

The Barren Fig tree.  
Mark 11:11-14, 20,21.  
Sunday morning, June 29, 2008.

I. Understanding what the Lord did here.

- A. As to the timing, it was the morning after the triumphal entry.
- B. why was the Lord hungry? Had He not eaten something before leaving the house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus? Had He gotten up very early in the morning to spend time with the Father as He often did? Luke 5:16 and 6:12.
- C. Did He spend time in the garden of Gethsemane as this seems to have been a spot He frequently visited? Luke 22:39,40. Given the burden He was bearing and the prospect he faced that is a distinct possibility.
- D. Why did the Lord look for something to eat on this fig tree when it was not the season of figs?
  - 1. The season of figs is from August through October. It was early to mid April, just before Passover.
  - 2. Figs grow on the branches of the Fig tree wherever a leaf grows out of the branch. The last leaves to grow on a branch in the late summer of any given season also carry with them the buds for fruit. However, the season is getting short and so the tree holds back on allowing these buds to grow into fruit.
  - 3. These buds break forth into fruit first thing in the spring, sometimes even ahead of the leaves, and they are called the early figs. The fig tree tends to shed many of these figs before maturity. Those that do mature tend to be few in number and they also tend to be small. They would be ripe in late April to early May. This fig tree being full of leaves already offered some prospect of being an

early

specimen, and that is why the Lord was looking.

- E. Why did the Lord curse the fig tree?
  - 1. Is this an example of the Lord having a temper tantrum not being able to satisfy His hunger? The Lord never used His divine powers for personal gain.
  - 2. Or are we here dealing with a parable that, instead of being taught with words, is being acted out in a real life situation?
  - 3. We believe it is the latter.

The Lord's ministry began under the preaching of John the Baptist. John employed this imagery in his preaching, applying it to Israel's leaders. "Even now the ax is laid at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." Matt. 3:10 "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance." Matt. 3:8.
  - 4. Similar teaching is put forth in John 15:1-8 where the parable of the vine and the branches is applied to individual believers.

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away..."  
"And they gather them (the fruitless branches) and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." John 15:2,6.

F. Was not Israel a fruitful fig tree at the time of the triumphal entrée?

Why this parable on the heels of that great event?

The fruit of Israel's praise and acclaim during the triumphal entrée was rotten fruit.

It was born, not from faith (a humble submission to, and dependence on the Lord), but from selfish ambition. (Deliverance from the Roman oppression.)

Application:

The triumphal entrée followed by the cursing of the fig tree will forever teach us the need for self-examination.

It teaches us that we must not mistake action for unction; nor rattles for revivals, and not commotion for consecration.

## II. The nature of good fruit.

A. Micha gives us a summary of this good fruit: “He has shown you, O man, what is

good, and what the Lord requires of you...” Micha 6:8.

### 1. To do justly...

This means that we give to each what we owe them.

- An honest day’s work for an honest days pay, and vice versa.
- Paying your bills in a timely fashion.
- Paying your taxes with integrity.
- Presenting yourself in all things to the Lord as His servant, for you are not your own.

### 2. To have mercy...

This means giving to our fellow man, not because we owe him, but because he really needs our help.

- This means not passing by on the opposite side of the road to our own enjoyments when both need and opportunity present themselves to us.
- The Lord has promised to visit us with his mercy according to the measure with which we practice mercy with those in need around us.

“With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful.” Psalm 18:25.

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.” Matt. 5:7

“Give... For with the same measure that you use it shall be given back to you.” Luke 6:38.

### 3. To walk humbly with your God.

- This is the humility of servant hood.
- It is the humility of being dependent rather than independent.
- It is the humility of childlikeness. Unpretentious.

B. The Lord Jesus also gave us a summary list. He called them “the weightier matters of the law”: Justice, Mercy and faith. Matt. 23:23.

This is the same list with faith substituted for humility. Yet humility is the essence of faith just as pride is the essence of unbelief.

## III. How will this fruit be cultivated in Me?

A. It is the vine that cultivates the fruit in the branches. John 15:4.

“Without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

B. The Apostle Paul prays the the Philippians might “be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ.” Phil. 1:11.

C. Present yourself to Him at the throne of grace for the purpose of cultivating justice, mercy and humble servant-like and child-like faith, and you shall have it.