

Where is your fruit?

Description

12The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13He noticed

Mark 11:12-14

The fig tree was commonly used as a symbolic representation of Israel in the old testament. Fig trees are fruit bearing trees that have the ability to produce fruit twice a year. Here Jesus is hungry and encounters a fig tree on his way into the synagogue which is one of the only times that we see the physical expression of hunger from Jesus, and he expects to find food on it. The disappointment is two-fold: Physically in that Jesus is hungry, and desires sustenance (food), but upon arriving at a source for fruit, he finds it lacking fruit, though it is covered in leaves; Spiritually because Israel has been barren for a long time, though it continues to operate in many of its traditions and religious orders that were given by God to ensure that they remain a holy and fruitful people; though they are prone to go periods without producing fruit causing them to cry out to God for forgiveness and help. The scripture says that the fig tree was in full leaf, which could lead a person to believe that it has figs also because the figs come from the leaves. This tree like many people appears, from a distance, to be ready/complete and bearing fruit; but upon closer examination, it has no fruit/substance. In the case of Israel, God had chosen them from long ago to be his chosen people, special and different from the other people of the world. Israel was to produce fruit that would draw and change/impact the rest of the world. Since their exodus from Egypt they showed a lack of faith and appreciation for God, and instead displayed an intense desire to live like the unbelievers that God had called them to be different/separate from. On the surface, Israel appeared to be different from the gentiles: they worshipped the Living God who led them out of Egypt, professed to live by the 10 commandments, were circumcised, observed the sabbath, and didn't intermarry (at least were commanded not to) with the gentiles who lived in neighboring lands (and at times amongst them). Closer inspection revealed a people who didn't have a heart for God, lusted after foreign women/men, lacked faith, and were more traditional/religious in nature than possessed an actual real relationship with God. Jesus came to save his people who should have recognized and believed in him if they had truly understood & believed the scriptures which clearly spoke of him. What he instead found was an unbelieving people with blind eyes, deaf ears, hard hearts, and only interested in seeing miracles and eating free fish sandwiches. When he cursed the barren but surfacely mature fig tree, he was also cursing the chosen but continually rebellious people of Israel that had grown spiritually dead, but outwardly holy. There is nothing worse than professing/having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5). Doing this results in a superficial relationship with God, and verbal faith, but lack of fruit/power.

Reflection Time

If Jesus was to take a closer inspection of your life, what would he find? Fruit or emptiness? If you are barren, why? Where/when did you stop bearing fruit? If you are fruitful, how can you produce more fruit? Is the life you show on the surface an actual reflection of your spiritual emptiness/barrenness or fruitfulness?

Category

1. Faith

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