

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

## *Living in the Spirit*

### Lesson 2: God's Temple

#### Bible Text

Mark 11:11-19

#### Memory Verse

"He taught them saying, 'Is it not written, "My house is to be called a house of prayer for all the nations"? You have made it a place of robbers.'" (Mark 11:17)

#### Word List

**curse:** to say words that are believed to have power; to cause trouble for someone or something

**disrespect:** speech or actions which shows that you do not think someone or something is valuable, or important.

**sacrifice:** to kill a person or animal in a religious ceremony as an offering to please God

Almost all people take history classes in school. The classes teach facts, dates, and names. Often, people learn the facts, dates, and names just long enough to pass the class. They do not really remember or understand the history lessons they have studied.

Many great movies tell people about history, too. Good historic movies are a great way to really learn and understand history.

Jesus taught His followers in many different ways. Sometimes He preached sermons, and sometimes He told stories or just talked to people. Jesus taught with actions, too. When people saw Jesus' actions and heard what He said, they could learn and remember important truths.

In this passage from Mark's Gospel, Jesus shows us how God wants His people to live lives that honor His Holy Spirit.

#### Jesus Arrives (Mark 11:11)

**11 Jesus came to Jerusalem and went into the house of God. He looked around at everything. Then He went with the twelve followers to the town of Bethany because it was late.**

Jesus spent about three years traveling with His followers all around the country of Judea. In the last week of His earthly life, He came to the capital city of Jerusalem. A large group of people came with Him.

People were excited that Jesus was coming. Many thought He was going to become king. Some thought He would lead the poor people into a war to get their country back from Roman rule.

By going to the Temple first, Jesus showed that worshiping God was the most important thing for Him. It is still the most important thing for us, too.

## **A Fig Tree with No Fruit**

**(Mark 11:12-14)**

**12 They came from Bethany the next morning. Jesus was hungry.**

**13 Along the road He saw a fig tree with leaves on it. He went over to see if it had any fruit. He saw nothing but leaves. It was not the right time for figs.**

**14 Jesus said to the tree, “Let no one ever again eat fruit from you.” His followers heard Him say it.**

Fig trees are common in the Middle East. The fig’s fruit is good to eat, but the leaves are not much good for anything.

Jesus wanted fruit because He was hungry. But this fig tree had none. Jesus **cursed** the fig tree. He said, “Let no one ever again eat fruit from you.”

Jesus cursed the fig tree for a deeper meaning than His hunger. In the Bible, the fig tree is sometimes used as a picture for the people of Israel. A fig tree gives shade from the hot sun. In the same way, God wanted to shelter His chosen people from danger. God wanted to care for His chosen people and provide for their needs.

Jesus saw this fig tree with no fruit. It was not as beautiful and as useful as it could have been. In the same way, the people of Israel were not as beautiful and useful as they could have been. People were not worshipping

God as fully as they should. The religious leaders were not the good people they should have been. When Jesus cursed the fig tree with no fruit, He was acting out God’s disappointment with the people of Israel.

In Mark 11:20, we read the rest of the story about the fig tree: “In the morning they passed by the fig tree. They saw it was dried up from the roots.” This was a miracle. Trees do not wither and die overnight.

In this way, Jesus showed what could happen to a nation that does not repent from its sins. It will wither and die.

## **A Temple with No Worship**

**(Mark 11:15-19)**

**15 Then they came to Jerusalem. Jesus went into the house of God. He began to make the people leave who were selling and buying in the house of God. He turned over the tables of the men who changed money. He turned over the seats of those who sold doves.**

**16 He would not allow anyone to carry a pot or pan through the house of God.**

**17 He taught them saying, “Is it not written, ‘My house is to be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? You have made it a place of robbers.”**

**18 The teachers of the Law and the religious leaders of the Jews heard it. They tried to find some way to put Jesus to death. But they were**

**afraid of Him because all the people were surprised and wondered about His teaching.**

**19 When evening came, Jesus and His followers went out of the city.**

In those days, the Jewish people met in small groups in their hometowns to study the Bible and pray. But the Temple in Jerusalem was different. Since the time of Moses, God told His people that He would meet with them in a holy place. They brought their special offerings to honor God. They brought **sacrifices** to show they were sorry for their sins. They came to worship and pray to God.

But when Jesus went to the Temple, it was not a place where people could easily worship God. The religious leaders had rules about how people must worship. They had to buy special animals, such as doves, for their sacrifices. They had to use special coins for their offerings. The only place to get these animals or coins was inside the Temple.

The people selling the animals and

coins were getting rich by taking money from poor people who came to worship. When Jesus saw the people buying and selling, He became angry. This was not the way God wanted people to do things in His Temple!

At the same time, people were walking through the Temple with pots, pans, and other items. It was a shortcut from one part of the city to another. This foot traffic was **disrespecting** God's holy Temple.

Jesus could not allow these things to keep happening. He pushed their work tables over. He let the doves loose from their cages. He chased away the people making money. Then Jesus spoke words that were written by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 56:7: "Is it not written, 'My house is to be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? You have made it a place of robbers."

Jesus got rid of the people who were not doing what God wanted in the Temple. This should have made religious leaders happy, but instead, they wanted to kill Him! The religious leaders were afraid, though, because many people loved Jesus and wondered about His teaching. By the end of that week, the religious leaders found a way to kill Jesus anyway.

### Things to Think About

1. Why do you think Jesus cursed the fig tree for not having fruit when it was not the season for fruit?
2. Why do you think the teachers of the Law and the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus after He cleared out the Temple?
3. What are some ways that people disrespect God's church today?
4. What should you do with and for your body if it is a temple for God's Holy Spirit?

### Things to Remember

Jesus cursed the fig tree to show He was disappointed that it did not have figs as it

was supposed to. He was angry that the Temple was not being used for prayer. The Temple was not being honored as a place for God's Holy Spirit.

Today, we have churches instead of the Temple. Our church buildings are where God's people come together to worship and pray. We are to use our church buildings in ways that honor God, not disrespect Him.

In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul wrote, "Do you not know that your body is a house of God where the Holy Spirit lives? God gave you His Holy Spirit. Now you belong to God. You do not belong to yourselves. God bought you with a great price. So honor God with your body. You belong to Him."

In Jesus' day, the Temple was to be a holy place of worship and prayer. In our day, our bodies are to be holy and filled with worship and prayer. Let us not be like the disappointing fig tree that did not produce fruit as it should have. Let us respect God's church and His people. Let us be filled with God's Holy Spirit, following His commands, loving and serving one another.

---

**Mark 11:11-19**

**11 Jesus came to Jerusalem and went into the house of God. He looked around at everything. Then He went with the twelve followers to the town of Bethany because it was late.**

**12 They came from Bethany the next morning. Jesus was hungry.**

**13 Along the road He saw a fig tree with leaves on it. He went over to see if it had any fruit. He saw nothing but leaves. It was not the right time for figs.**

**14 Jesus said to the tree, "Let no one ever again eat fruit from you." His followers heard Him say it.**

**15 Then they came to Jerusalem. Jesus went into the house of God. He began to make the people leave who were selling and buying in the house of God. He turned over the tables of the men who changed money. He turned over the seats of those who sold doves.**

**16 He would not allow anyone to carry a pot or pan through the house of God.**

**17 He taught them saying, "Is it not written, 'My house is to be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? You have made it a place of robbers."**

**18 The teachers of the Law and the religious leaders of the Jews heard it. They tried to find some way to put Jesus to death. But they were afraid of Him because all the people were surprised and wondered about His teaching.**

**19 When evening came, Jesus and His followers went out of the city.**