

Of Figs and Faith

Matthew 21:18-22; Luke 13:6-9; Mark 11:12-14; 20-21

I had a fig tree when I lived in Florida...

This passage teaches us plenty...it reveals to us:

1. The Picture of Figs, a Picture of Us.

Favorite of All trees in Bible: They could reach 20 ft high and 3 ft thick, with great leaves to produce shade for everyone.

Picture of Promise Land, Deut 8:8, pomegranates and figs

Picture of Peace and Prosperity, 1 Kings 4:25, 'every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree'

Picture of God's wrath, too...Ps 105:33 'and he struck down their vines and fig trees and shattered the trees of their country.'

Picture of Prayer, John 1:48 (Jesus seeing Nathaniel under his fig tree...often where water and shade happened, meditation and prayer did, too.

Completely a picture of God's blessing on a person, a family, a country...a nation.

2. The Plan for Fruitfulness, A Plan for Us.

Here lies the problem: This fig tree was about false advertising. To understand this, you must know the fig tree was unique in that it produced 2 crops a year. The first crop was in June from the old wood, the second in September from the new wood. Both leaves and fruit would reveal themselves at the same time. However, here we have a tree in April, with leaves but no fruit...the timing was off...it would not have fruit until June. On the way to the city, Jesus curses it. A picture for sure of the Jewish religious system of the day, busy with leaves, but no fruit...just like we can be.

Here's God's plan for fruitfulness:

1. Everything and everyone is expected, in time, to produce:

So, how do you position yourself to be fruitful?

- a. Make sure you have the **right root**.
- b. Make sure are in the **place to grow deep**.
- c. Make plans to **bloom**.
- d. Make room for the **gardener's hands**.

2. His plants and people are personally examined and handled...'a fig tree', not all of them.

3. His children are to operate prayerfully in faith.

a. Notice the hyperbole: no mountains in the sea...global redecoration daily, if so. He is saying, 'no problem will stand in your way to accomplish my purpose in and through your life.'

b. Notice the faith: 'have faith, no doubt'

What is faith: Heb 11:1, being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.' So, faith is NOT a feeling, whimsical desire to attain a wish, positive thinking, or impression. FAITH is based solely on the WORD of GOD. *You can only pray in faith, when you know what to pray for according to His Word."

c. Notice the prayer. Asking the Lord with dependence upon His timing, purpose and pleasure to accomplish His perfect Will.

3. The Power of Grace, A Time for Us. Luke 13:6-8

'one more year'...

We observe:

a. The principle of pruning...cut it back, and redirect it to point in the right direction. Ever been cut back in life?

b. The principle of tilling...break the soil that had become hardened and resistant to both water and fertilizer...rough it up so it can begin to breathe and eat. Ever felt roughed up by life?

c. The principle of fertilizing...adding nutrients to the soil and stimulate growth and productivity. Ever received new insight into your life?

But there is a time...there is a place to respond to the power of grace, a second chance, a new renewal for fruitfulness. Can it be missed? Sure...This is not about eternal security for the believer but productivity and fulfillment in God's Kingdom.

My Florida fig tree? I just gave up on it because I wasn't much of a gardener. I moved on...didn't even think twice about bringing it to Nebraska with me. It never became what it was intended to become. The next owner of the house...just removed it from the backyard.

Aren't you glad God is not a gardener like me? Don't let your life go unresponsive to the gentle hand of the master gardener!