

## Take Away – Unlocking the Kingdom: Faith Produces Fruit

Text: Matthew: 21: 18 – 22

Date: 11-6-22



### With your group...

Answer each of the following questions prompted by the text and/or today's sermon.

1. Okay, now this is weird! Why, in the world, would Jesus curse a seemingly innocent fig tree? Was He just angry and annoyed or what lesson was He trying to teach His disciples?
2. What is the purpose of a fig tree? Was it fulfilling its purpose?
3. Review verses 12 - 13. What is the miracle that has now taken place in verses 18-20? What does this miracle have to do with the temple?
4. What is the purpose of the church on earth?
5. What are some of the reasons that the church or we ourselves do not fulfill the reason for why we are here on earth?
6. What lesson did Jesus teach His disciples about faith?
7. What lesson did Jesus teach His disciples about prayer?
8. A common reaction to Jesus' statement: ***"All things you ask for in prayer, you will receive if you have faith."*** is, "Really? Whatever I ask for in prayer I will receive? I have asked many times in prayer and not received what I asked for. Is my faith just not strong enough?" How are we to understand and respond to this teaching of Jesus?

## Small Group Leader – Answers

### With your group...

Answer each of the following questions prompted by the text and/or today's sermon.

1. Okay, now this is weird! Why, in the world, would Jesus curse a seemingly innocent fig tree? Was He just angry and annoyed or what lesson was He trying to teach His disciples?

Jesus, unable to satisfy his hunger, saw the opportunity of teaching a memorable object lesson and cursed the tree, not because it was not bearing fruit, but because it made a show of life that promised fruit, yet was bearing none.

2. What is the purpose of a fig tree? Was it fulfilling its purpose?  
To produce very tasty fruit. No.
3. Review verses 12 - 13. What is the miracle that has now taken place in verses 18-20? What does this miracle have to do with the temple?
4. What is the purpose of the church on earth?
  - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19
  - Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. Ephesians 5:19
  - To be a picture of a pure, spotless bride of Christ Eph 5
  - We are to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8
  - To bring about reconciliation between two believers Matthew 18
  - Pray for one another Acts 12 - praying for Peter in prison, James 5:14 - for those who are sick
  - Sending out workers, hearing reports of what God is doing around the world - Acts 14, 15
  - Help those in need - Acts 6 where deacons began, 2 Cor 8 helping believers who were poor, 1 Tim 5:16 help widows in need and orphans - James 1:27
  - To work together in love and unity using our spiritual gifts to build up the body of believers 1 Cor 12
  - Submit to Christ Eph 5
  - Love God with all our heart, soul and mind and love our neighbors as ourselves - Matt 22:37-39
5. What are some of the reasons that the church or we ourselves do not fulfill the reason for why we are here on earth?

Fear, other priorities, selfishness, not aware of our purpose.

6. What lesson did Jesus teach His disciples about faith?

Faith is the prerequisite for accessing the power of God and His blessings.

7. What lesson did Jesus teach His disciples about prayer?

- If we pray with faith, God will show us what needs to be done to remove the obstacle.
- Prayer is not necessarily a deliverance or escape from a situation, a removal of a tragedy or an exemption from a task but the ability to accept and transform it. Prayer also helps us to bear the unbearable and to face the unfaceable, and to pass the breaking point without breaking.
  - Paul with the thorn in his flesh (2 Corinthians 12:1-10) He discovered that God's grace was sufficient for him, and God's power was made perfect in his weakness, which resulted in God's glory.
  - Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was not delivered from the agonizing situation but found the strength to face it. The agony of the cross led to the glory of His resurrection.
- If we regard prayer as an escape or removal of a problem we will be bewildered and disappointed.
- We never saw Jesus actually throw a mountain into a sea but what Jesus asked for He received. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus said, "If it is possible... but not my will but yours be done."
- We fail to realize that where God really wants to reveal His power is through persistent prayers of His people.
- Maybe we'd be a greater help to each other if we spent more time in prayer than in giving advice.

8. A common reaction to Jesus' statement: ***"All things you ask for in prayer, you will receive if you have faith."*** is, "Really? Whatever I ask for in prayer I will receive? I have asked many times in prayer and not received what I asked for. Is my faith just not strong enough?" How are we to understand and respond to this teaching of Jesus?