

4. Application

1. **PERSONALLY** — I have a responsibility to bear fruit, not just grow leaves.
 - A. God has given each of us spiritual gifts and natural talents. We are fruitful when we use them instead of sitting on them.
 - B. We are to invite people to church, not just attend church. We are fruitful when we help people hear the good news of Jesus.

2. **CORPORATELY** — God calls his people to have a heart of love for those who do not know him.

3. **The old temple is gone, but a new and better temple has come.**

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. John 2:19–21 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. Read Mark 11:12-21. Looking for figs on the fig tree is a parable. What does it actually symbolize. Cursing the fig tree is also a parable. What does it actually symbolize?
2. Why does Jesus condemn what was happening in the temple? Which Old Testament texts does He cite?
3. Read Jeremiah 7:1-11. Jesus saying God's people made the temple a den of robbers. What does Jeremiah 7 tell us about how people become robbers of God?
4. Read Isaiah 56:3-7. What does this teach us about God's heart for people who are far from Him? How should that change the way we feel about people who are far from God in our community?
5. Pastor Kurt talked about two ways to bear spiritual fruit in our lives and not just be full of leaves. Did God prompt you to make any changes from those personal challenges? Are there other ways the Bible tells us we can bear spiritual fruit? (See Galatians 5:22 for one example.)
6. What is the best way to make sure we actually bear fruit in our lives and not just look leafy green? (See John 15:1-8)

MARK THE KING AND THE CROSS

Mark 11:12-21 – Nothing But Leaves

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What is the history of the temple?

Now the angel of the Lord had commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and raise an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 1 Chronicles 21:18 (ESV)

Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the Lord God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel." 1 Chronicles 22:1 (ESV)

1. The fig tree was cursed.

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. Mark 11:12 (ESV)

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. Mark 11:13 (ESV)

And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it. Mark 11:14 (ESV)

And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." Mark 11:21 (ESV)

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.” Matthew 23:25 (ESV)

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” Matthew 23:27–28 (ESV)

And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’” Luke 13:6–9 (ESV)

2. The temple was judged.

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. Mark 11:15 (ESV)

For zeal for your house has consumed me,... Psalm 69:9 (ESV)

And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. Mark 11:16 (ESV)

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.” Mark 11:17 (ESV)

“And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant— these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” Isaiah 56:6–7 (ESV)

“Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name’s sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.” 1 Kings 8:41–43 (ESV)

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. Mark 11:18 (ESV)

And when evening came they went out of the city. Mark 11:19 (ESV)

3. A cursed fig tree is a dead fig tree.

As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” Mark 11:20–21 (ESV)