

## Day Two

### Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

#### What Am I Producing? - Part 1

**Mark 11:12-25(NLT)** *"The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. <sup>13</sup>He noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so he went over to see if he could find any figs. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit. <sup>14</sup>Then Jesus said to the tree, 'May no one ever eat your fruit again!' And the disciples heard him say it. <sup>15</sup>When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, <sup>16</sup>and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace. <sup>17</sup>He said to them, 'The Scriptures declare, "My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations," but you have turned it into a den of thieves.' <sup>18</sup>When the leading priests and teachers of religious law heard what Jesus had done, they began planning how to kill him. But they were afraid of him because the people were so amazed at his teaching. <sup>19</sup>That evening Jesus and the disciples left the city. <sup>20</sup>The next morning as they passed by the fig tree he had cursed, the disciples noticed it had withered from the roots up. <sup>21</sup>Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the tree on the previous day and exclaimed, 'Look, Rabbi! The fig tree you cursed has withered and died!' <sup>22</sup>Then Jesus said to the disciples, 'Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup>I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, "May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea," and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. <sup>24</sup>I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours. <sup>25</sup>But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.'"*

Jesus was not just disliked, Jesus was hated! Do those words shock you? I challenge you to read the gospels and see the level of conflict that surrounds Jesus. You might be surprised. If you grew up in church, you might have been introduced to the "meek and mild" version of Jesus. They do not crucify the meek and mild; they crucify radicals. To say that Jesus was "radical" is truly an understatement of enormous proportions. Why was Jesus so hated? How can the same people who shout "Hosanna" on Sunday shout "Crucify" on Friday? Jesus, the Healer, the One who raised the dead, the multiplier of food, the "blesser" of children, the Teacher of God's Kingdom, why would He be so hated?

Jesus is (excuse the expression) the divine "Messer," the divine "Interferer." Jesus will mess with you before He blesses you. You see, He will confront you with truth at the deepest core of who you are. When we are confronted on that level, we can only respond in one of two ways: Repentance or Rejection! Sadly, most choose the latter.

We see this in the actions of Jesus, the surprise of the disciples, and the anger of the Pharisees.

**Mark 11:12-14(NLT)** *"The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. <sup>13</sup> He noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so he went over to see if he could find any figs. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said to the tree, 'May no one ever eat your fruit again!' and the disciples heard him say it."* If you just casually read it, it almost seems unfair to the tree. Notice what it says; that it was too early in the season for fruit. If that is true and Jesus curses the tree, then it would seem that Jesus is just in a bad mood because He is hungry and His sugar level is low, so He is ticked off at the fig tree and just curses it to death.

At first, it would almost seem that Jesus is just having a bad morning and decides because He can't find any fruit He is going to kill the poor tree. However, this is the week of Passover, so it is safe to say it is around the first week, or so, of April. Why is that important to know? Because towards the end of March the leaves begin to appear for these fig trees, and in about a week, the leaf cover is complete. At the same time, and sometimes even before, there appears quite a crop of small knobs, not the real figs, but a kind of early forerunner. They grow to the size of green almonds and are eaten by travelers when hungry. When they come to maturity, they drop off. These precursors of the true fig are called "*taqsh*" in Palestinian Arabic. Their appearance is an indication of the fully formed appearance of the true fig some six weeks later. So, as Mark says, **"it was too early in the season for fruit."** But if the leaves appear without any of these small fruit "*taqsh*," it is a sign that there will be no figs. The small buds and fruit are indicators of the real fruit to come; no bud, no fruit! Since Jesus found "nothing but leaves" – leaves, without any *taqsh*– he knew that "it was an absolutely hopeless, fruitless fig tree" that only has the appearance of fruit, but no real fruit to enjoy.

Jesus did not throw a temper tantrum and curse the fig tree, even though it was incapable of producing fruit. He cursed the tree because it should have been growing fruit since it had the outward signs of productivity. He curses a non-bearing fig tree on the way to the temple and the disciples overheard it. As always, when it comes to Jesus, He is not interested on how things appear to be, He wants us to know how things really are. He is teaching a lesson without speaking a word to the disciples, but by actually speaking to a fruitless fig tree.

If the Master were hungry and needed to eat of the fruit that your life produces, would He find what He needs? You might think, "Wait a minute. God does not have a need." You are right, but the fruit that He desires from us is always for others. We see this when Jesus ministers to the woman at the well and His disciples return after they went to buy food. He says this to them in **John 4:31-34(NLT)**: *"Meanwhile, the disciples*

*were urging Jesus, 'Rabbi, eat something.'* <sup>32</sup>*But Jesus replied, 'I have a kind of food you know nothing about.'* <sup>33</sup>*'Did someone bring him food while we were gone?' the disciples asked each other.* <sup>34</sup>*Then Jesus explained: 'My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.'"*

Jesus says His food is doing the Father's will, and the Father's will is ministering to people. You might be a beautifully-looking tree, but appearances can be deceiving, according to Jesus. Jesus wants us to know that He needs to be able to trust us to produce fruit that others can enjoy. This radical Messiah is not simply interested in us looking like we are good followers, He wants us to be producing followers. What kind of fruit are you producing? This Easter season, with all of its new challenges, let's focus on how we can minister like Jesus and feed others. You might be surprised that doing the will of God will feed you more than any other kind of food ever will...

**Prayer Focus:**

- **Ask the Holy Spirit to minister truth to you, even though it might be hard.**
- **Pray that you would be a fruit-producing follower of Jesus.**
- **Release any fear and failure to your Father and ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to minister to others.**
- **This week, feed on your Father's will by helping others. Allow the Lord to show you who to minister to.**