

“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’?”



A. Context of Jesus' Question

Jesus enters Jerusalem and begins the final week before his crucifixion and resurrection. His judgment upon a nearby fig tree (symbolizing Israel), brackets his declaration of God's justice in the center of the Temple. The question he asks of the crowd (v.17) recalls Isaiah 56:7, preparing his people for an entirely new way to join the nations in worship.

B. LESSONS FROM TODAY'S PASSAGE: Mark 11:8-25 (ESV)

1. The Owner of the House is Coming. (Sunday)

⁸ And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹ And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” ¹¹ And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

2. Judgment is Coming. (Monday)

¹² On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he 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 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.

3. Justice* is Coming. (Monday) [Justice = “righteousness”; God **IS** absolutely just.]

¹⁵ And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple 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. ¹⁷ And he was teaching them and saying to them, **“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”** ¹⁸ And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. ¹⁹ And when evening came they went out of the city.

4. The Church is Rising to its Calling. (Tuesday)

²⁰ As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹ And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” 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 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. 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.”

C. Questions for Small Groups or Further Study

1. How do you prepare your home for visitors? How has COVID changed that practice for you?
2. How welcome is Jesus in your “home” (your heart)?
3. What are examples of spiritually unfruitful attitudes or activities? What makes them unfruitful?
4. How are you preparing for God's judgment and his justice?
5. How are you joining the nations in prayer before the Lord?
6. What makes prayer powerful? Write out the most powerful prayer you believe God wants you to pray this week.