



LESSON 120 MARK 11:12-14 & 20-26

12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. 14 When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

The next day: **Mark 11:20-26 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." 22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. (Literally this is "Have the faith of God, (which Jesus defines for us in the next verse) 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. 25 " And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."**

Questions

1. What made Jesus approach the fig tree?
2. When Jesus found no fruit, what did He do?
3. What does a curse do?
4. Jesus used the fig tree to teach a lesson to the disciples about the power of words and faith. What kind of faith are we to have?
5. In verse 21, it states, "Peter remembering..." What does this show about Peter?
6. Jesus used the fig tree as an object lesson to teach a spiritual truth. How can you employ this method?

Possible answers

1. Jesus was hungry. The tree had leaves on it which usually meant that, although it was not the season for fruit, some fruit was still left on it. The tree had an outward indication of fruitfulness, but when searched closely, no fruit was there. This was similar to Israel's leadership at this time. They acted very religious and made a show of their piety, but they had no real heart for God. Remember the previous lesson about the priests sanctioning crooked moneychangers to use the temple grounds for their thefts? Read Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18, and 23:13--39 for a description of these religious leaders.

2. He spoke words to the tree. **In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again."** Those words had a definite effect. Peter says in verse 21, Jesus had cursed the tree. This shows that words can be powerful. They can give life if they're the right kind. **Matt 4:4 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but (shall live) by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'** **"Proverbs 4:20-24 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you.**

Our words are powerful, too. They can bring hurt and wounding, if we use them in the wrong way. **James 3:2, 10 If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. ... the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.**

We must be careful to speak the words of the Holy Spirit. He is gracious and gentle, but strong and truthful. **James 3:17 the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Galatians 5:23-24 the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**

3. It can bring a change, a loss, a withering away and death. Read about curses: Genesis 3:14-19, Deuteronomy 23:5, Galatians 3:10-13, Matthew 5:44, Rom 12:14, James 3:9-10, Revelation 22:3.

4. God's kind of faith. When God commands, He never doubts that what He has said will come to pass. That is the kind of faith we are to have, not in ourselves, but in what God has said.

5. He was alert. He gave thought to what Jesus had said the day before.

6. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you alert to the possible objects or events that can be turned into a spiritual lesson for yourself or someone else. For example, a friend of mine said she was filling her car with gasoline when she heard a train whistle. The Lord said to her, "That train is bringing lots of provisions. Every time you hear a train whistle, be reminded that I will provide for you--more than enough."

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