

Have Faith In God
 Mark 11:12-14, 20-25
 June 14, 2026
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¹² On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. ¹³ And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.

²⁰ As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹ And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." ²² And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

If you had one opportunity to ask God for one thing, what would you ask for?

1. God asked Solomon, "*Ask what I shall give you.*". 1 Kings 3:5, 2 Chronicles 1:7.
 What did Solomon ask for? A big house. No. Wealth. No. Stuff. No. Revenge against his father's enemies. No.
 Solomon asked for wisdom and discernment.
"Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"
 God was pleased by what Solomon asked him. 1 Kings 3:10.
 And what was the result? The people of Israel lived in safety, peace and in prosperity. Peace and joy evade so many people because they seek peace and prosperity prior to seeking God. When you seek the things that are above where Christ is seated, peace and joy are outcomes.
2. James the brother of our Lord writes – "*If anyone of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who generously gives to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.*" James 1:5
3. King David asked for one thing in his prayer. That he may gaze upon the beauty of God. "*One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.*" Psalm 27:4
4. The prophet Elijah asked Elisha, "*Ask what shall I do for you?*" Elisha asked for a

double portion of his spirit. 2 Kings 2:9

5. Jesus taught his disciples, in the Sermon on the Mount, to not be like the gentiles asking for all kinds of stuff. This world is consumed and obsessed with what to wear, what to eat, what to drink. But Jesus tells his disciples - *“Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him”* Matthew 6:8
6. The prophet Jeremiah said *“Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.”* Jeremiah 6:16

In this passage Jesus instructs his disciples that they should have God in faith. Don't doubt but believe, ask and you will receive.

Last Sunday, we saw Jesus' cleansing of the temple. The cleansing of the temple was symbolic of purification, of judgment and pointing to the death and resurrection of our Lord.

In this passage, you find another symbolic act of Jesus cursing a fig tree. Why a fig tree? Fig trees were symbolic of peace, security and prosperity in ancient Israel.

Did you know that Washington state grows more apples than any other state in the United States? And 90% of the organic apples in the country come from here – Washington state. In the year 2022, it is said apples contributed to \$2 billion in value. Last year the crop estimate was 142 million forty-pound boxes of apples.

If apples contribute to the economy and the prosperity of this state, fig trees were symbolic of peace, security and prosperity in Israel.

During the height of Solomon's reign as king of Israel, 1 Kings 4 describes to us the security and prosperity of Israel this way – *“Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates²¹ to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.”*. Verse 25 – *“And Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon”* 1 Kings 4:25

The Old Testament has several mentions about vine and figs – symbolic of peace and prosperity. Even the enemies of Israel in king Hezekiah's day knew what fig trees meant. Sennacherib, the King of Assyria threatened Hezekiah and his people, he says to them in Isaiah 36:16, *“Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern”*

So, if fig trees were metaphors of peace, safety and prosperity in ancient Israel, a lack of figs or fruit were signs of being unfruitful, and even being cursed.

Imagine next year when the crop is ready for apples, the farmers see only leaves but no apples at all. That would be terrible.

In verse 12, we see Jesus is hungry. And he sees a fig tree. And he finds nothing on the tree except leaves. And what Jesus does is quite irrational and astonishing to the human mind. Jesus speaks to a tree. Verse 14.

¹⁴ And he said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

- So far in the Gospel of Mark, we have seen Jesus speaking to demon possessed people and they are delivered. Jesus has the power to break any stronghold in your life.
- Jesus spoke to a dead girl and she came to life again. While we were still dead in our sins, Jesus gave eternal life.
- Jesus spoke to the raging sea and there was a great calm. Jesus can speak into your life to give a calm and peace no one else can give.
- Jesus can speak a word to bring healing and renewal but here Jesus speaks to a fig tree to not have any fruit at all.
- This is the first time we see Jesus speaking to a tree.
- Is Jesus wishing the tree would bear fruit and is a little irritated because of hunger?
- Who speaks to a tree this way? No one speaks to a tree this way unless He is God. When the prophet Jonah sat outside Nineveh, God appointed a tree to give him shade and appointed a worm to destroy the plant.
- The cursing of the fig tree is symbolic of judgment because of the fruitlessness of Israel. The temple was soon going to be destroyed.
- Every believer has the responsibility to bear fruit for God. Imagine planting a fruit tree in your backyard and every after year you see nothing but leaves.
- Jesus taught his disciples in John 15 – “*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples*” John 15:7-8

The disciples hear what Jesus said. And what happens?

Verse 20.

²⁰ As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹ And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.”

Peter observes that the fig tree has withered and gone. Peter is perhaps too impressed by the miracle Jesus had performed.

And Jesus turns the fig tree incident into a teaching moment for the disciples.

Verses 22 through 25.

²² And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. ²³ Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

These are all commands from Christ to his disciples.

Verse 22 - “Have faith”. Verse 23 - “Be taken up”. Verse 24 - “Believe”.

To have faith in God is to believe in Jesus Christ alone.

“Believe in God; believe also in me” John 14:1

“One grain of faith is better than a gallon of tears. A drop of repentance is more precious than a torrent of weeping” Charles Spurgeon

Jesus promises great things for the one who believes. How wonderful! Believe. Don’t doubt and you will receive.

Some false teachers have twisted these words of Christ by saying you can ask God anything your flesh craves for. Wrong!

Jesus is not a heavenly genie to fulfill what our flesh desperately craves for. Jesus is Lord! And if we call him Lord, your life must be fully under his sovereignty.

You must ask according to God’s will and by abiding in Christ.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. John 15:7

“And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us” 1 John 5:14

What is the will of God?

To love God, neighbor and forgive.

That is why Jesus commands in verse 25 that you *must* forgive. Your obedience to God must precede your asking of God.

Asking God for something while harboring resentment, bitterness, murmuring, or an unforgiving attitude will never work.

Many people ask “why are my prayers not answered?”

God desires obedience. The prophet Jeremiah told the people of Israel in his day – “*Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have kept good from you*” Jeremiah 5:25

Even Jesus, as sinless and guiltless as he was, had to learn obedience by his suffering as a son. (Hebrews 5:8).

In the hardest part of his journey to the cross Jesus said, “Father not my will but yours.”

How much more should we as sinful yet redeemed people learn and walk in obedience?

In conclusion, let us look to the promises of God.

“*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us*”. Ephesians 3:20

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Have Faith In God. Mark 11:12-19

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What does Jesus' cursing of the fig tree reveal about Jesus' authority over nature, worship and stewardship of God's house?
2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.
 - Why does Jesus command his disciples to "Have faith in God?" in light of the cursing the fig tree? Do you believe you have a responsibility to bear fruit for God? Mark 4:3-8, Matthew 21:43, John 15:1-8 Galatians 5:22-23
 - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

3. HEART For personal reflection: What will you do or change to produce fruit for God?