

[from] its roots [its source of nourishment].²¹ And Peter remembered and said to him [Jesus], “Rabbi [Aramaic for Teacher], look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered [the implication: I see it, but HOW is this possible].”²² And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God.²³ Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says [λαλεῖ, utters – not just to say, but “to utter what God thinks and wills.” (Lenski, 495)] will come to pass, it will be done for him.²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. // When it comes to prayer, let us ♦know God’s Word, ♦pray in harmony with God’s Word, and ♦believe *and not doubt* that God will give us whatever we ask that is in harmony with His Word – *even when what we ask seems impossible!*

- b. Forgiveness –²⁵ And **whenever** you stand praying, **forgive**, if you have **anything** against **anyone**, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” // Us forgiving others is so important that all exceptions are removed – “**whenever**,” “**anything**,” “**anyone**.” Lenski put it this way: “**Whatever attitude the offender takes makes no difference as far as we are concerned; our part is to remit [forgive], and that at once, without stipulating any conditions. That frees us before God.**” (497)

Conclusion: May this Lenten season ♦expose our sin AND ♦assure us of God’s forgiveness through Jesus! *Amen!*

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“The Week that Changed Everything”

Today’s Section of Mark is Based on 11:12-25 ESV

Series Summary: Because of God’s gift of faith by which we trust in Jesus as our Savior, God has changed us ♦from spiritual blindness to sight, ♦from spiritual death to life, ♦from eternity in hell to heaven, ♦from anxiety to peace, ♦from meaninglessness to purpose, and so much more! The awesome changes that God has worked in our lives and how we think, speak, and act as God’s forgiven children are intertwined with Holy Week – *Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday* (even Easter Sunday) – *The Week that Changed Everything!* During this Lenten Season 2012, *both on Wednesdays and Sundays*, we will cover Mark chapters 11-15. Please ♦join us for each service, ♦read each section in advance, and ♦marvel at Jesus’ extraordinary teachings and sacrificial love!

Ash Wednesday – 2012

February 22 → 11:00 & 7:00

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, the season of Lent, which begins today, concludes with Holy Week – *The Week that Changed Everything!* Later in Lent, on Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week, we will return to the beginning of Mark¹ chapter 11. Today, we find ourselves on the day after Palm Sunday, which we call Holy Monday:

1. **Part 1: “Leaves But No Fruit” Mark 11:12-14:** ¹² On the following day [the day after Palm Sunday], when they [Jesus and His disciples] came from Bethany [about two miles from Jerusalem], he [Jesus] was hungry. ¹³ 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

¹ Mark himself was not an apostle, but he worked very closely with Peter.

but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ And he said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it. //

- a. Don't give false expectations – The fig tree, *being in leaf*, caught Jesus' attention. Normally fig trees in Jerusalem would just begin to leaf in March or April; then, *after the leaves were fully out*, they would produce figs in June. In this account it was only March, *but the fullness of the leaves pointed to a good possibility of figs!* Think about your life: As a father, mother, church member, employee, neighbor, etc., are you like a *fully-leafed* but *fruitless* fig tree?
- b. Don't be self-deceived – Faith alone saves, *but faith is never alone!* Real faith produces real fruit, *but faith without works is dead* (James 2:26)!

2. **Part 2: “Radical Action to Remove Sin” Mark 11:15-19:**

- a. Get their attention – ¹⁵ And they [Jesus and His disciples] came to Jerusalem. And he [Jesus] entered the temple [more specifically, the court of the Gentiles] 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. ¹⁶ And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. // ♦Money changing, ♦selling, and ♦purchasing are not sins; however, *doing such things in the court of the Gentiles became sin* – for sellers and buyers! Sin is sometimes connected to **where**, other times to **when**: It's not a sin to go out for Sunday brunch, *but it's wrong to do so INSTEAD of receiving God's spiritual blessings in Divine Service and Bible Class!*

- b. Call them to repent – ¹⁷ And he [Jesus] was teaching them [those who were in the court of the Gentiles] and saying to them, “Is it not written ₁ in the Holy Scriptures, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations [Jews and Gentiles]’? But you have made it a den of robbers [a place where robbers feel safe].” // Think about the situation: The very presence of those who were gathered was indicating their ♦knowledge of the Scriptures, ♦sorrow for sin, and ♦trust in God; nevertheless, *right in God's house*, they continued in their sin AND felt safe – *like robbers in their den!* Lenski wrote: “The church has no refuge for sinners who go on in their sin and think they are safe when they run to the church...” (490) Let us know God's Word of truth and repent!

- c. Let's kill the threat – ¹⁸ And the chief priests and the scribes [the high court of the Jews] heard it [what Jesus said] and were seeking a way to destroy him [Jesus], for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. ¹⁹ And when evening came they went out of the city. // The Jewish leaders wanted the spotlight, but the people were drawn to Jesus instead of them – *not because of His miracles but because of His teaching with authority*. For fear of losing their influence and their jobs, they began planning how to actually end Jesus' life. What is your response to the hard things of God's Word? A deaf ear, rejection or *a plea to God for transformation!*

3. **Part 3: “Faith and Forgiveness” Mark 11:20-25:**

- a. Faith – ²⁰ As they passed by in the morning [on Tuesday], they saw the fig tree withered away ☹️