

INTRODUCTION

In this passage, Jesus curses the barren fig tree and confronts the corruption of the temple, exposing a religion that appears fruitful outwardly but is barren of genuine worship, obedience, and faith. From this we learn that true religion bears the fruit of faith, prayer, obedience, and forgiveness, trusting that God can remove even seemingly immovable obstacles to the advance of Christ's kingdom.

INSTRUCTIONS

This guide is meant to facilitate discussion which will lead to a response to God's word. Therefore please use it as a tool that best fits the needs of your small group.

OPENING DISCUSSION

- What was the most interesting idea/concept about Sunday's sermon?
- What is your overall impression of Jesus in this passage?

REVIEW

- Have someone read **Mark 11.12-25**
- How were the fig tree and the temple alike?
- Why was Jesus so angry with what was happening in the temple?
- What does Jesus mean by having faith that can "move this mountain and cast it into the sea?"
- Why do you think Jesus brings up forgiveness in the context of the barren temple/tree?

APPLICATION

- What are some ways Christians or churches can appear spiritually healthy while lacking genuine spiritual fruit?
- What kinds of "leaves" can we use to hide spiritual barrenness in our own lives?
- What is the difference between doing Christian things and actually bearing Christian fruit? What fruit does Jesus seem to be looking for in this passage?
- What are some "mountains" that can appear immovable in the advance of Christ's kingdom today?
- What would it look like to pray for the advancement of Christ's kingdom with this kind of confidence?
- Why is forgiveness such an important evidence of genuine faith?
- Why is it sometimes easier to rehearse someone else's wrongs than to remember the enormous debt God has forgiven us?
- Is there someone whose offense you are still holding onto?
- How does knowing that Christ was cursed for us change the way we respond to our own spiritual barrenness?
- What would it look like this week to live as a person who has been deeply forgiven and therefore bears fruit?

PRAYER (divide the group based on gender if desired)

- What action/repentance does God want you to take according to the truths of this text?
- Are there any other prayer needs?