



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Mark Sermon Series

Supports Session 9: Clears

Sermon Title: "Spiritual Fruit" (Mark 11:12-21)

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### Connection to Session 9

God desires sincere worship from His people, not just the appearance of religious activity. And, spiritual fruit will be evident in the life of one who is pursuing righteousness.

### Introduction/Opening

There was an assumption in Jerusalem that when the Messiah came all would go well. Israel would be reinstated as a world power and the oppressive power of Rome would be overthrown. The Messiah would reinstate greatness and the existing leaders would ascend to even greater positions of honor and power. However, when Jesus came, He was not pleased with what He saw happening in the Temple. It was a striking contrast to what Israel expected.

### Outline

#### 1. Jesus Cursed a Fig Tree (vv. 12-14)

- a. Jesus spent His years of ministry developing followers outside of the capital city. When He entered Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11), His actions clearly displayed He was coming as a King. He entered Jerusalem on a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9-10.
- b. Upon entering Jerusalem, Jesus visited the temple and then retreated to Bethany with the disciples.
- c. The next day, Jesus encountered a fig tree. He inspected it but did not find even the buds that should have covered the tree. He found only leaves.
- d. Jesus cursed the fig tree as a symbolic action. In the Old Testament, the fig tree was a symbol for Israel (Jeremiah 24:1-10; Hosea 9:10). Jesus's words expressed a curse on the tree that bore no fruit.
- e. Jesus desired to see spiritual fruit among His people. His curse on the fig tree was a prophetic act meant to display God's judgment.

## 2. Jesus Cleansed the Temple (vv. 15-19)

- a. Jesus had visited the temple one day prior. He saw a blatant disregard for the holiness of the space. Travelers were allowed passage through the temple and merchants were set up in the Court of Gentiles, prohibiting the Gentiles from their place of worship.
- b. Jesus saw a “den of thieves” (v. 17). It was no longer a place for prayer and worship.
- c. Jesus openly displayed anger; He overturned tables and made a whip out of robes to clear the space (see John 2:15).
- d. Like the barren fig tree, the temple had become unfruitful. It was meant to be a place of prayer and communion with God.

## 3. Peter Saw the Withered Fig Tree (v. 20-21)

- a. Jesus and the disciples journeyed outside Jerusalem, where they passed by the fig tree Jesus cursed in v. 14. Peter noticed the tree had “withered from the roots up” (v. 20).
- b. God desires for His people to be marked by righteousness, not just the appearance of righteousness. Jesus’s encounter with the fig tree and His cleansing of the temple demonstrated this truth.
- c. As Christians, we’re to be fully devoted to God, pursuing righteousness so that our lives are honoring to Him. Spiritual fruit is evident in the life of one who seeks God.

## Conclusion

The people eagerly awaited a Messiah who would be a powerful political leader and who would look to their interests. Instead of coming to judge those who oppressed the Israelites, Jesus’s actions were wholly different. Jesus examined His people and was displeased with the lack of spiritual fruit. He examines our hearts and lives as well, seeking to discover righteousness and spiritual fruit.

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