



## Mark 11:12-26 | The LORD Comes to His Temple

*Written & Preached by John Cole*

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### **Mark: Following the Suffering Son of God**

Immediately after parabolically condemning the temple system, Jesus taught a lesson on prayer to the ones who will participate in Jesus building a temple made without hands and full of faithful priests. As promised, the LORD came in Christ to bring people from all nations into His presence among a people who have faith in God, pray as priests, and forgive as God. Church, we must faithfully represent Jesus to the nations.

### **Songs:**

All Hail the Power of Jesus Name  
Come Ye Sinners  
Only A Holy God  
Before the Throne of God Above

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## INTRODUCTION

### **10,000 Sermon Illustrations Bungling Burglar**

In San Antonio, a man was sentenced to ten years probation for a bungled burglary of a liquor store. The burglar had cut his hand badly when he broke through the roof of the store. He tried to throw a bottle of whiskey out through the hole he had created but missed, causing the bottle to fall to the floor, shatter and set off an alarm. He then fell onto the broken glass, cutting himself again. Reaching the roof for his getaway, he fell off, leaving his wallet on the sidewalk. He also left a trail of blood from the store to his home, just around the corner.

Chuck Shepherd, Universal Press Syndicate

### **There was no getting around it, that man got caught!**

Kind of like the temple leaders of Jesus's day.

The long-awaited day of visitation from the LORD has come as we saw last week.

And not only are the temple rulers found not blessing Jesus, but even more, they are found being cursed by Jesus!

**That's right. Our text today is an account of Jesus righteously cursing (not as in swearing) and condemning the apostate temple leaders and the temple itself.**

**Today's message will build and build toward the applications at the end.**

It has a lot of drama, and for the first half, it is aimed at people in the account and not us!

But don't get too comfortable... Jesus has a message for each of us today... I pray we have ears to hear.

*But let's begin by following Jesus on His walk by a fig tree and His workout in the temple...*

## **CURSING THE FRUITLESS FIG TREE (v12-14, 20-21)**

### **Mark 11:12-14**

<sup>12</sup> And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: <sup>13</sup> And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. <sup>14</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard *it*.

**Many have senselessly made much ruckus of this only destructive miracle of the four Gospel accounts.**

Unbelievers like Bertrand Russell have mocked Jesus as being emotionally uncontrolled and vindictive towards an innocent tree. He knows better now.

Many have questioned why Jesus would be so upset if it wasn't the time for figs to be ripe anyways. Did He not know? And if He did know, why would He get so mad at a tree for staying in season?

**The sort of accusations and scorning towards Jesus from this text puts on display several things:**

1. It takes faith in the Gospel to understand even many of the *simple* truths of Scripture.
2. Jumping to interpretations and applications without humble, thoughtful study can easily lead you astray.
3. Scripture is to be interpreted in a historical grammatical way and not according to "*what this passage means to me...*"

## Okay, so what is going on in this text?

1. **Jesus is acting out a parable in similar fashion to how God commanded some of the prophets in the past.** His action is intended to communicate a message. It is certainly not uncontrolled emotions.
2. **Mark once again gives commentary to help the Roman reader and us today when he writes, “for the time of figs was not yet.”** The time may have been March, possibly a couple weeks before Passover. And while it was not the season for ripened figs, it was normal for fig trees to have what they call “paggim” when the tree had already begun to grow new shoots and leaves—as is stated by Mark. Our family has a fig tree, and this is the time of the year when we have “paggim” on our trees. I wouldn’t want to eat them now, but those native to Jesus’s area sometimes did—especially if they were hungry enough!
3. **Fruitless vines and trees—especially fig trees—were commonly used as metaphors and illustrations for faithless and disobedient Israel in the prophets.** [Jeremiah 8:13](#) gives a good example.

So...

By bracketing the fig tree cursing around the temple confrontation, Jesus is likening the beautiful looking temple to the fig tree that is full of foliage but void of fruit.

**The temple looks like a place of God’s presence, but it isn’t!**

**Bottomline, Jesus is teaching a lesson through this destructive miracle, and notice what Mark makes clear at the end of verse 14: “Jesus said to the fig tree, ‘No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.’ And the disciples heard it.”**

That, friends, is the point. “*For ever!*” “*And they heard it.*”

And then Mark by the Spirit, goes on to tell us what Jesus did next in order to give us the interpretation and application of Jesus’s lesson.

But before we get into the real drama, let’s notice how Jesus in His actions and the Spirit in Scripture “sandwiches” the temple account with this cursing of the fig tree.

It’s a “fig sandwich,” if that’s a thing! *On the next day...*

### **Mark 11:20-21**

<sup>20</sup> And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. <sup>21</sup> And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

**Okay, so this is not a pruning for future health. This is a curse that dries up the fig tree “from the roots” so that no man will eat from it again “for ever!”**

And Peter pointed out the connection between what Jesus said, did, and caused.

The tree was withered from the roots never to produce fruit again.

This was dramatic. Whatever the application, it has serious consequences!

And in response to Peter’s sober notice of it, Jesus responds with the assuring words that we will come to at the end today!

*But first, let’s get back into the chronology of Mark’s Gospel and see what takes place immediately after Jesus curses the fig tree and before it is found withered up.*

## **CONFRONTATION IN THE FRUITLESS TEMPLE (v15-16)**

**This is one of those accounts that people either love or hate—depending on how one tries to view Jesus.**

Some get excited and cheer Jesus on because He is demonstrating His authority in a strong, visible way. *He’s putting His foot down! Flexing. Taking on the enemy out in the open in front of everyone!*

Others don’t know what to do with this because it totally messes up their neat, tidy, soft picture of Jesus who got his portrait painted during the European Renaissance and who wrote the forward to books about “toxic masculinity!”

But I propose that we all should *love* this account because it helps us more *rightly* see Jesus as He has *revealed* Himself to us and *is...*

### **Mark 11:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the

seats of them that sold doves; <sup>16</sup> And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

**Just like in verse 11, Mark passes right by the mention of coming to Jerusalem and focuses on Jesus entering the temple... where Jesus makes some enemies.**

It is very important to understand where Jesus is, what exactly He is doing, and how this relates with prophecies in Scripture. Let's start with where Jesus is.

**Jesus is in the Gentile Courtyard of the 3rd Jewish temple that had been under construction by Herod since 20 BC, following the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel.**

This temple is colossally impressive, even in comparison with other ancient temples and buildings.

There were four divisions: *the Court of the Gentiles, the Court of Women, the Court of Israel (circumcised males), and the Holy of Holies.*

The Court of the Gentiles was about 5 football fields long by over three wide. It totaled to 35 acres!

According to Jewish historian, Josephus, its surrounding portico had columns that were 35 feet high and so large that it took three persons to wrap their arms around them.

(Source: 11:12–25 Ant. 15.391–425)

**Even more important for understanding the account is the enormous stock market of animal dealers and money changers that was taking place in the Gentile Courtyard.**

Walking into the Courtyard, Jesus would have been immersed with the sounds and smells of animals like sheep and doves, the sight of commerce, and the void of Gentile worship.

This was the place for Gentile God-fearers to come and worship YHWH after all!

**So why all the commerce?**

About two miles away on the Mount of Olives there were already four markets where pilgrims could buy their needed animals and exchange currency to the Tyrian shekel, which had no image on it and was closest to the Hebrew shekel that was commanded in [Exodus 30](#).

**But, that wasn't profitable for Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.** So, around AD 30, Caiaphas introduced the market in the Gentile Courtyard as a punitive competition with the markets on the Mount of Olives. (Source: The Gospel of Mark, V. Eppstein, "The Historicity of the Gospel Account of the Cleansing of the Temple," ZNW 55 (1964), pp. 42–58.)

**This commerce in the temple was a new and peculiar practice that revealed the hearts of the rulers of the temple.**

**They favored money over worship, hypocrisy over righteousness, and power over their mission to the Gentiles.**

And Jesus wouldn't have it. So again...

**Mark 11:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; <sup>16</sup> And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

**This was out in the 35-acre Gentile Courtyard, and Jesus's disruption was aimed at the unfaithful rulers of the temple sacrificial system.**

Jesus was hindering both the exchange for the sacrifices and the taxes, and He was stopping the bringing in of "skeuos" to the temple. (That's the Greek word used in the Septuagint for sacrificial vessels or animals.)

The Courtyard was huge, so this sort of disruption was enough to get the attention of the Sanhedrin without having to actually halt everything in the Courtyard and attract the temple police or the Roman garrison in the Antonia Fortress on the north side of the temple walls.

**This account is commonly called Jesus's "cleansing" of the temple, but I believe it is better to call it Jesus's "confrontation" in the temple.**

The idea of Jesus's "cleansing" the temple is because Jesus is both the LORD of the temple and the true High Priest.

But Jesus neither cleanses the temple for use nor does He fully clear it out.

Jesus's purpose is not to redeem the temple; it is to replace it.

**Now that Jesus has arrived, there is no more use of the temple—especially not one of such outward beauty and inward filth!**

As the acted out parable of the figs makes clear...

along with the context of Jesus’s following quotations...

and much more witness of Mark’s Gospel that we will see in coming weeks...

*Jesus is condemning the temple and its rulers.*

## **CONDEMNING THE TEMPLE RULERS (v17-19)**

**These next three verses pack in a lot.**

1. First, we will see that Jesus used His conflict to gather a crowd to teach.
2. Second, we find that Jesus combines quotations from two prophets—Isaiah and Jeremiah—in order to bring us into the context of historic prophetic witnesses about the temple and people of God.
3. Third, Jesus’s actions mirror more of the way in which prophets like Jeremiah gave warnings and messages of coming judgment. The cursing of the fig tree and the overthrowing of the temple merchants was very “Jeremiahesk.”
4. Lastly, we will notice how just like the disciples “heard” Jesus’s curse of the fig tree, the scribes and chief priests will “hear” the words of Jesus’s teaching and condemnation.

*That’s four things. Ready?*

### **Mark 11:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. <sup>18</sup> And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. <sup>19</sup> And when even was come, he went out of the city.

**Look at how the temple rulers responded to the words of Jesus and feared the people. They plotted His death like weasels.**

Jesus obviously did not make enough disruption to earn the force of the Roman garrison. That would have made the Sanhedrin’s plotting much easier!

But, Jesus’s teaching certainly earned Him both amazed crowds like in chapter one and plotting enemies like in chapter three.

What was it that Jesus said that made the rulers so angry?

**Jesus condemned the temple rulers as fake frauds who were worthy of the same judgment as the temple rulers of Jeremiah’s day—a destroyed temple.**

Let’s take a look at the context of Jesus’s forceful quotations.

“*My house shall be called a house of prayer*” comes from [Isaiah 56](#).

“*But ye have made it a den of thieves*” comes from [Jeremiah 7](#), and the fig cursing brings us into [Jeremiah 8](#).

[Isaiah 56](#); [Jeremiah 7](#)

*Isaiah 56:1-8* sums up much of previous chapters with verse one and then looks forward to a day when those who were once considered outcasts due to physical qualities will be invited to worship the LORD in His temple as long as they join themselves to the LORD, serve Him, love Him, serve Him, and obey Him.

**Isaiah 56:1-8**

<sup>1</sup> Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: For my salvation *is* near to come, And my righteousness to be revealed.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed *is* the man *that* doeth this, And the son of man *that* layeth hold on it; That keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, And keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

<sup>3</sup> Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: Neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I *am* a dry tree.

<sup>4</sup> For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, And choose *the things* that please me, And take hold of my covenant;

<sup>5</sup> Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls A place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

<sup>6</sup> Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, To serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, To be his servants, Every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, And taketh hold of my covenant;

<sup>7</sup> Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, And make them joyful in my house of prayer: Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.



<sup>8</sup> The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

**So around 700 years prior, Israel is told to prepare for the day that the LORD makes His house a *house of prayer for all peoples* and gathers in the outcasts.**

Verse 7 is what Jesus quotes, while condemning the temple as not fulfilling the promise the LORD has made of His temple.

**But, instead of bringing Gentiles into true worship, the temple rulers who Jesus came to intentionally turned the Gentile Courtyard into a chaotic market that would hinder all the “strangers” from entering into worship of the LORD!**

*The temple leaders are found to be more like those described in the rest of [Isaiah 56](#).*

#### **Isaiah 56:9–12**

<sup>9</sup> All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, *Yea*, all ye beasts in the forest.

<sup>10</sup> His watchmen *are* blind: they are all ignorant, They *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

<sup>11</sup> *Yea*, they *are* greedy dogs which can never have enough, And they *are* shepherds that cannot understand: They all look to their own way, Every one for his gain, from his quarter.

<sup>12</sup> Come ye, *say they*, I will fetch wine, And we will fill ourselves with strong drink; And to morrow shall be as this day, *and* much more abundant.

This context leads us well into Jesus’s quote from [Jeremiah 7](#).

Jeremiah’s context is the early 6th century BC, and he prophesies about the coming and fulfilled destruction of Jerusalem and the first temple (Solomon’s) by the armies of Babylon.

**Like Jesus, Jeremiah is in the gate of the LORD’s house condemning the leaders of the temple without giving hope of the temple being spared destruction.**

#### **Jeremiah 7:1–16**

<sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

<sup>2</sup> Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

<sup>4</sup> Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, *are* these.

<sup>5</sup> For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;

<sup>6</sup> *If* ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:

<sup>7</sup> Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

<sup>8</sup> Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

<sup>9</sup> Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;

<sup>10</sup> And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

<sup>11</sup> Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the LORD.

<sup>12</sup> But go ye now unto my place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.

<sup>13</sup> And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;

<sup>14</sup> Therefore will I do unto *this* house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

<sup>15</sup> And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, *even* the whole seed of Ephraim.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

**So notice verse 16 in connection with verse 11 that Jesus quoted:**

[Jeremiah 7:11](#) “Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.”

**The LORD had told Jeremiah not to pray for these people or the temple that had been turned into a den of robbers.**

The LORD would not hear, and the temple would be destroyed!

And the same was true in Jesus’s day.

**Jesus was declaring that the temple will be cursed like the fig tree that is dried up from the roots... and never to be a place of God’s presence again!**

Notice the...

**Blatant failures of the temple rulers:**

1. They failed to justly shepherd God's people and make way for the Gentiles. ([Is. 56](#))
2. They corrupted the temple with their wicked practices. ([Jer. 7](#))

**They lived against the very commandments they professed to teach and uphold. Notice how in Jesus’s day they:**

- Stole ([Mk 7:10-12](#); [12:1-12](#))
- Plotted to murder the innocent ([Mk 3:6](#); [11:18](#))
- Committed adultery ([Mk 10:2-12](#))
- Lied about their love for God ([Mk 7:6-9](#))
- Were blind idolaters ([Mk 3:29](#); [4:12](#); [7:6-7](#))
- Oppressed the widow ([Mk 12:41-44](#))
- Misused and bound the Sabbath ([Mk 3:1-6](#))
- Dishonored their mother and father ([Mk7:10](#))

**Jesus did not come to cleanse the temple for use.**

He came to condemn it to be replaced.

The rulers did not know the LORD, and the LORD was not there.

## **But if the temple is to be replaced, what is it to be replaced with?**

That's easy. Jesus became known for teaching about it...

[Mark 14:58](#)

### **Mark 14:58**

We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

### **Jesus was referring to His own body. That was the temple which would be made without hands within three days.**

Jesus would be the final sacrifice, the temple, and the High Priest!

But Jesus would leave us and return to His followers after just forty days from His resurrection. What then? What will be the temple?

*Let's jump ahead outside the Gospel account but still around the time Mark is writing. Let's see what understanding God gives us through Paul about this new temple...*

[Ephesians 2:19-22](#)

### **Ephesians 2:19-22**

<sup>19</sup> Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; <sup>20</sup> And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; <sup>21</sup> In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: <sup>22</sup> In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

So Jesus would fulfill the physical temple with a spiritual one made of followers indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

*And these followers would also function as the priests... every single one of them.*

## **COMMANDING THE NEW TEMPLE PRIESTS (v21-26)**

**This is where we better listen up.**

So far, we have been able to just eat our popcorn and watch while Jesus scathed the “bad guys.”

But now Jesus instructs His disciples... then... and now.

### **Mark 11:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. <sup>22</sup> And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup> For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

### **Why the sudden instruction to “Have faith in God” and to pray in faith?**

*Let's deal with the faith in God first.*

### **The wicked temple rulers had led many to have faith in “the temple the temple the temple.” Our faith is not to be in the temple. It is to be in God.**

Little did they know that Jesus was the Temple as long as He “tabernacled” there among them!

But not only that... Jesus came to build the new temple made without hands for when He would return to the Father for a time.

And that temple is only seen and entered by those who have faith in God.

That temple is actually *made* of those who have faith in God!

The temple to which Gentiles and outcasts from all over the earth would gather would be the temple built by Christ and made of believing followers!

### **It is the church!**

### **And this temple would be filled with praying priests from all nations. Christ's followers would become the temple... and the priests!!**

So, Christ's followers must both have faith in God and learn to pray!

### **What does Jesus mean about moving mountains though?**

The most obvious is that “mountains” were commonly used as a metaphor for something that is impossible and that those who pray in faith and according to God’s will without doubting will receive seemingly impossible answers from God.

The next contextually clear application is that Jesus is talking about Himself receiving what He is declaring—the removal of the temple.

The temple of God was often called “the mount of the LORD” in Scripture, so I believe this application of Jesus’s statement (not really a prayer) is the primary application.

**Jesus’s condemning of the temple in faith would result in the removal of the temple.**

**But then on the heels of that and connected to it is Jesus’s teaching on prayer for those who will replace the unfaithful rulers of the temple—His followers.**

- If they are going to represent the Lord as a Kingdom and temple of priests, they better pray in faith.
- And if they are going to be faithful through the removal of the temple, they will need to forgive.
- And if they will receive Gentiles (like those in Rome to whom Mark is writing!), they will need to forgive.

**It is very important to note that these final three verses are all in plural verb form—like when Jesus taught with His model prayer in [Matthew 6](#).**

Jesus is not teaching merely *how* to pray.

**Jesus is instructing His followers that we pray in community as the new temple made without hands that invites peoples from all over the earth to enter by repentance and faith, as Isaiah prophesied.**

#### **Mark 11:24–26**

<sup>24</sup> Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. <sup>25</sup> And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. <sup>26</sup> But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

**Immediately after parabolically condemning the temple system, Jesus taught a lesson on prayer to the ones who will participate in Jesus building a temple that is made without hands and that is full of faithful priests.**

1. Have faith in God
2. Pray in faith
3. Be ready to forgive
4. Give witness of God's forgiveness in Christ.

**We must not be found fruitless, unfaithful, and fake like how Jesus found the temple in His visitation.**

Have faith in God.

**The apostate temple cult was led by fakes who had no true faith in God.**

They encouraged sin and unbelief instead of faith and obedience!

And they were condemned.

**This must not be true of Christ's new temple—His church.**

And yet, all we have to do is take a turn out our driveway and begin seeing groups that call themselves churches but who peddle the blind world's gender confusion, sexual immorality, and love of death.

How is it faith in God to feed people with the lies of Satan?

We have many so-called churches who are just like the condemned temple rulers of Jesus's day.

**Affirming what opposes faith in God encourages people to remain in the shackles of rebellion and condemnation.**

Sin is not freeing. It is enslaving! And condemning!

Faith in God is freeing! Because He is a good Master.

**This is a big issue for the church to address today.**

Leaders who are not born again embrace the world's teachings on gender, sexuality, and a myriad of connected issues which clearly go against Scripture.

The next step after that is to reinterpret Scripture to justify it.

And then it is to deny the inspiration of Scripture.

And all this reveals unregenerate church leaders.

And all that is worthy of and ripe for God's judgment!

**As Isaiah began in chapter 56, God's people must do righteousness and justice! Blessed is the one who does this and lays hold on it!**

Have faith in God, church!

True faith in God will produce righteousness, justice, mercy, and proclamations of truth!

**This is not the only application of "Have faith in God."**

And it certainly was not the application of Jesus's day.

But it is related to it.

Instead of having faith in temples and corrupt religious rulers, we are called to have faith in God Who came in Christ.

By that faith, we are to follow and promote the teachings of Christ.

And groups that call themselves churches who do not uphold clear teachings of Christ reveal that they do not "have faith in God"—just like the condemned temple.

**Q: How might you justify things you know God condemns? What does that say about your faith?**

**Followers of Christ must have faith in God... not buildings, programs, money, cultural pressures, or fear of man.**

The condemned temple rulers feared the crowds and trusted in the defiling commerce they generated.

As soon as local churches do this, we are likewise doomed for judgment.

**Instead, have faith in God.**

*And we must...*



## Pray in faith.

**Not only must we have faith, but we must go to God on behalf of others in prayer with that faith in God.**

Friends, we are the priests of the new temple. Jesus is teaching His disciples this very truth.

God's temple of priests is called to be a blessing to all the nations! Rivers of water flow from it. Righteousness and peace is found here.

If you are a born-again follower of Christ, you have a life calling and commission, and it involves praying for others!

**We cannot look at prayer as a mere personal benefit of being saved. It is a vocation!**

Do you see yourself as a priest who has faith in God and prays for others?

Let's look for opportunities to pray publically.

Pray with your waiter at the restaurant.

Pray with your coworker having a hard time.

Pray with your family.

Pray with the church!

**Q: Do you see corporate prayer as something only leaders in the church do? Do you have the faith to pray with other Christians?**

**Jesus condemned the temple because they prevented Gentiles from praying and worshipping rather than inviting and equipping for prayer.**

As the church, we must call our neighbors to come in and know God!

Come in... repent from sin... trust in Christ... and pray with us!

That's why we work to ensure our primary worship gathering is very focused on God, Christ, and the Gospel.

The entire service we hear God's Word, respond in faith through song or prayer, and then go out to live what God has told us.

**We have fellowship and other events, but we work to keep our worship service full, focused, and worshipful.**

We must be a house of prayer, and we must never incorporate things into our church that hinders people from coming to worship.

*And as we pray, we must...*

Be ready to forgive as God.

**A church that welcomes sinners from all nations to repent and believe on Christ will have much need to offer forgiveness to one another.**

Faithful churches have new believers among them, unbelievers visiting them, and members who regularly do wrong and need to repent.

As the church, we must hear Jesus's correction, repent from our sins, and be ready to forgive those who sin against us and repent.

**Jesus was speaking to disciples who would be despised by many of their own Jewish people. They would need to be ready to forgive.**

Mark was writing to a church of both Jew and Gentile in Rome. They would need to be ready to forgive.

**Q: What does forgiveness have to do with representing God to others? How do we forgive as God?**

**People who have faith in God have been forgiven through Christ's death and resurrection.**

With that forgiveness, we come boldly to God's throne of grace with prayers.

And we learn to copy the forgiveness they have received from God.

**This gives testimony to God and makes us faithful go-betweens... priests of Christ's new temple made without hands for the nations.**

**We are called to give witness to God’s forgiveness in Christ—if we have received it.**

And that is an important question to consider: Have you received the forgiveness of God in Christ?

Do you know why Jesus would soon willingly go to the cross, die, and rise again?

Do you believe that your sins are worthy of death according to our holy God?

Have you responded to the good news of Jesus by repenting from sin and trusting in Jesus as your Savior and King?

If you have, you represent the Savior by forgiving others who also repent.

If you haven’t, you need to repent and follow Jesus by faith.

**The people of God indwelt by the Spirit of God give witness to the forgiveness of God through the work of the Son of God.**

*Alright, let’s wrap this up.*

## **CONCLUSION**

**Mark introduced the Gospel of Jesus with a quote from [Malachi 3:1](#).**

### **Malachi 3:1**

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, Even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

**The temple rulers rejected the LORD’s messenger: *John the Baptist*.**

And now the temple rulers have been found guilty when the LORD and His Messiah came suddenly to the temple.

And the physical temple that had become so central to the Israel of God and the prophetic books for a thousands years is doomed.

A new age is on the horizon.

And it comes in the LORD Jesus Christ—the Priest-King.

**The One Who tabernacled among them would soon form His followers into the new temple.**

As the church today, we must be found faithful to receive people from all nations who desire to join themselves to the Lord, serve Him, love Him, and obey Him.

And we must be for them a house of prayer... worship... presence of God.

**Mark 11:17**

<sup>17</sup> And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

**Jesus came to fulfil God's promise of bringing the nations to His temple.**

The LORD came to His temple.

The Priest-King has come!

There is no more need of a temple made with hands.

**Until Jesus returns and gathers all His ransomed people in the temple of the new heavens and earth...**

1. Have faith in God.
2. Pray in faith.
3. Be ready to forgive.
4. Give witness to God's forgiveness in Christ.

**Be faithful priests as God builds us into a holy temple in the Lord.**

**Main Argument:** As promised, the LORD came in Christ to bring people from all nations into His presence among a new temple-people who have faith in God, pray as priests, and forgive as God has forgiven them.