

HYPOCRISY AND TRUE FAITH

MARK 11:12-25

Matt Ross ■ Grace Bible Church ■ October 11, 2026

“Israel, like the fig tree, showed the outward signs of bearing fruit, but those who approached it spiritually hungry found none.”

Sinclair Ferguson, Let's Study Mark

Central Truth: Jesus exposes hypocritical worship and calls us to a faith that rests entirely upon God.

1. The Tree: Jesus exposes fruitless religion (v. 12-14)

- *Jesus is the true Prophet who speaks judgement upon the house of God.*

Application: *Beware of hypocrisy that looks fruitful on the outside but provides no nourishment.*

2. The Temple: Jesus exposes corrupted worship (v. 15-19)

- *Jesus is the true Priest who teaches that God's house is a house of prayer for all nations.*

Application: *Examine whether your worship is self-focused or God-focused.*

3. The Truth: Jesus teaches what true faith looks like (v. 20-25)

- *Jesus is the true King who commends utter dependency upon God.*

Application: *True faith is shown by trust in God, neediness in prayer, and forgiveness towards others.*

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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. ¹⁵ And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶ And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. ¹⁷ And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” ¹⁸ And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. ¹⁹ And when evening came they went out of the city. 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.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

These questions are for further study and application of today's text of Scripture. Thoughtfully writing out the answers to these questions will help to drive home the point of today's study. One great way to grow as a disciple is by discussing these types of questions in a small group. Find a small group here: gracebiblecw.com/lifegroup or ask someone next to you if you can join their group!

1. The Tree:

- What is the significance of the tree having leaves but no fruit?
- What are ways a person can appear spiritually healthy on the outside while being spiritually barren on the inside? Have you ever seen or experienced this yourself?

2. The Temple:

- What are ways our worship can subtly become self-focused rather than God-focused both personally and corporately as a church?
- How are we all hypocrites to a certain extent as professing Christians? What are ways we can close the gap between the faith we profess and the life that we live?
- Jesus says, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." How should that phrase "for all nations" shape the way we think about worship in the church?

3. The Truth:

- Jesus responds to the withered fig tree by saying to the disciples, "Have faith in God." What does genuine dependence on God look like practically for you day by day?
- How does our prayer life reveal what we actually believe about God's power and goodness?
- Is there someone you are struggling to forgive? What makes forgiveness difficult?