

## **Recap of 1/7/24 message by Pastor Steve (Mark 11:12-19):**

*The day after Jesus is hailed as King on what we call Palm Sunday, Jesus curses a fig tree for being unfruitful and clears the temple area of those conducting business.*

**Cursing the fig tree:** *This is a puzzling episode because it seems contrary to what we know of Jesus' character. However, when we accept His deity and sinlessness, we understand that Jesus was not being capricious. We know that He expected to find something to eat on the fig tree and that, finding nothing but leaves, Jesus cursed the tree for being unfruitful. We can assume He is teaching His disciples (and us) a lesson through this action. Because Mark uses a "sandwich" construction, we don't find out the point of the teaching until the next section of scripture. Joe will cover the "why" in today's message.*

**Clearing the temple:** *Jesus quotes two Old Testament passages when clearing the temple. Going back and looking at the context of these quoted passages tells us why He was so upset. Israel had once again fallen into worshiping in a way they wanted instead of as God directed. Instead of keeping the temple holy, they had debased it for common use. The lesson for us is that **we must be careful to worship God as He revealed Himself to be and in the way He commands.** This theme runs through the Bible. We looked at Exodus to see how Israel went from seeing the power of God as He brought them out of Egypt to worshiping an idol in about 40 days because they wanted to worship in a way that was comfortable for them. In Malachi we see God giving Israel several ways that they have abandoned true worship in favor of what they want. In Mark, we will see the people go from hailing Jesus as king to calling for His crucifixion in less than a week. Man is prone to leave true worship in favor of idolatry because our hearts are deceitful above all things. We naturally fall into doing what we want instead of what God commands.*

**Application:** *Because our sin nature makes us susceptible to following idols, we must be diligent and vigilant to continue worshiping God as He has revealed Himself to be and in the way He commands. Constantly working on our relationship with Christ through 1) being in His word individually, 2) studying His word corporately, 3) having a robust prayer life and 4) serving one another in love are the best antidotes to unwittingly falling into idol worship.*