

Mrk42 – **Hypocrite Religion – Mark 11:12-21**

In our **Last msg** in **Mark**

The **Triumphal Entry** had just **occurred**

& we **looked** at Jesus **CLEANSING the Temple**

In the **message** called - "**A House of Prayer**"

& in **that msg**

I said we were **skipping over** the "**Fig Tree Section**"

**Because** I explained the "**Cleansing of the Temple**" was **inside**

a "**Sandwich Teaching**" – that **Mark** is **Famous** for

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So **Today** – we're **looking** at - that "**Sandwich Teaching**"

**That** occurs on **BOTH SIDES** of

the "**House of Prayer**" **teaching** from our **last msg**

**Make any sense?** (*it will*)

**Let's Pray** - & we'll **see it**

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So – **we're** actually **starting** today

The **morning AFTER** – the **Triumphal Entry**

& the **Cleansing of the Temple** (last msg)

Has **NOT YET** Occurred

**So Mark 11:12–13 start it off (NLT)**

***12 The next morning (after the Triumphal Entry) as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.***

***13 He noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so he went over to see if he could find any figs. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit.***

Notice – **Vs 13 Says** – this **Fig Tree** was **in FULL LEAF**

**THAT** - is what a **Fig Tree** **LOOKS LIKE**

**When** it **HAS fruit** on it (*in Full Leaf*)

So – **even tho** it was **TOO Early** in the **Season** -

**This Fruit tree** had all **the SIGNS** – of **Bearing Fruit**

& **since** it **HAD all the signs** of actually **BEARING FRUIT**

It **attracted** the **attention** of **Jesus**

It **looked SO MUCH** like it **would have**

**Real Fruit** – **under** it's "**Perfect Looking**" **Leaves**

but **when** it was **inspected** by **Jesus**

IT **actually HAD** – **NO FRUIT**

**There** was **ONLY** - the **outward appearance** of **Fruit**

**This Fig Tree** had **ALL** the **Right LOOK** –

***From a distance***

But **when Jesus GOT CLOSE** - & **inspected it**

it **actually** had **NO Real Fruit**

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& so – judgment falls from the lips of the one  
Who has been given all Judgment

**Mark 11:14 (NLT)**

*14 Then Jesus said to the tree, “May no one ever eat your fruit again!” And the disciples heard him say it.*

**Now** - This is **NOT Jesus** getting **ANGRY** at the **tree**  
**because** he was **hungry**

**which** (unbelievably)

some **‘supposed scholars’** actually **say**

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**Remember** – this is **NOT Jesus** writing – this **is Mark**

*If this **WAS Jesus writing** – **Jesus** would **say**, “Of course I knew there was no fruit on that tree – but it **LOOKED SO MUCH** like there **SHOULD BE** fruit under those Leaves, that this tree provided an awesome Example to my Disciples - and to every person who reads & understands what I’m about to do”*

**This** is a **DRAMATIC LIVING-PARABLE**

**Meaning** – It’s a **Parable** – **ACTED OUT** by **Jesus**

**R. Kent Hughes says:**

*The reason Jesus cursed the barren fig tree was because he wanted it to become a visual parable of what was happening to Israel. In actuality he honored that tree, making it the most useful tree that ever grew! It was, and is, a tree from which thousands have **learned about themselves and turned back to God.** If one*

*soul has been made to consider its life through that tree, it did not wither in vain.*

Jesus was teaching – a DRAMATIC LIVING-PARABLE

In order to TEACH US – a Very Critical Lesson

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So - Let's catch up the Timeline  
Leading up to - the Fig Tree Moment

3 years ago (beg of his ministry - Jn Ch 2)

Jesus made a whip of cords & cleansed the Temple  
of the Worldly Business Venture - it had become

Then – Just Yesterday – was The Triumphal Entry  
with everyone Singing Hallelujahs

& SEEMING like they were Receiving Jesus  
AS the Messiah he was

But at the end of the Triumphal Entry  
Jesus went into the Temple – to check things out

& he found it exactly the same - as it was - 3 years ago

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There were obviously - BIG SIGNS  
of Spiritual FRUIT - in the Temple

Everything about the Temple was Magnificent  
It was Glorious – It Awed and Enamored people

**People LOVED to be there**  
& they **loved to say** – they **attended there**

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**AND** – the **best part** was  
you **didn't even** have to **bring** your **own sacrifice** anymore

**you** could **just come** - & **BUY** a **pre-approved sacrifice**  
**WHILE** you're **walking in** to **worship**

You **didn't have** to **go out of your way**  
You **didn't have** to be **inconvenienced** at **all**

the **Religious System** had **provided everything** you **need**  
**in fact**, it had **provided** for your “**FELT NEEDS**”

**ALL** you **had** to do was **COME** - **with your money**

& **you** could **have** a **wonderful Religious Experience**

& you could **leave** feeling **very, very good** about **yourself**

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The **Religious System**  
**that attracted** so **many** to **Jerusalem**

had **BIG, beautiful Leaves** - **Just like** the **FIG TREE**

& it **SEEMED So Fruitful – So Attractive**  
**Anybody**, and **Everybody** – **wanted** to **be there**

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**On the Surface** – it **all seemed SO RIGHT**

**But** – when **Jesus came in close** – to **inspect it**

**He KNEW** there was **Actually - ZERO Real Spiritual Fruit**

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**That inspection of the Temple - was YESTERDAY**

So **now** (*next day*) – **Jesus** & the **Disciples**  
**LEAVE** the **Living-Parable** of the **Fig Tree**

& **Head BACK** to the **Temple** – for **Part-Two** of **the Lesson**

**Mark 11:15–17 (NLT)**

***15 When they arrived back in Jerusalem, (after leaving the fig tree) Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, 16 and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace. 17 He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”***

We **dug DEEP** into **these vs’s** in our **last msg** in **Mark**

If **you didn’t get** that **msg** – it was **really** a **CRITICAL ONE** –  
Called - **“A House of Prayer”**

You can ***Watch, Listen, or Read***

at **EITHER website** – or **on** the **Word By Mail phone App**

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& then – **Mark 11:18** tells us

The **ZEAL of the Lord** that was **eating Jesus up**

**Kept Jesus** perfectly **on** the **Path to the Cross**

**In** the **Next** Few **Days**

**Mark 11:18 (NLT)**

***18 When the leading priests and teachers of religious law heard what Jesus had done, they began planning how to kill him. But they were afraid of him because the people were so amazed at his teaching.*** (in the next few days, they'd figure it out)

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But – **today** – **we** are **focused on**

**How** the **Fig Tree** & the **Cleansing of the Temple**

**Go together** in this “**Sandwich Teaching**” of Mark

The **FIG TREE** - **Looked Really Good**

**But** had **NO FRUIT**

& **THE TEMPLE** - **Looked Really Good**

**But** had **NO SPIRITUAL FRUIT**

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& **So** - **The FIG TREE** – was the **LIVING-PARABLE**

**for what** the **Disciples** would **Witness**

as **Jesus cleansed** the **Temple** - of its **Worldly Influence**

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Jesus prepared the Disciples with the Fig Tree

NOW - Jesus is trying to SHOW his disciples  
there is NO SPIRITUAL FRUIT

in what is Supposed To Be  
the Most Holy Place on Earth

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& We have GOT TO Understand  
What Jesus is trying to do here

Because Jesus has gone to Great Lengths  
to make sure this truth hits us RIGHT between the EYES

DO we LOOK LIKE we have Spiritual Fruit?

OR Is there ACTUAL Spiritual Fruit in our lives?

I don't mean to be too dramatic

But – the answer to that Question  
could be a matter of Spiritual LIFE or DEATH

It Certainly was for The Fig Tree  
& Ultimately it was for The Temple in Jerusalem

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We see it – on the other side of the sandwich teaching

Mark 11:19-21 (NLT) → →



## **Mark 11:19-21 (NLT)**

**19 That evening** (after cleansing the temple) **Jesus and the disciples left the city.**

**20 The next morning as they passed by the fig tree he had cursed, the disciples noticed it had withered from the roots up.**

**21 Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the tree on the previous day and exclaimed, “Look, Rabbi! The fig tree you cursed has withered and died!”**

**This is where it gets DRAMATIC**

**Because this Fig Tree**

that **LOOKED like** it had **Real Fruit** – but **had NONE**

**Has now been CURSED - & DIED – from the ROOTS UP**

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& so – **To Me** - This **Sandwich Teaching**

**of the Judgment of the Fig Tree**

& the **Judgment of the Temple**

**Jesus is saying ONE THING - Very Clearly**

<b>There is <u>a Judgment</u> – for <u>LOOKING SPIRITUAL</u> <u>but</u> having <u>NO REAL SPIRITUAL FRUIT</u></b>
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There is NOTHING in the Word of God

that puts any Value – or Priority  
on “LOOKING SPIRITUAL”

No-where – in No-way - Does God ever tell us  
to LOOK like we have Spiritual Fruit in our lives

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I Believe - This entire Teaching  
is meant to WARN us - & SCARE us – of ONE THING

HYPOCRITE RELIGION

Which is - Looking Spiritual  
but having NO REAL Spiritual Fruit in your life

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Between the Judgment on the Fig Tree  
& the Judgment on the Temple

The Disciples were being CONFRONTED  
By this Truth

There is a Judgment - for HYPOCRITE RELIGION

& that truth - Is meant to be As SHOCKING to US  
As it was to them

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So - we **CANNOT** look at **this**  
**SHOCKING Teaching** - about **HYPOCRITE RELIGION**

**Without Applying** it  
in a **very REAL** & **PRACTICAL** way – **to our own lives**

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**IF** our **Spiritual Life & Death** hangs in the **balance**  
**like it did** for the **Fig Tree** - **AND** for **the Temple**

**Then we** have **GOT** to **Examine Our Lives**  
**in light** of this **text** – **Right?**

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**So First - What IS Spiritual Fruit?**

**Fruit** is a **Frequent Metaphor**  
for **Spiritual Growth** in the **Bible**

**Used** over **150 times** – to **describe**  
**The Transformation** - **God produces** in our **lives**

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**So – QUESTION**

Is a **big wealthy church** - with **massive attendance**  
**Considered Spiritual Fruit?**

**If it is** – then **Jesus** - **NEVER bore** any **Spiritual Fruit**  
& **neither did any** of the **original Disciples**

Because Spiritual Fruit  
is NOT Measured - by Worldly Success

in any Church – or - in any Person

Spiritual Fruit is Measured - by Jesus Christ

HE was THE JUDGE of BOTH  
the Fig Tree - & the Temple

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But Fortunately – what God calls Spiritual Fruit  
is super easy to define from the Bible

In a sentence – we can say, “Spiritual Fruit is anything in our lives  
that REFLECTS the True Character and Nature of God”

Spiritual Fruit is the EVIDENCE to those around us  
that Jesus Christ is Living IN US & THRU US

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& THAT – is the Whole Point

Spiritual Fruit comes ONLY from  
Jesus Christ Truly Living IN US & THRU US

You & I cannot produce “Spiritual Fruit”

No matter how BIG the leaves of our “Fig Tree” get  
No matter how Impressive the outside of our “Temple” is

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Without Jesus Christ Truly IN our lives

We can LOOK LIKE there SHOULD BE fruit  
Under our "Good Looking" Surface

But One Day - Jesus is going to JUDGE US  
For what is TRULY - UNDER that Surface

& this "Hard Teaching" today  
is Jesus helping us get ready – for THAT day

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The GOOD NEWS is

Since ONLY the Life of Jesus  
Can PRODUCE Spiritual Fruit in us

Then we know exactly what we need to do  
To BEGIN to have Jesus – Produce that Spiritual Fruit

TURN OVER to John Ch 15

Some time ago – we did a TEN-PART series called ABIDE  
That series came from these vs's in Jn 15

John 15:4–8 (ESV)

*4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.*

*5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

**6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.** (a motivational warning)

**7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** (a motivational encouragement)

**8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.** (Spiritual Fruit is the proof of being a disciple)

We've got to learn – HOW to Abide in Jesus  
& HOW to have Jesus Abide in us

& then – The Life of Jesus will produce  
TRUE Spiritual Fruit - IN US & THRU US

<p><u>Learning</u> to <u>ABIDE in Christ</u> - Is <u>the Beginning</u> of <u>having Jesus Produce</u> - <u>Spiritual Fruit</u> – <u>in</u> our <u>lives</u></p>
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There is so much more  
about what Spiritual Fruit – LOOKS LIKE

But – I only have time to suggest some Further Study

Try - ABIDE Series

Alone With God Series (to learn to Abide)

Galatians Ch 5

Ephesians Ch's 4-5

James Series - - 1John Series

All at either website – or the WBM APP

**But remember – YOU can't produce - True Spiritual Fruit -**  
**Only the Life of Jesus in you can**

So - **To close today** – We've **got** to **TURN this INSPECTION**  
**On** our **own lives**

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**Spiritual Fruit**  
**is** an **ATTITUDE** or an **ACTION** - **in our lives**

**That** has **been Transformed**  
by **Jesus Christ** Living **IN US** & **THRU US**

**Spiritual Fruit** - is **US, in some way** -  
**becoming MORE** like **Jesus** - & **LESS** like **Ourselves**

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**AND** – **Spiritual Fruit** is **something**  
that **IS SEEN By** the **people around** us  
& **brings GLORY** to **God** in **our lives**

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**I Know** those are **HUGE TESTS**

**But** – **Listen carefully** to **2 COR 13:5**  
from the **Paraphrase** called “**The Message**”

### **2 Corinthians 13:5 (The Message)**

***5 Test yourselves to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don't drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourselves regular checkups. You need firsthand evidence, not mere hearsay, that Jesus Christ is in you. Test it out. If you fail the test, do something about it.***

**Let's Pray**