

Matthew 21-11-07a

Good morning, welcome to Sunday services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the seventh day of November 2021. We're in Matthew chapter 21 and we are going to cover quite a bit of ground this morning.

Strap in, buckle your belt, be sure you've got at least something to write with. There's a couple of things you may want to add to the margin of your Bible at this particular passage. It is a fascinating look.

And if I was going to title this lesson, I would call it faith that moves mountains. There's much more to that than meets the eye. I'm very gratified to have learned some things I did not know about this particular section of scripture.

And it's going to be a fun thing to look at this morning. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study, on our fellowship, on our worship through the word and through music and through the gifts that God has given to each and every one of us. And then we'll begin.

Father, what a privilege it is to share this time with like-minded believers who treasure your word, who love your son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are so grateful for the many expressions of your grace and faithfulness toward us in ways that both we see and that we don't see. We pray that as we look together at this portion of your word, that your Holy Spirit will bless it to each of our hearts, help us to see how pertinent and how applicable it is in our circumstances until that day that you send the Lord Jesus to collect us and take us to himself and present us before your throne.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen. We're going to begin by reading our passage and we're going to read quite a bit beginning with the withering of the fig tree in Matthew chapter 21 verse 18.

In verse 17, Matthew notes that Jesus having spoken about the mouths of babes and nursing infants that we saw last time, left them and went out of the city to Bethany and he lodged there. This took place on Monday. There is no notation of time here in Matthew because he is speaking thematically.

We'll talk about that more in a moment, but this is Monday morning in verse 18. In the morning as he returned to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he came to it and found nothing on it, but leaves and said to it, let no fruit grow on you ever again.

Immediately the fig tree withered away. When the disciples saw it, they marveled saying, how did the fig tree wither away so soon? So Jesus answered and said to them, assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was

done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing you will receive.

Now, when he came to the temple, into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted him as he was teaching and said, by what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority? But Jesus answered and said to them, I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, where was it from, from heaven or from men? They reasoned among themselves saying, if we say from heaven, he will say to us, why then did you not believe him? But if we say from men, we fear the multitude for all count John as a prophet. So they answered Jesus and said, we do not know.

He said to them, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. But what do you think? A man had two sons and he came to the first and said, son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not.

But afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said, likewise, and he answered and said, I go, sir. But he did not go.

Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to him, the first. Jesus said to them, assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but tax collectors and harlots believed him.

And when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him here. Another parable. And then he tells the parable of the wicked vine dressers that are, uh, leased a vineyard by the owner and they abuse those who are sent to collect the earnings from that vineyard.

Uh, we'll be talking about that a bit later, but I want to note that it is present here because these two parables, the parables of the two sons and the parable of the wicked vine dresser, these two parables together bracket what Jesus has said in answer to the question about his authority. And it begins with the way withering of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple in reverse order, cleansing of the temple, withering of the fig tree. Then you have this back and forth about authority.

Then you have the two parables, two scenes at the beginning, what Jesus says, and then two parables. So in a symmetry of that nature, what's important is what's right in the middle. And it is in verses 21 and 22.

That's at the heart. So let's begin by looking at the withering of the fig tree. Now we have seen this in our study of Mark.

We have noted it a couple of times when we've done studies of the week leading up to

the crucifixion and the nature of fig trees, how they leaf out and they have an early fruit. And then later on that ripens and becomes a mature fruit. And that the fact that this tree at this season, which is Passover in the spring, it is not the season for figs and this tree to be fully leafed out.

And for Jesus to expect that there might be this early fruit on it to satisfy his hunger, indicates that this tree stood in a very favored position. During Passover week, most fig trees wouldn't be leafy like this. And so we begin in verse 17 after Jesus had been in the temple and had cleansed it on Monday.

And he left and went out of the city to Bethany Monday night and lodged there. Now in the morning, as he returned to the city, he was hungry and seeing a fig tree by the road. He came to it and found nothing on it, but leaves and said to it, let no fruit grow on you ever again.

Immediately the fig tree withered away. Keep your finger here and turn over to Mark chapter 11 where we get a better sense of the chronology. And I may even have misstated it myself just now.

So the parade into the city with the clothing on the ground, the waving, the palm branches, Hosanna, and so on took place on Sunday in Mark chapter 11, Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple in Mark 11, 11, when he looked around at all things, the hour was already late. He went out to Bethany with the 12. So he spends Sunday night in Bethany.

Now the next day, Monday, when they had come out from Bethany, he was hungry seeing from afar, a fig tree having leaves. He went to see if perhaps he would find something on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves for it was not the season for figs in response.

Jesus said to it, let no one eat fruit from you ever again. And his disciples heard it. You get the idea that this tree sat a little bit off the road.

And as they're coming down the road toward the city, Jesus sees this tree sitting at a little distance and he walks over to it. The disciples stay on the road. They don't have any real reason to follow him.

They don't know why he's momentarily leaving the road could be one of several reasons. And when Jesus looks at the tree, examines it and doesn't find what he's looking for, they overhear him say, let no one eat fruit from you ever again. His disciples heard it.

And this implies that they heard it from a distance. They overhear it. So they came to Jerusalem.

This is Monday. Then we have the cleansing of the temple after Jesus talks to the fig

tree. When you come back to Matthew, you have the cleansing of the temple.

And then speaking to the fig tree, Matthew reorders this material, not chronologically, but thematically. And this is really fascinating. We have seen this before.

Um, if you turn back to Matthew chapter eight, Matthew chapter eight, this has been over a year and a half ago that we were at this part of Matthew. But you remember that, uh, the demon possessed men in eight 28, uh, the gurgles scenes, the gathering area, uh, two men coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce that no one could pass that way. They cried out.

What have we to do with you? Uh, Jesus, you son of God, have you come to torment us before the time a good way off the herd of swines, the demons begged him cast us, permit us to go in, et cetera. And, uh, the swine run violently down the steep place into the sea parish in the water. Um, but when you look at the parallel accounts of this in, in Mark and in Luke, uh, it only mentions the one man possessed with the Legion.

And here there are two, uh, you remember Bartimaeus blind Bartimaeus on the outskirts of Jericho. And in one gospel account, it's, it's two blind men in another gospel account. It's only Bartimaeus.

Um, and while these accounts are easily reconciled, if there are two men and you only talk about one, it is not a contradiction to leave out mention of the other in the same way, Jesus coming in the morning and looking at a fig tree for figs, not finding any and saying, let no one eat fruit from you ever again. And the disciples noting the rapidity with which this mature tree full of leaves withers away. The fact that a day passes that Matthew does not mention isn't germane to the truth.

You can easily reconcile these. You go to Mark and find out that this took place over 24 hours. Uh, and it's not a contradiction.

It is simply emphasis. We do this all the time. When we tell stories, we don't necessarily, well, depending on how verbose we are and how much we like the sound of our own voice, we may include every little detail or we may, we may summarize, we may synthesize, we may just give the pertinent details and under cross examination, someone can, can ascertain that more things went on.

This happens throughout scripture. And I would submit that it goes all the way back to the creation account where there is a summary of what God did in the days of creation. And it is compressed.

It is thematic. It is almost symbolic in its brevity. The details in which God created this world and put life in it and on it and organized it and planted the garden and placed the man.

And later the woman in it is highly compressed. We have just essential details. Same thing in Genesis chapter six.

There's a lot more that than meets the eye. When you look at the sons of God, seeing the daughters of men, that they are beautiful and taking all whom they desire, taking in marriage and God making a pronouncement that there is not going to be personal, divine being presence for rulership for much longer. And very soon you have Noah and the ark and so on.

These accounts are often given to us the way Matthew gives us the fig tree story. And so we want to be careful about making dogmatic statements based on passages that suggest to us that they are compressed or that they are a synthesis or that they are a summary. There is nothing wrong.

There is nothing incorrect. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, but we want to look at the purpose. And that brings me to the point as we come back to Matthew chapter 21 of what Jesus says.

It says in verse 19, immediately the fig tree withered away immediately is a relative term. It doesn't mean that it shriveled and shrank before their very eyes. Behold, I come quickly.

Behold, I come immediately. The idea here is that there is a very unexpected and in this case, supernatural suddenness to the withering. We know from Mark that this took place over a 24 hour period because the next day when they pass this same tree, the disciples having heard Jesus say, let no one eat fruit.

Jesus didn't say be you withered and shriveled and die on the trunk here, die from the roots up. But it is visibly dead the next day. And for a mature tree, now we've seen trees around here.

We're in an area full of trees and something that bursts out with leaves in the spring. By mid summer, you say, wow, this branch or this entire tree has just kind of mysteriously shriveled in the middle of the summer. Was it lack of water? Was it a disease? Did it old age? All the rest of the trees around this thing are doing fine.

And this particular one, the leaves have turned brown and they're dropping off and it's nowhere near fall. And you would say, well, that's sudden. This tree could be 40, 50, 60 years old.

And out of nowhere, we've got one right in front of the house here. And this tree has been here forever. My dad built a deck around it when my grandmother lived up here.

And it's a two trunk tree. It's a V-shaped tree. They unite right at the ground, just above the ground.

And then there's these two great trunks that come up. Well, this summer out of nowhere, one half of that tree has just lost its life. And we're going to have to do something, saw the other one off and put a tabletop on it or something.

But I kind of grieve over it because we've been looking at this tree specifically, this double tree for decades. And I don't know why one half of it has decided to quit. Well, the disciples remark on this immediateness.

Matthew purposely, Matthew was here. Matthew is one of the disciples. He overheard Jesus.

He saw this take place. He knows the chronology, but he distills it and synthesizes it because his message is different than Mark's. And it is not a contradiction.

It's not a mistake. It's not an error. It is done for thematic reasons.

There is no disharmony between Matthew and Mark, just as there is no disharmony between two demoniacs or one, two blind men or one in Jericho and so on. So, but here's our point. Let no fruit grow on you ever again.

Immediately the fig tree withered away in a very supernatural and sudden fashion. This tree is dead. When the disciples saw it, when did they see it? Tuesday morning.

You read Mark. When the disciples saw it, they marveled saying, how did the fig tree wither away so soon? It's very interesting. We've done the miracles of Christ.

And what is the nature of those miracles? Peter's mother-in-law has a fever and she's healed. Dead girl is not dead, but sleeping. She is raised.

A young man being carried out to be buried. Jesus touches the stretcher and he comes to life. Lepers, blind, lame, deaf, mute, demon-possessed.

Jesus' miracles are universally positive in nature, aren't they? Stilling of the wind and waves. The disciples are fearful. They think they're going to die.

Jesus calms the storm and allays their fears with his actions and with his presence and with his words. He uses all three to take these professional sailors out of panic and back to where they can learn and grow spiritually. This action here is the one exception in Jesus' entire earthly ministry.

This is a destructive miracle. Normally Jesus gives life. Jesus gives health.

Jesus gives stability and rectitude and benefit when he invokes the power of the Holy Spirit to act in a supernatural fashion. This is the one exception. It's right at the end of his ministry.

Even in the arrest, when Malchus' ear gets lopped off, Jesus is going to heal it and put it back on. This is the one exception, and it's so important to figure out why. And to do that, it's best to let Jesus explain and illustrate and make sense of what he does.

So that's why this is the central section. It comes after the two scenes of cleansing the temple and withering the fig tree. Jesus is going to speak here.

And coupled with these words, you have the questioning of his authority by those in the temple precincts. And then you have the two parables. So we have two scenes.

We have two teaching sections by Jesus. And then we have those two parables that are illustrations and explorations of the teaching that is distilled here in the middle. So this is the first of two.

Jesus answered and said to them, they say, how did the fig tree wither away so soon? This is the disciples question. What is the authority's question in verse 23? By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority? The disciples see a manifestation of Jesus' authority because he tells the tree, let no one eat fruit from you again. And the fig tree dies.

They ask the question, how did it wither away so soon? And you get the idea that how stands in for why and what that seems so out of character with what we normally see you do. How and why did this happen? So Jesus answered and said to them, assuredly, the old King James, verily, I say to you, and isn't it interesting? Jesus so often doesn't directly answer questions that are asked to him. How did it wither away so soon? Well, I asked of my father, I invoked the power of the Holy spirit.

I wanted to make a symbolic statement. Jesus doesn't say any of that. What does he say? He talks about the disciples faith.

How did the fig tree wither away so soon? Jesus said to them, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, he turns the corner. He's not just answering the question in simple terms. He goes straight to what should you learn from this? What should you observe and interpret and apply from this? He cuts right to the heart of the matter.

If you have faith and do not doubt you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing you will receive. Now let's think about this.

What's the nature of the other miraculous actions that they have seen Jesus to give sight to the blind. Did Jesus ever turn to the disciples and say, you know, if you have faith and do not doubt, you can give the blind sight. You can give the deaf hearing.

You can enable the lame to walk. You can heal lepers and raise the dead. We have him

giving that command when he sends them out.

But this particular action, which is destructive is the one that he picks out and says, if you have faith and do not doubt, you can do this same thing. And he details it in the case. There's any doubt you can not only do what was done to the fig tree.

I have withered this fig tree. I have pronounced judgment on this fig tree and it's no longer alive. You can do what was done to the fig tree.

And I say, wow, didn't Jesus send us into the world and leave us here to represent him, to be a blessing, to be a light, to draw people to the father and so on. Jesus says, if you have faith and do not doubt, you can do what was done to the fig tree, which is a destructive act of judgment. There's no getting around it.

This is a destructive act of judgment. The tree is no longer alive. It was there.

It was given opportunity. It leafed out. It's in a sunny watered spot.

It is unique and different than the other fig trees that might be in the area. It is favored. It's fully leafed out at this time.

And Jesus goes to it expecting fruit, even though it's not the season for figs. And when he doesn't find it, he pronounces judgment on it and it dies. Jesus says, in answer to the question, well, if you have faith and do not doubt, you can do what was done to the fig tree.

Think about that. You can pray and the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man will avail much and you can anoint the sick and they'll get well if you pray and have faith and do not doubt. It's destructive.

Well, how do we typically answer questions like this? How do we start looking for an answer? What is the universal principle of Bible interpretation? What are the three rules of Bible interpretation? When you've got a question about a passage like this, how do you solve it? Context. What's the second rule? Context. What's the third? Context, context, context, context.

I have helpfully outlined the structure of this section. What are the two things we just saw before Jesus gives these words about faith and not doubting the cleansing of the temple? Was that helpful or was that judgmental? What do you think? Judgment, withering of the fig tree, helpful or judgmental? Judgmental. Let's talk about the two parables, which we helpfully read at the beginning of class.

The sons who were requested by their father to go work in the vineyard. What is the point of that parable? Harlots and tax collectors are going to go into the kingdom before you. It's judgment, right? How about the the murderous vineyard workers in the parable

that follows? Helpful or judgmental? What do you think the owner is going to do after they kill his son? And the people themselves answer and say, he's going to destroy those vineyard workers, hire others who will give him the fruits of that vineyard.

Judgment. So if we've got judgment, judgment, Jesus saying something, then judgment, judgment, that thing right in the middle, probably contextually is speaking about judgment, right? So the common proof texting approach to Jesus saying, if you have faith, you can say to this mountain, be removed. We think, oh, I've got a mountain.

I've got a problem. I can just pray to the Lord. And if I have faith, nothing doubting God will pick that mountain up and cast it into the sea.

And we don't stop and ask ourselves, what does this mountain represent? Is it a difficulty? Is there anything here that where Jesus is having a difficulty or the disciples are having a, the only difficulty is that people are rejecting the one who has come to deliver them, right? But this is not a circumstantial difficulty context. What is the context? Rejection of divine truth, rejection of divine presence, and judgment, concomitant judgment. Jesus says, if you have faith and do not doubt, you can do what was done to the fig tree.

What did Jesus do to the fig tree? What is he going to do to this nation by his presence and by his words in confronting them with sin and righteousness and judgment in person, something he's going to hand off to the Holy spirit. When he leaves, Jesus says to the disciples, what I have just done with my presence, with my presentation, with my words of truth that force people to choose, you will do what is done to the fig tree. If you have faith, why do you need faith? And why can you not be doubting? Did Jesus have any doubt when he confronted these people, what he's about to say to these people down at the temple, these chief priests and, and rulers, elders, does Jesus have any doubt that they are hypocrites, that they are rejecters, that they refuse to acknowledge divine authority? Is there any shadow of doubt in Jesus mind that he is right in representing his father and doing the father's will, and they are wrong in rejecting the father and the father's communicators, the father's truth, the father's word and will for them.

There's no shadow of doubt in Jesus mind. We know the fig tree represents Israel. And we know that when Jesus comes to it and it is in a favored position and is leafed out and seemingly prosperous, but it is not bearing the fruit for which it was created and designed and planted in a favored position.

And Jesus says, if you're just going to soak up the sun and the water and occupy this favored position and not bear fruit, you're not fulfilling your purpose. You don't need to be here. Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.

If you can't produce fruit when you're supposed to in this unique and favored position, you're going to be replaced. People are having to go to some other tree to get fruit in the

same way that the wicked vine dressers need to be replaced and the vineyard given to those who will work it and bring forth its fruit as we'll see in the second session. So keep that in mind now.

That's our first point. What Jesus says here is a talking about the tree. Now he's going to talk about the mountain.

Oh, my goodness. Read verse 21. You will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done.

Do you notice that there is a specific mountain in view? He doesn't say you will say to a mountain or you will say to some mountain. What mountain is he talking about? Verse 18 in the morning, as he returned to the city, this mountain, what mountain is he looking at? What mountain is the city on? What mountain is the city on? This is Mount Zion, right? This is Mount Moriah. This is this mountain.

He's not talking about the Mount of Olives. He's already, he's fixing to enter the city. The mountain he's looking at is Mount Zion.

It's the Mount on which the city he is entering is placed. You will say to this mountain, what does the fig tree represent? Israel, the people of God, right? What does this mountain represent? What is the entire testimony of Old Testament scripture when it comes to this mountain? What does this mountain represent? We just assume when we say, oh, faith that will move mountains, that it's some difficulty, some obstacle that's in our path. It's not any old mountain.

It's not our mountain. It's God's mountain. This mountain.

Take a look with me at Isaiah chapter. Well, I'm going to, I'm going to take you straight to the chase here. Let's go to Micah chapter four.

I don't need to give as many passages as I've got here. Micah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Micah chapter four. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and people shall flow to it.

What season is this that our episode is taking place? What week is this? It's Passover week. It's one of the assembly feasts, right? It's the first of the assembly feasts in the spring. So hordes of people are descending to where, where do they assemble this mountain? It shall come to pass in the latter days, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and peoples shall flow to it.

Many nations shall come and say, come and let us go up to what mountain? The mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways and we

shall walk in his paths for out of Zion. The law shall go forth.

Wait a minute. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. What mountain did the law go forth from? What mountain did Moses climb and bring the tablets down and smash them and have to go back up and get another set? What mountain was that? Sinai, Mount Sinai.

It's good to go back and review these things, isn't it? Mount Sinai. So what's this about? Out of Zion, the law shall go forth and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples and rebuke strong nations afar off.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Now you recognize this, right? Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. Everyone shall sit under what? His vine, wicked vineyard workers and his what? Fig tree.

How could you look at this passage and not think when you're steeped in the old Testament as these people were? He's talking to the chief priests and the elders of the people in our very next verses. Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree. No one shall make them afraid for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

No one shall make them afraid. Just make a little asterisk in your mind about that, about fear and what people fear. No one shall make them afraid for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

All people walk each in the name of his God, but we will walk in the name of the Lord, our God forever and ever. This mountain. Now Jesus has come for judgment for judgment.

I have come into this world. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Jesus is going to say several chapters ahead of us here.

Remember Matthew 28, everybody quotes the, uh, the quote unquote, great commission, Matthew 28, 19, and 20. As you go make disciples, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever. I've commanded you low.

I'm with you always, even at the end of the age. Remember that? What about Matthew 28, 18 doesn't get quoted near as often as it should with the quote, great commission. All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, all authority.

What is the question going to be from the chief priests and the elders? By what authority do you do these things? Who gave you this authority? Jesus is telling his disciples, you will have judgment authority to say to a fig tree, be withered you, how does Jesus accomplish this judgment? It is his presence. It is his presentation. It is God's power at work in him and through him making an issue of sin, righteousness, and judgment, right? Because he is indwelt and imbued and empowered by God's Holy Spirit.

Oh, wait a minute. Isn't that us? Are we not here as the body of Christ imbued and enabled and empowered by God's Holy Spirit? What is the role of the Holy Spirit that Jesus says he will convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment? Jesus says to the disciples, if you have faith and do not doubt your presence, your presentation, the power of the Holy Spirit that is in you is going to do the same thing you have just seen me do. And that is make an issue of acceptance or rejecting, rejecting of the truth.

That's what withering the fig tree is. You should have fruit and you don't. And I am here to tell you that because you are not responding to the presence and the power and the presentation of God's truth and are fruitless judgment is coming judgment.

There are consequences for disregarding the presence and the power of God. There are consequences for disregarding divine truth. And I'm here to tell you what they are.

No one's going to eat from you ever again. This mountain, the mount of the Lord's house is going to disappear. You can talk to my brother Matthew.

He knows about some articles that he was sharing with me a few years ago that by the best estimates of a lot of people who have gone to the temple mount, looking at the dome of the rock and what are the chances that the temple can be reconstructed. The very area of the mountain where the temple of God used to sit, it didn't sit where the dome of the rock sits. The very dirt where the temple sat is gone.

The whole area is gone. The foundations of the temple, there are metric tons of earth that were removed. All of the stones were removed.

The mountain itself, the part of the mountain on which the temple sat is by good triangulation gone. The fig tree withered. The mountain has been moved as it were.

And there is no, there's the dirt isn't even there to build the temple where it was the first two times. There is a great hollow there. Judgment.

It was judged in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. It was judged in the days of the Romans and Titus and the legions who came in in 70 AD 70. There is judgment coming on any people that rejects the presence and the power and the presentation of truth.

We are here as spiritual representatives. We are here as temples of the Holy spirit. Jesus goes every day to the temple Sunday.

He went to the temple Monday. He went to the temple Tuesday. He goes to the temple.

And when you take a look, as we go to our break here in, uh, right after he says these words about the fig tree and the mountain be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done. Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing you will receive. We'll revisit this in the second session.

But as we close this first portion, look at verse 23. Now, when he came into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people confronted him as he was doing what, what is Jesus doing at the temple teaching love to have an account. I think some of the hidden manna, when we get to the days of the millennial kingdom and beyond that, that Jesus is going to share with the overcomers, we will get transcripts.

We will get to visit these Bible classes that Jesus gave Jesus on Tuesday at the temple is teaching. Wouldn't you love to hear what he was saying? He knows that in two days, he's going to be on, on trial. And in less than three days, he's going to be crucified.

What is he doing? He's doing that for which the father sent him. He goes to the temple and he is teaching. He is presenting the truth.

His presence is there. This is the temple, but this mountain is going to be removed in judgment. He is warning.

He is pleading. He is presenting divine truth. And we're going to get just a, an excerpt here.

When we look at these two parables that are coming up, but by way of application, we, with the presence and power of the Holy spirit, with knowledge of the word of God, what is our role as body of Christ? We need to stand up and point out sin, not shrink. Jesus says you can only do this. If you have faith and do not doubt, not niggling about this policy or that piece of legislation or this thing that happened in government or in society, what kind of truth is supposed to be represented on this mountain and in this fig tree, the old Testament people of God, did they argue about whether different parts of the law of Moses were justified or vindicated or ought or ought not to be done? Well, don't eat pork is bad for your health.

This is why God gave us the command. What kind of truth are we going to be political? Are we going to be social? Are we going to be arguing at the earthly level? What kind of fruit is Jesus looking for on this tree? Why is the tree condemned? Because it had bad social policies, because it condoned slavery, because it, uh, kissed up to the Romans. What kind of truth is their conviction and judgment for spiritual truth, spiritual identity, fidelity to God and to his word and to his will.

Now, this may work itself out in laws and policies and social conventions and so on, but don't mistake the illustration or the example for the central truth. The fig tree is withered. And Jesus says to his disciples who will be apostles and will be church age believers, you will do this also do what judgment for spiritual apathy, spiritual indifference, spiritual rejection.

We represent Jesus Christ. What would Jesus Christ say to people who dismiss God, who dismiss God's word, who dismiss Jesus Christ? Well, when we come back and look at this

in the second session, it's going to be manifestly clear what Jesus was talking about. When he mentions this fig tree and this mountain, he is not talking about praying to get over your difficulties.

He is talking about representing God as Jesus Christ does here to make the issue clear that rejection has consequences. Rejection has consequences. If we do not represent that, we are not shining as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

People should look at us, see our lives and glorify our father who is in heaven, not pick political sides, not take arguments on social issues or should I do this or not do that. It is divine truth. That is what is at issue.

That is the life and death issue for the fig tree. That is the existence or non-existence issue for God's holy mountain. God's going to take his own mountain and blow it away and drop it into the sea as it were.

Why? You did not know the hour of your deliverance. How often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks, you would have none of me. The issue is Christ.

The issue is God the father. The issue is sin and righteousness and judgment. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we are going to see the other half of this beautiful symmetry and the teaching that Jesus gives on this occasion just really comes to life with this context.