

Sermon Discussion Guide

The Barren Temple and the Withered Fig Tree

Mark 11:12–25

The fruitless fig tree (12–14)

- Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? Was he being petty or vindictive?
- How was the fig tree a picture of Israel's spiritual condition?
- How is the cursing of the fig tree related to Jesus' actions in the temple?

The barren temple (15–19)

- Why did Jesus clear the temple?
- How do the two quotations from the Old Testament in verse 17 (Isa. 56:7 and Jer. 7:11) help explain the reason for Jesus' actions?
- Discuss the ways in which Jesus is the true temple?

The withered fig tree (20–25)

- Why does Jesus address the issues of faith, prayer, and forgiveness in verses 22 to 25? How do they relate to the rest of the passage?
- How would you explain what Jesus is promising in verses 22 and 23?
- Does Jesus' promise in verse 24 mean that God will give you everything you ask for in prayer? How does 1 John 5:14 help you understand the promise?
- How can an unwillingness to forgive others hinder your prayers?