

## **Recap of 1/14/24 message by Pastor Joe (Mark 11:20-25):**

**1.** In Mark 11:12-14, 20-25 Mark explains the coming judgment of Israel, because of their rejection of Jesus the Messiah, illustrated by Jesus in the cursing and subsequent withering of the Fig tree. The passage also lays out God's expectation for His people: fruitfulness (11:12-14, 20-21), prayerfulness (11:22-24), forgiveness (11:25).

**2.** Israel's religion was flourishing but lacked the righteousness God desired, it had "promise without performance."

- "The fig tree was a symbol of the Jewish nation, which abounded in the leaves of religious profession but was barren of the fruits of righteousness." (The New Bible Commentary)

- "...this fig tree was a type or symbol of Israel nationally, and its fruitless condition pictured the state of the nation—much religion but no fruit for God." (Ironsides)

- "...it is not anti-Christian to be honest about the frequent fruitlessness of many churches today. Let's not measure spiritual reality by either flourishing activity, or by great buildings." (Richards)

... the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time." (C.S. Lewis)

**3.** The fig tree wasn't fulfilling its function just as the Temple and its service wasn't fulfilling its function—bearing fruit. It was impressive, full of activity, doing religious things but bereft of the fruit God desired—the fruit of righteousness. Where He should have found fruitfulness, instead He found barrenness, a warning for Christians and churches today. A warning against empty profession unaccompanied by sound doctrine and holy living. Being a Christian should change our marriages, our home life, our work life. In John 15, Jesus impresses upon the disciples the need to be fruitful by abiding in Him and in His Word. When we do, God produces the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), an orderly life. When we don't abide, our sinful nature produces all kinds of disorder (Galatians 5:19-21). When we do abide in Him, we become more like Him, conformed to His image.

**4.** The effectiveness of prayer rested on having faith in God. "Live in an attitude of dependence on Him," as someone put it. Faith is unwavering trust, dependence on God's Word, His omnipotence, and His unfailing goodness. God must be the object of our faith. "Have faith in God," not faith in faith, or faith in ourselves, or faith in our feelings, but in God.

**5.** We should forgive others (Ephesians 4:32), but how: admit our hurt, go to God asking for His help, forgive as an act of the will, forego the right striking back, replace feelings of resentment with good will, seek the other's good, remember forgiveness may take time, when appropriate take steps to restore good relations.