

Message Notes

The Fig Tree Withered
Matthew 21:18-22
June 4, 2006

Message Outline

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I. The Expectation of Fruit

A. Why is the fruit expected?

1. The tree showed the sign of fruit.
2. The tree was made to bear fruit.

B. What is the fruit produced?

1. "Character" Fruit (Gal. 5:22-23, Rom. 7:4)
2. "Good Works" Fruit (Mt. 7:16-21, Col 1:10, Heb. 12:11)
3. "Worship" Fruit (Heb. 13:15)
4. "Conversion/Changed Lives" Fruit (Jn. 4:36, Rom. 1:13)

C. How is the fruit produced?

1. Abiding (Jn. 15:4-8)
2. Obeying (Mt. 3:8, Jn. 12:24, 15:10)
3. Holding Fast the Word (Lk. 8:15, Col. 1:6)
4. Asking (Jn. 15:16)

II. The Exercise of Faith

A. The Disciple's Amazed Inquiry

B. Jesus' Amazing Invitation

Growth Group Understanding Questions

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1. Read Matthew 21:1-27. What's up with this fig tree cursing? What comes before it? What comes after it? How does this scene relate to the scenes that surround it?
2. Was it harsh and out of line for Jesus to curse the barren fig tree? How is the curse of the fig tree a living parable of sorts? What does it illustrate? How is the withering of the fig tree really an act of compassion toward men?
3. Off the top of your head can you quote one other passage that uses the "fruit" metaphor? What are the four kinds of fruit that a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ is supposed to produce in/through our lives? (How many can you remember without looking at the outline?)
4. Read John 15:1-17 and circle all the references to fruit. This passage mentions three of the ways that fruit is produced. What are they?
5. What do you do with Jesus' amazing inquiry in response to the disciples' amazed inquiry? What is the qualification to this promise in I John 5:14-15?

Growth Group Application Questions

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1. What was most challenging or new in the text/message this week?
2. How does this week's message build upon last week's message?
3. Why is it so easy for us, like the Pharisees, to go through the motions, play church and play the Christian game together?
4. Should we be more worried about our own fruitfulness or someone else's fruitfulness? How do we inspect our own fruitfulness? Why is that so hard to do?
5. Of the four ways that spiritual fruit is produced in our lives, which ones are happening in your life? Which is more of a battle or the easiest for you to neglect?
6. Is there some big audacious thing you are believing God and asking God for in your life? Something so huge and extraordinary that if it happened it could only be because God did it? What might that look like at Grace Church? What might we believe God for and ask God for together?