

Day Three

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical! What Am I Producing? - Part 2

Mark 11:15-17(NLT) "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, ¹⁶ and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace. ¹⁷ 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.'"

It now seems that Jesus' day is going from bad to worse. He is not only mad at little fig trees, but He is mad at the guys working at the foreign exchange counter and the people selling animals for sacrifice! Maybe His disciples are looking at one another saying, "Man, we should've cooked some breakfast this morning. Jesus is out of control. Someone please find an "Unleavened Bread R Us." We've got to get Him some food!" Now, in the evening, they leave the city. And look at **Mark 11:20-25(NLT)** "The next morning as they passed by the fig tree he had cursed, the disciples noticed it had withered from the roots up. ²¹ 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!' ²² Then Jesus said to the disciples '**Have faith in God.**'"

This was the beginning of the week of Passover and just a day after Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, four days before His crucifixion. He is now, more than ever, beginning to show them, and demonstrate to them, God's Kingdom. So, as they come to the Temple, they are greeted with a scene more like the Temecula Valley Mall during Christmas (remember when we used to go to the mall?) than a place of worship and prayer. Jesus is about to connect the dots for the disciples and show them the results of a fruitless ministry.

It has all the appearance, just like the fig tree, of doing and functioning, but it lacks the very heart of what God's Kingdom is all about. **Matthew 21:12-14(MSG)** "**Jesus went straight to the Temple and threw out everyone** who had set up shop, buying and selling. He kicked over the tables of loan sharks and the stalls of dove merchants. He quoted this text: 'My house was designated a house of prayer; You have made it a hangout for thieves.' **Now there was room for the blind and crippled to get in. They came to Jesus and he healed them.**"

What happens when we have the appearance of fruitfulness without actually producing Godly fruit? **It produces misguided emphasis. Mark 11:17(NLT)** "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.'"

When we do not produce the fruit that Jesus expects us to produce, we must compensate. We have to cover up just like our friends Adam and Mrs. Eve did; co-incidentally, with fig leaves. We have to somehow look like a leafy tree, but understand this: that a leafy tree is not necessarily a fruitful tree. What did it produce in the lives of the Pharisees? It produced selfish, self-righteous attitudes in them, and they were more interested in getting something from people than getting something into people. They were more interested in giving people rules and regulations than allowing God to rule their hearts.

They turned a House of Worship, that is supposed to be filled with prayer and praise, into a house of thieves. They turned a place where people came to worship and connect with God, into a place where people were ripped off and others were excluded! So, this radical Messiah confronts them in the darkest corners of their hearts, and instead of repenting and changing, they simmered in anger and allowed it to boil over.

Whenever we lack true fruit, we love to exclude people and be our own little exclusive club! So, instead of ministering to the ones who truly need ministry, we use what God has given us on wrong priorities. God is building a House for all nations! **Verse 14 of Matthew 21:14(MSG) "Now there was room for the blind and crippled to get in. They came to Jesus and he healed them."**

Once Jesus kicked out the moneychangers and the dove salesmen, there was room for the hurting. Are we still talking about the fig tree? You bet we are. Several times in Scripture the Nation of Israel is referred to as a fig tree, and Jesus is demonstrating to His disciples what fruitful ministry is all about. It is all about people! We need to remove those things that we know hinder people from coming to Jesus and understand that Jesus wants all to come. For God so Loved the good people? The rich People? The spiritual people? No, no, no...God so loved the world!!!! **Acts 10:34-35(CEV) "Peter then said: 'Now I am certain that God treats all people alike.'³⁵ God is pleased with everyone who worships him and does right, no matter what nation they come from."**

When we realize that God loves all and came to save all, it will make us understand that Jesus is not trying to keep people out, we are. When we are fruitless, we practice exclusivity. We have misguided emphasis. We focus on things that do not matter. May we learn this lesson from our Radical Jesus: People matter!! And anything else we place before loving God and loving others, only produces dead religion, not life-giving relationships.

Prayer:

- **Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you where you have been tempted to cover up.**
- **Ask the Lord to help you produce fruit in every season of your life.**
- **Pray that you will be reminded daily what matters to your Father.**
- **Pray to be delivered from dead religion that is misguided and exclusive.**
- **Ask the Lord to touch people this Easter season and bring them into a life-giving relationship with Him.**