

Mark 11:12-23 – Passion of the Christ: Sadness

Calvin, Lightfoot, TSK, Handfuls, GreekLexicon, Rienecker, Henry, Robertson, Geneva, Clarke, Poole, Trapp, JFB, Barnes, Gill, INT

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Jesus had to deal with a lot of suffering during the last week of his life. **He had to deal with the anticipation of the painful and shameful cross. He had to deal with the rejection by his own people who changed from saying, “Hosanna in the highest,” to “Crucify him,” 5 days later. He had to deal with the abandonment of leaders who should have protected him, but instead made his temple like a shopping mall.** Yet the Lord set his face like flint坚石 and headed to the cross.

That was day 1. Now we come to day 2 of Passion Week, and you will see again the Lord’s suffering – a suffering of sadness.

Our headings are:

Hypocrites (假冒伪善者) Exemplified

Hypocrites Exposed

Hypocrites Enlightened

Illustrate

Our goals are: **That you will become even more attracted to the one who obeyed and suffered for your sakes and so that you will not become complacent (自得的) in how you live.**

Hypocrites Exemplified

12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, **He was hungry.** 13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, **for it was not the season for figs.** 14 In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

1. Jesus was hungry and went to the fig tree to look for figs, but when he came to the fig tree with leaves there were no figs on it.

2. So a hungry Jesus cursed the fig tree.

Why, why would he curse the fig tree?

3. Jesus cursed the fig tree, not because he was hungry, but he did it to teach about the hypocrisy of his people.

They had welcomed him as king the day before, but they did not offer him food.

4. So what was the meaning?

The Jews had become an unproductive – though rich looking- fig tree. The fruit on a fig tree came out earlier than the leaves, so a tree that had leaves (even though it was early in the season, was expected to have fruit. It had promise without performance (行为) . (Robertson)

So Jesus’ point was that **the Jews, like the fig tree, had the appearance of having fruit but they had no fruit in their lives.** The Lord had invested much in Jews! He had sent them his Word, the prophets, the signs and ceremonies (礼仪) , the angels, the history...but they tossed it all aside and produced no fruit.

But Jesus did not curse the fig tree to make it barren (不结果) ; he cursed it because it was barren.

The Scriptures are clear that the Lord expects trees to bear fruit, and covenant people are often considered trees.

Matthew 7:16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes (荆棘) or figs from thistles (蒺藜) ?

5. How Jesus must have been disappointed – even as he faced his final week before his death.

He was going to die for people who were contemptible (可憎的) . **He was looking for figs**

from a fig tree – not from thorn bushes, but found none. He only found the appearance of productivity. This was the same thing Jesus found of a Christian church in Sardis. There was hypocrisy among the covenant people.

Revelation 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

6. Lessons:

a. Your leaves are your profession of faith or your baptism. But with leaves, the Lord expects fruit. Every Christian will produce fruit – fruits of repentance (悔改), fruits of godliness (敬虔), and fruits of evangelism (传福音). We thank God you are a member of this church, but when was the last time you invited someone to hear the Gospel? Do people in your work place recognize that you are different from the world? Do your fellow students know you spend several hours at church on Sunday, or is that a secret? Do you feed the hungry, or do you only talk about helping the poor? Leaves are only "promises." Fruits are the "reality."

b. Bearing real fruits is especially critical to those who are having and raising covenant (约) children! Make sure your children aren't raised with ritual (礼仪的) obedience – having shiny green leaves alone. Make sure they are loving and serving Jesus from their hearts and that they can be full of sweet figs of obedience. This means "digging around their roots."

Hypocrites Exposed

15 So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers (兑换银钱的) and the seats of those who sold doves. 16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

1. Jesus had great zeal热情 for the House of God and so, having come to Jerusalem, he made an effort to go to the temple again.

But he soon found many there who were misusing the temple, using it, not for prayer and praise, but for personal profit. There were shops in the outer courts. There were money changers – converting foreign coins to local coins. There were people who sold doves and likely other animals for sacrifices (献祭). You have to remember that Jerusalem at this time was a very large cosmopolitan city with many foreign businesses. It was one of the chief commercial cities of the time.

2. Jesus cast out the buyers and sellers from the temple, overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and threw the money to the ground, the fitter place for it.

This was his 2nd **cleansing of the temple**. Jesus did this at the beginning of his ministry and now at the end of it.

John 2:16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise (做买卖)!"

Jesus, as the Son of God, had the right to do this. It was his house. The house pictured him. He did not take over the civil authority when it demanded taxes, **but he asserted his rightful rule over his church.**

Further, **one of the Jewish traditions is that a man was not to enter into the temple courts to take a shortcut to and from Mt. Olives, carrying money in his pocket, a staff, sandals, or dust on his feet.** And he certainly was not allowed to take unconsecrated (未分别为圣的) utensils (器皿) there! The temple was a holy place for holy human vessels.

17 Then He taught, saying to them, "**Is it not written**, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' (贼窝)"

3. And Jesus reminded the Jews that their hypocrisy was harmful to the Gentiles who would believe in him!

Isaiah 56:7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And **make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings (燔祭) and their sacrifices Will be accepted** on My altar; For **My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.**"

God had prophesied (预言) this inclusion of the Gentiles (外邦人) into the temple through Solomon in 1Kings 8, at the dedication of the temple. But how their pollution of the temple must have made him sad... The lives of his people were a hindrance to the Gentiles coming in. You understand why in AD70 he had to destroy that temple with "one stone not remaining on another," divorcing his people, and allowing the Gentiles to become the new Bride, though the Jews could return.

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

4. But the scribes (文士) and chief priests (祭司长), rejecting the charges (指控) of hypocrisy, then tried all the more to kill Jesus ---confirming the charges of hypocrisy! Instead of taking Christ's words as dew for the crops, or as a "handmaid looks to her mistress (主母)," they condemned him and tried to kill him. The scribes and chief priests were afraid he would win the hearts and minds of the people and they would lose their influence. And when they would lose their influence they would lose their loyalty. And when they would lose their loyalty they would lose their loot! And this was a real concern. They had seen what happened the day before as Jesus entered Jerusalem. The people had called Jesus King and Messiah (弥赛亚).

19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.

5. So Jesus left the city, likely because he did not feel safe there, even with his own temple there!

6. Lessons:

a. God will not be light on anyone who corrupts his worship! The worst judgment in the Bible is reserved for those who corrupted the worship of God. More, God despises (憎恶) the worship of hypocrites! The same thing is true today!

b. Preachers must not hesitate to condemn hypocrisy wherever it is evident – in the home, church, business, or state. To refrain制止 from necessary condemnation is to hurt the kingdom's cause. Of course some people might become angry when you condemn their hypocrisy, **but preachers must be more afraid of God in Glory than the people in the pews.** If you don't condemn wickedness **you might keep some cash in the church.** If you do condemn their wickedness **you might keep their souls out of hell.**

c. Know that you will face opposition when confronting a hypocrite. And this opposition might come from your children, if they are the hypocrites! But don't buy their false accusations. **And you'd better show covenant children a genuine life.** Children will smell hypocrisy a mile away, and if you are not careful, **they will develop a taste for it.**

d. When you think of being a hypocrite, think of what the Lord went through to pay for the punishment of your sins! Teach this to your children. Only the cross will cause them to be genuine.

Hypocrites Enlightened

20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw **the fig tree dried up (枯萎) from the roots.** 21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

1. The disciples then saw the fulfillment of Christ's curse on the fig tree because it was not producing fruits.

It was only fit to be thrown into the fire. John the Baptist said:

Luke 3:9 "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which **does not bear good fruit** is **cut down and thrown into the fire.**"

2. The tree then dried up from the roots, proving that it was unproductive from its core.

The tree was really drawing from nothing – there were no nutrients (养分) for it to draw – no water to keep it alive. It was planted in the wrong place. The tense of the verb suggests a continuing action. So the roots were dried and stayed dried. In another slightly different illustration, Jesus pointed out in Luke 13, that any unproductive tree was fit only for the fire. What a reversal this was from the driest branch that was made to blossom by the power of God.

Numbers 17:8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle (会幕) of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted (发芽) and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds.

22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "**Have faith in God.** 23 "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

3. Jesus then gave his people the remedy for the unproductive, pretentious (伪装的) life.

He said they must have faith in God. Really he meant that they had to have **strong faith as Christians.**

Through faith they would be justified (被称为义), declared righteous on account of Christ's suffering and death.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

Through faith they would be sanctified (使成圣) and lead productive lives. Through faith they would conquer the world. So the cure for hypocrisy is real faith in Christ.

4. Lessons:

a. Judgment is waiting for any unproductive covenant child. So do not trust in your baptism (洗礼). Trust in Jesus. Ask him to help you trust him.

b. Draw from Jesus and produce fruit. You who dwell in the house of God will be like ever-verdant常青的, 永远繁茂的 trees! Ps92. You draw from Jesus through faith.

c. Your fruits that you bear are works of righteousness. You now have the ability to produce so much good fruit that you can turn the world on its head. You should be able to tell Mt. Olive to get up and go into the Mediterranean Sea (地中海). So judge yourself: When was the last time you told someone about Jesus, or invited him to church, or gave to a mission cause?

Conclusion:

Passion Week was a hard week for Jesus. He was going to die for **people who did not care for him** or care about what he was going to do. And yet, the Jews **wanted to feel like they were serving God.** So Jesus **exemplified their hypocrisy through the fig tree illustration. He then exposed their hypocrisy in the temple,** where they wanted to appear productive but they had no heart of faith to serve the Lord. Finally, **Jesus enlightened his people on how they could avoid being hypocrites and live productive lives.** The people needed real faith and Jesus was a generous faith donor.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You are in the covenant by the grace of Jesus. He kept the covenant for you by living and dying for you on Calvary's cross. You are no longer your own. You are not a fig tree at the side of the road. You are

planted in the house of the Lord.

2. Let this fact of God's work make the Lord more attractive to you – attractive in the fullest spiritual sense of the word.

3. Then diligently train your children to put their trust in Jesus and bear fruits of repentance. Don't train them to trust in their covenant keeping - since their covenant keeping will never be enough to please God. Let them hear the Gospel daily!

Finally, you may look good to the world, you may think you are good, and the world may think you are good, but unless you are getting your nourishment (营养) from Christ, you are really no good. You are like that dead fig tree with leaves that will wilt and die. You are only fit only for the fires of hell. But if you are planted in the vineyard (葡萄园) of the Lord, you will be green and productive tree. To come into the Lord's vineyard, you need to ask God to count Christ's payment of his life on the cross as your entrance fee.