good judgment or common sense?
- No there are some important lessons Jesus is trying to teach His disciples.
- This was an example of visual parable used by Jesus

A few points to consider:

1. Throughout the Major and Minor Prophets, Israel is compared to a fig tree – both in positive ways, as a fruitful tree – and in negative ways, as a withered, dying, fruitless tree.
2. Throughout the OT many “visual parables” had been given to the people of God.
 - Compare Isaiah’s walking around naked and barefoot to symbolize the “stripping” of Egypt (Isa. 20:1–6).
 - Jeremiah’s retrieving a rotten waistband to symbolize the humiliation of Judah (Jer. 13:1–11).
 - Jeremiah’s breaking of an earthen jar to symbolize the “breaking” of Judah (Jer. 19:1–3, 10–11).
 - And Jeremiah’s wearing a yoke around his neck to symbolize enslavement to the king of Babylon (Jer. 27:1-7).
 - Ezekiel lying on his side, bearing first the sins of Israel and then lying on his other side to bear the sins of Judah (Ezek. 4).

Spiritual lesson:

- Jesus apparently makes a very visual parable about the nation of Israel, its people and especially its leadership.
- Jesus is hungry for Israel to come and receive Him.
- The religious leadership looks like a prosperous growing tree, but they weren’t producing any spiritual fruit.

The lesson of faith:

Mark 11:22, “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered.

- We need to have faith in God!!
- This is an explanation about the withered fig tree, rather than a new thought.

23) “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.

- You can move mountains – especially spiritual ones if you believe in God and have faith.

24) Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

- Jesus tells us to pray in faith and expect to receive.
- We, today, need to put life into our prayers and take steps of faith.
- Judaism and the Jews had become stuck!! They were no longer walking in faith.
- They had accepted their situation.
- When Jesus came offering something much grander, they were afraid to experience it.

- This was the Passover season, where Jews from all over the Roman Empire came to Jerusalem to pray at the Temple – but nothing is happening.
- The religious leaders had rejected Jesus and then moved to kill Him.

Video: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KsV853oYuo&feature=youtube>)

- Pastor Glen then played the video entitled “Journey to the Magic Kingdom” which helps to make this point about not getting stuck where we are and moving forward.
- The pastor in the video shows footage of himself and his wife who take their 4 children from Denver to Orlando where they are going to visit “The Magic Kingdom.”
- Along the way, they stop at Junction City, Kansas where the father was born.
- There the children were happy to stay where they were and not get into the SUV to continue their journey to “The Magic Kingdom.”
- But their father coaxes them to continue their journey.

Conclusion:

- We do not want to be a fig tree that looks nice – a church that has all the appearance of being healthy – but which is not bearing fruit.
- We want to be a church – and individuals – who are walking in faith.
- We want to be a people who are expecting to move mountains.
- Jesus tells us “to have faith in God.”
- Jesus tells us “to believe and we can move mountains.”
- Jesus tells us “to ask in prayer and believe you will receive it.”
- This is not necessarily referring to miracle working faith – such as healings, etc.
- But the faith to accomplish the mission of God, to BE the people of God, which Israel no longer was.
- Jesus didn’t want His disciple stuck in Jerusalem, but to “Go and make disciples of all nations.”
- We don’t want to get stuck in Junction City – the status quo, but move on to the Magic Kingdom!!
- Lord, help us, as a congregation, to ask in faith and expect to receive!

Closing Prayer