

THE BARREN TEMPLE *(Mark 11:12-26)*

It's amazing how much we take for granted once we've been to a place many times, including a church service. This passage teaches us some things about worship and the church.

I. JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE (vv. 12-16)

1. The fig tree symbolically represented Israel throughout history. The disciples readily knew this.
 - Jesus saw the tree in full foliage, but it had no figs.
 - It had all the signs of life, but no fruit.
2. Jesus came to the tree – He came to the temple and saw something disturbing.
 - Israel looked very much alive but deep down it was dead worship.
 - When Jesus arrived during Passover, He witnessed an immense volume of trade.
 - There was no worshipful atmosphere; the symbol of God's presence was missing.
 - In anger, He threw over their tables and chairs and halted the traffic.
 - Jesus defended God and the worshipers declaring that God's house was a place of worship!
3. We must consider the importance of our corporate worship.
 - Is our worship authentic from the heart?
 - What does our worship and service say to a lost person who enters our "Court of Gentiles?"
 - We really need to consider what we are doing to contribute to or defile sacred worship.

II. JESUS SANCTIFIES THE TEMPLE (vv. 17-19)

1. "Sanctify" means *to set apart for service*.
2. Jesus said the Lord's House is to be a house of prayer.
 - Worship is the primary focus here and prayer is the key component.
 - Our worship together in the House of God is to be a time and place for communion with God.
3. Jesus said the Lord's House is to be a house of prayer for the nations.
 - The temple's second purpose was to be used for evangelism.
 - The church must be evangelistic in its worship service.
4. Jesus showed that the Lord's house should be a house of teaching the Scripture. (v.17)

III. JESUS IS THE TEMPLE

1. Christ is the temple—the fullness of God.
 - We are part of the temple—not this building but the members. And wherever and whenever we gather, we are the church—the sanctuary of God.
 - Our responsibility when we gather to worship is to function just like the temple.
2. The next morning Peter noticed the tree was withered to its roots.
 - It was disconnected from the master; it withered to its very core.
 - Jesus then pointed out some important characteristics of true life and worship.

God, help us today to see our worship for what it is. Show us what is authentic and what is not.