

Mk series pt 42

- The complaints
 - Concern for the fig tree
 - The fig tree didn't deserve that!
 - Concern that Jesus is being emotional and irrational
 - It's not even the season!
- Jesus is acting aggressively here. Very.
 - A good reminder that He is the judge we will all stand before
- One of the best examples of a Markan sandwich
 - Starts a story
 - Interrupts it with a story
 - Finishes the first story
 - Reason?
 - Guiding our interpretation!
 - By connecting the two stories
 - Consider this
 - He didn't have to record the withering of the fig tree at all...
 - But here it is, taking up precious real estate in a pivotal moment in the GofM.

READ IT

Mark 11:12–21 (NASB95)

¹²On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry.

¹³Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

¹⁴He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

¹⁵Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves;

¹⁶and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.

¹⁷And He began to teach and say 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 robbers' den."

¹⁸The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.

¹⁹When evening came, they would go out of the city.

²⁰As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up.

²¹Being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."

²²And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God.

²³Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.

²⁴Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

²⁵Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

- The fig tree is Jerusalem
 - Who bears no fruit when Jesus comes looking for it
 - The Messiah comes, and finds the temple unprepared, hearts astray
 - And judgment is proclaimed against it
- A lot of little things to cover...

Mark 11:12–25 (NASB95)

¹²On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry.

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¹⁴He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

- Deity of Christ challenge
 - "went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it"
 - Didn't Jesus KNOW there were no figs?
 - Limited access to His omniscience as part of His humbling during the incarnation
 - Just like "hungry"
 - The doctrine of the deity of Christ has always included this understanding
 - CLEARLY taught – called God.
- Unfruitful interpretation
 - "there should have been early figs!"
 - "He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs."
 - FOR it was not the season for figs.
 - Why is this bit in here?
 - To show us that this isn't about the fig tree.
 - It's an illustration, a teachable moment.
- What's the lesson?
 - 4 elements
 - 1. Jesus is hungry for the fruit of the fig tree
 - God wants Israel to bear fruit
 - Righteousness and readiness for His coming
 - 2. He comes and examines the tree

- He also wears a yoke
 - Elisha used smashing arrows on the ground to represent victory in battle
- Overall context -
 - Jerusalem is “judging” Jesus...
 - But really, Jesus is testing Jerusalem
 - Sobering
 - An attitude adjustment
 - Culture often thinks it is the judge of Jesus
 - In how we judge Jesus, we will be judged.
- Now, the “temple cleansing”
 - I want to try and clear up misunderstandings of this passage
 - As well as apply it... and that’s the most important part.

¹⁵Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves;

¹⁶and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.

¹⁷And He began to teach and say 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 robbers’ den.”

- First, what is the nature of Jesus’ actions here?
 - Violent?
 - Let’s not water it down
 - Elements
 - Drove people OUT of the temple!
 - Buyers and sellers
 - Overturned money changers tables
 - Causing money to flying
 - And the seats!
 - Which they would have been sitting in
 - Jesus was a force to be reckoned with
 - Somehow He stopped people from even carrying merchandise in the temple
 - Or at least one area of it (it was bigger than a couple football fields)
 - The goal isn’t hurting anyone
 - It’s forcing this business OUT of the temple
- How should we view it?
 - John “with a whip”
 - Different event
 - I think He probably used on the animals
 - ***But John 2:15 (NASB95) ¹⁵And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;***
 - Violent?
 - Forceful, not violent
 - No violence to individuals
 - but it was destructive and costly
 - He is the LORD
 - It is HIS RIGHT
 - It’s God’s temple, this is the Son!
 - Like kicking people out of your OWN house
- How is this a model for us?

- 1- Jesus wasn't always nice
 - No fear of conflict itself
 - Just fear of being in the flesh
 - It may be a mark of genuine spirituality that you can confront people without sin
 - 2- Not a cloak for us to compromise
 - Online – someone is being rude and points to this jokingly.
 - 3- But it is a reminder to react to compromise strongly
 - App?
 - Your own area of proper authority
 - Just as Jesus had proper authority
 - Church
 - Pastor, elder
 - Some churches have turned to this.
 - About getting money
 - A leader NEEDS to step up
 - Home
 - Yourself
 - You are the temple
 - It amazes me that God entrusted the temple to people who failed so badly
 - Yet, I am the temple
 - **1 Corinthians 6:17–19 (NASB95)**
 - ¹⁷But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.***
 - ¹⁸Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.***
 - ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?***
 - Jesus “but this is the Temple!”
 - Us, “but this is the temple!”
 - Let zeal consume you
- We can get excited about tearing down things.
 - But Jesus is focused on restoring something!
 - “house of prayer”
 - Perhaps this application stands out
 - Prayer is a behavior that is focused on devotion to and relationship with God
 - How are you? Your prayer life
 - Cleanse the temple
 - Pray and fast?
- What was wrong with what these guys were doing?
 - **¹⁵Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; ¹⁶and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.**
 - Generally thought to be about overcharging, true,
- ON ABUSE OR CORRUPTION IN THE TEMPLE DURING THE 1ST CENTURY
 - The Talmud rips on the priests of the Temple
 - Calling them “sons of Eli”
 - And says, like Eli’s sons, that they “took by force” and used the money to get more gold for the temple
 - Effectively they found ways to get more money than God required

- Because the priests took more than what was required, according to the Talmud, “it did not take long before they covered the whole temple with gold plaques...”
 - Josephus, 1st century historian, described the Temple this way
 - “The exterior of the building wanted nothing that could astound either mind or eye. For, being covered on all sides with massive plates of gold, the sun was no sooner p than it radiated so fiery a flash that person straining to look at it were compelled to avert their eyes, as from solar rays. To approaching strangers it appeared from a distance like a snow-clad mountain; for all that was not overlaid with gold was of the purest white. From its summit protruded sharp golden spikes to prevent birds from settling upon and polluting the roof.” (J.W. 5.5.6)
 - Even he beauty of the Temple was corrupted
 - Annas (and his sons, including Caiaphas) had a pretty bad reputation
 - The Tosefta says that these high priests made their sons treasurers who would come and physically beat others into giving.
 - See Evans’ article - **Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?**
 - LINK - https://www.jstor.org/stable/43717764?read-now=1&seq=23#page_scan_tab_contents
 - Josephus agrees and said that the chief priests sent their servants to get tithes from lower ranking priests by force, “beating those who refused to give,”
 - And that this resulted in some of them starving to death!
 - The Tosefta says the reason the second temple was destroyed was because they “loved money and hated one another”
 - The wealth of the family of Annas was not only incredible, it was despised.
 - In the Jewish revolt against Rome in 70 AD the crowd seized it.
- On doves
 - The Mishnah says “Once in Jerusalem a pair of doves cost a golden denar”
 - Seems to have been 25 times the rightful cost
 - Doves were for the poor.
- but there is more
 - Doves were especially sold to the poor
 - ***Leviticus 5:7 (NASB95) “But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the Lord his guilt offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.***
 - “den of thieves”
 - Implying immoral sales
- BUT MORE
 - 1- cast out buyers AND sellers (vs15)
 - Buyers?
 - 2- in recent years this behavior was brought into the court of the Gentiles
 - Epstein – first started under Caiaphas
 - This isn’t what it is about!
 - Your relationship with God doesn’t center around your transaction
 - Even the buyers can fall into this.
 - I harp on prosperity preachers
 - But their followers have a serious problem too.
 - What a tragedy!

- What does this say about a relationship with God?
- Why didn't they stop Him?
 - 1- many may have been excited about this
 - Given the recent change and the well-known and hated abuses
 - 2- Jesus had a significant following
 - It's the same reason they took Him at night.
 - 3- the people were especially volatile during Passover
 - Because of numbers and religious sentiment
- **¹⁷And He began to teach and say 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 robbers' den."**
 - Two quotes
 - The first quote is from Is 56:7
 - Context – Gentiles worshipping God in the temple
 - This trade cut them off... no concern for them
 - Jesus cares for all
 - Some Jewish expectations would have included Jesus cutting Gentiles off!
 - Even though prophecy said otherwise
 - The second is Jer 7:11
 - God calls the temple a den of robbers and prophecies that He will destroy it!
 - Jesus' words are foreboding

¹⁸The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.

- They will have to get him in the dark, away from the crowd of His supporters
 - Less they cause a riot.

¹⁹When evening came, they would go out of the city.

²⁰As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up.

- Notice the lack of commentary.
 - The context is the commentary
 - The sandwich
 - The INTENTIONAL subtle theology of Mark
 - Deity of Jesus, His mission, etc.
 - Liberal and unbelieving scholars become obtuse to it
 - Which is ironic, because that's also a theme in Mark
 - Ears but not hearing

²¹Being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."

- Side note on Peter
 - Spokesman for the group
- Main point
 - Non-believer
 - How we respond to Jesus matters, and it matters today.
 - Not putting it off
 - Christian
 - You are the temple
 - What are you for?
 - A life devoted to God
 - Not merely involving God

- Not materialism,
 - Not other things
 - And are to be devoted
 - Maybe it's time for a cleansing
 - Clear the way because our focus is off
 - Prayer, worship, service
 - Not about a list
 - About living our purpose
- Prayer, next week.

¹⁸And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God.

¹⁹"Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.

²⁰Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

²¹Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

- The lesson is unexpected
 - It's not about Israel
 - That's there, but so is this lesson.
 - One Bible passage has multiple applications!
- What is the lesson on prayer and faith?
 - On proclaiming in faith
 - Sure, just not outside God's will
 - But, do I just try to believe stuff when I know some of it won't be God's will?
 - Perhaps it's a gift of faith?
 - Perhaps we do?
 - Perhaps it's just for the apostles
 - But they long for things that they don't always expect
 - And example praying without knowing/being confident
- Forgiveness
 - "this mountain"
 - As required for forgiveness
 - How so?
 - 1- it's a natural byproduct of salvation and therefore we will
 - 2- it's a different kind of forgiveness... relational quality not salvation
 - Against: seems ad hoc and forgiveness of my sin seems like we should generally assume it is salvific.

FOR MK 12 THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

- Alludes to Isaiah 5:1-7
 - Which was interpreted to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and its 1st Temple
 - Craig Evans says this can be seen from Targum Isaiah.
 - "This is seen in Tg. Isa 5:2,3 where God threatens to destroy Israel's "sanctuaries," and it is seen more explicitly in L. Mechl. 1:16 and t. Sukk. 3:15 where the tower of Isaiah's Vineyard Song is identified as the temple, and the wine vat as the altar. Since the tower and the wine vat in Isaiah's son are threatened with destruction, it was concluded that the prophet's utterance was fulfilled in the destruction of the temple in 70 B.C.E. Although this Jewish interpretation is preserved in admittedly late (i.e., post-NT) sources, the similar usage and context in Mark suggest that this interpretation is at least as old as the first century and that the evangelist Mark was aware of it."
 - *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (April, 1989), pp. 240 (or pg 4 of 34 of the article)