

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Mark 11:20-26.**
- B. Jerusalem at Passover season was the delight of the Jews and the despair of the Romans. Thousands of devout Jews from all over the world arrived in the Holy city, their hearts filled with excitement and nationalistic fervor.
- C. In spite of its many privileges and opportunities, Israel was outwardly fruitless (the tree) and inwardly corrupt (the temple). After Jesus enters the city, there are important things to do!

## I. THE TRIUMPH.

- A. See **Mk. 11:1-11.**
- B. The problem: *hatred, error, and death.*
- C. The Lord was about to do something He had never done before, something He had repeatedly cautioned others not to do for Him: He was going to permit His followers to give a public demonstration in His honor.
- D. Jesus sent two of His disciples to Bethphage to get the colt that He needed for the event. Our Lord needed this beast so that He might fulfill the messianic prophecy found in Zech. 9:9.
- E. Many patriotic Jews from the crowd of pilgrims eagerly joined the procession that proclaimed Jesus as the King, the Son of David come in the name of the Lord. When welcoming a king, it was customary for people to lay their outer garments on the road, and then add festal branches (2Kgs. 9:13). The shout "Hosanna!" means "save now!"
- F. Our Lord's triumphal entry was the victory march of love over hatred, truth over error, and life over death.
- G. Paul spoke of our marching w/Him in triumph in 2Cor. 2:14.

## II. THE TEMPLE.

- A. See **Mk. 11:15-19.**
- B. The problem: *inward corruption.*
- C. Jesus had cleansed the temple during His first Passover visit (Jo. 2:13-22), but the results had been temporary. A "religious market" had been set up again to extort the Jews.
- D. This "market" was set up in the court of the Gentiles, the one place where the Jews should have been doing serious missionary work. If a Gentile visited the temple and saw what the Jews were doing *in the name of the true God*, he would never want to believe what they taught.
- E. Jesus quoted two Scriptures to defend what He did--Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:11. The Jews looked on the temple primarily as a place of sacrifice, but Jesus saw it as a place of prayer. Jesus had a spiritual view of the Jewish religion, while the leaders promoted a traditional view that was cluttered with rules and regulations.
- F. If the Lord Jesus were to show up in our house of worship, what changes would He make?
  - 1. Do outsiders in our communities think of our building as houses of prayer?
  - 2. Do we as members flee to church on Sundays to "cover up our sins?"
  - 3. Do we attend worship to maintain our reputation or to worship/glorify God?
  - 4. Do you need to make changes in your attitude about the assembly/worship?
- G. True worship is done in spirit (attitude) and truth (doctrine). See Jo. 4:23,24.

## III. THE TREE.

- A. See **Mk. 11:12-14, 20-26.**
- B. The problem: *outward fruitlessness.*
- C. The fig tree produces leaves in March or April and then starts to bear fruit in June, with another crop in

August and possibly a third crop in December. The presence of leaves usually meant the presence of fruit, even though the fruit would have been “leftovers” from the previous season. The problem was not the absence of edible fruit, but rather the absence of fruit period!

- D. Two lessons taught from the barren tree:
  - 1. *Failure.* Israel had failed to be fruitful for God.  
Christ is still seeking fruit from His people, and for us to be fruitless is sin (Jn. 15:16).  
We must carefully cultivate our spiritual roots and not settle for “leaves.”
  - 2. *Faith.* Israel had no faith in Jesus or in God.  
Our faith, or lack thereof, is seen in prayer. People of great faith, have a great prayer life; and vice versa. Jesus used prayer to show the lack of faith in the Israelites.
- E. We should not interpret 11:24 to mean, “If you pray hard enough and *really believe*, God is obligated to answer your prayers, no matter what you ask. Prayer must be done in the will of God (1Jn. 5:14-15), and true faith is not based on emotion or feelings. True faith in God is based on His word (Jn. 15:7; Rom. 10:17), and His word reveals His will to us.
- F. True prayer (based on faith) involves forgiveness as well as faith. I must be in fellowship with both my Father in heaven and my brethren on earth if God is to answer my prayers.
- G. Bearing fruit for God comes from being in His will, and becoming like X.

#### IV. THE TEST.

- A. See **Mk. 11:27-33**.
- B. The problem: *dishonesty*.
- C. It would seem that one of the duties of the Sanhedrin, was to investigate anyone who claimed to be sent by God; and that included Jesus (Deut. 18:15-22).
- D. Unfortunately they were not seeking truth; they were looking for evidence to use to destroy Him (11:18).
- E. Jesus countered their question (about authority) with a question.
- F. Why take them all the way back to John the Baptist? Because God does not teach us new truth if we have rejected the truth He has already given us. The Jewish leaders had not accepted what John had taught, so why should God say anything more to them?
- G. Had they obeyed John’s message, they would have gladly submitted to X’s authority, for John came to present the Messiah to the nation.
- H. Jesus did not refuse to answer their question; He only refused to accept and endorse their hypocrisy. He was not being evasive; He was being honest.
- I. *Be honest with Jesus, and He will be honest w/you.*

#### CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The problems and the solutions of Mk. 11.
 

1. The problem: <i>hatred, error, and death.</i>	The solution: love, truth, and life.
2. The problem: <i>inward corruption.</i>	The solution: internal cleansing worship.
3. The problem: <i>outward fruitlessness.</i>	The solution: prayer and faith.
4. The problem: <i>dishonesty.</i>	The solution: believe the truth.
- C. Ready to get these things out of your life? Be honest with Jesus; obey Him.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.