

The Gospel According to Mark

Confrontation Over Authority

Mark 11:20-33



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Introduction:

I. THE LESSONS FROM THE FIG TREE (vs. 20-26)

A. A Word About Power (vs. 20-24)

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

“Being reminded, Peter said to Him, ‘Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.’ ”

“And Jesus answered saying to them, ‘Have faith in God...’ ”

James 1:6-7

“ ‘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.’ ”

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

B. A Word About Prayer (vs. 25-26)

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

“ ‘But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.’ ”

II. THE LESION WITH THE TEMPLE FIGURES (vs. 27-33)

A. How They Confronted Him (vs. 27-28)

“They came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him...”

“and began saying to Him, ‘By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?’ ”

B. How He Confounded Them (vs. 29-33)

“And Jesus said to them, ‘I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.’ ”

“ ‘Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me.’ ”

“They began reasoning among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, from heaven, he will say, then why did you not believe him?’ ”

“ ‘But shall we say, from men?’ – they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet.”

“Answering Jesus, they said, ‘We do not know.’ ”

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’ ”

“Thus in the gospel of Mark, as in John, Jesus appears as God incarnate in His bearing, speech, and activity. This astonishes, baffles, and even offends His contemporaries, from His closest circles outward. The religious leaders in particular regard His laying claim to a realm that belonged properly to God as the gravest possible trespass. Jesus gives the distinct impression, however, that He is not a trespasser but is entering into His rightful property.” – James R. Edwards

Conclusion: Why do people refuse to follow Jesus?

- 1) They do not want to submit to His authority (vs. 27-28).
- 2) They refuse to examine honestly the evidence (vs. 29-32).
- 3) They fear men more than they fear God (vs. 32-33).