

BIBLE READING DAY 34, FRIDAY: APRIL 1

Holy Week, Tuesday: The Withered Fig Tree

Mark 11:20-33 (Matthew 21:20-27; Luke 20:1-8)

Now as they passed by in the morning, they found the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered away.”

Then Jesus, answering, said to them, “Have faith in God. I tell you truly, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and cast into the sea!’ and does not doubt in his heart but has faith to believe that what he says will come to pass, it shall be done for him.

“Therefore, I say to you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

Now when Jesus had entered the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you that authority?”

“I will also ask you one question,” replied Jesus, “and if you answer me, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or merely of human origin? Answer me!”

Then they began to reason among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘It was merely of human origin,’ we will be in trouble with the people, for they all regard John as a prophet.”

So, they answered Jesus, “We do not know.”

“Then I will not tell you by what authority I do these things,” replied Jesus.

Judas’s Conspiracy

Matthew 26:1–5, 14–16 (Mark 14:1-2, 10-11; Luke 22:1-6)

And when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover will come. Then the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the High Priest, Caiaphas, and discussed how they might arrest Jesus by some sort of craftiness and kill him.

“But not during the feast,” they said, “or it might cause an uprising among the people.”

Then one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him into your hands?”

And they weighed him out thirty pieces of silver, and from that time, he watched for an opportunity to betray him.

Fate of Those Who Oppose Christ

Matthew 21:28–22:14 (Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19)

“But what do you think about this? A man had two sons, and he went to the first one and said, ‘Son, go work in the vineyard today.’ And the son answered, ‘I will, sir,’ But he failed to go. And he went to the second

son and said the same thing, and the son answered, 'I will not.' But afterward, he repented and went. Which of the two did the will of the father?"

"The second one," they replied.

"I tell you truly," said Jesus, "the tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you preaching righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and harlots did. And even after seeing that, you did not repent and believe him."

"Listen to another parable," said Jesus. "There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, built a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he let it out to tenants and went away to another country. And when the harvest season drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his share of the crop. But the tenants seized his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Then the landowner sent some other servants, more than the first time, but the tenants treated them the same way. Finally, the landowner sent his son, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir! Come, let us kill him and take over his inheritance.' And they seized him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

"He will put those scoundrels to death without mercy," they replied, "and will rent out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the crop every season."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures, **'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'**? Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a people who will produce the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken, and on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

Now when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they recognized that he was referring to them. And they wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the people, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Then Jesus spoke to them again in a parable, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He sent his servants to summon those who had been invited to the wedding feast, but they refused to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my feast; my oxen and the fat cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come on to the wedding feast!"' But they made light of the invitation and went their ways—one to his farm, and another to his business; and the rest of them seized the king's servants and shamefully mistreated them, and killed them.

"Then the king was angry, and he sent his troops, killed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Go out therefore into the highways and invite everyone you find to come to the wedding feast.' Then those servants went out into the highways and gathered everyone they could find, both bad and good, and the wedding feast was supplied with guests.

"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man among them who was not dressed in a wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And the man had nothing to say. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind his hands and feet and cast him into the darkness outside. That is the place for weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"For many are called, but few are chosen."

Approximate Timeline of Jesus's Public Ministry														
EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	FIRST PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FIRST BOOTHS	WINTER	SECOND PASS-OVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	FINAL PASS-OVER

DEVOTIONAL DAY 34 (FRIDAY APRIL 1)

Word Power

Based on Matthew 21, 26; Mark 11, 12, 14; Luke 20, 22

“Your dog killed my tree!”

I spoke those words to my youngest son during an episode of our family’s history. Before coming out of the kingdom of darkness into God’s salvation through Jesus Christ, I was going through a divorce. After acknowledging my need for Jesus, things seemed to change rapidly. My marriage ended, but my two youngest children were placed in my custody. We did not have a place to call our own and my finances were in a mess.

Nevertheless, the Lord blessed. We moved into a home in an established neighborhood. Our house had a nice shade tree in the front yard. In the backyard I planted a silver maple in the hopes that it would someday provide shade for our patio. We also got a puppy for my son.

The dog was intended to be primarily an inside pet but was allowed to play and roam around the backyard regularly. One day I noticed the recently planted tree had grown leaves and showing signs of upward and outward growth. A few days later I noticed that our puppy had chewed the bark completely around our slender tree. I was sure the tree would not survive and it didn’t.

When Jesus cursed the fig tree, it almost seems atypical of what He would normally do. We can speculate on why He did that and may or may not come up with the correct answer. However, one thing is certain: the words spoken by Jesus were powerful; He has great authority.

When Peter saw that the fig tree had withered up overnight after Jesus had cursed it, he seemed quite surprised. It is probably safe to say, Jesus was not. It is also safe to say that Jesus fully understands the power of the spoken Word, *rhema* in the Greek language.

After all, was not Jesus present when God the Father spoke the world into existence? It is also noteworthy to recall that the Word records that God made man in His image. Words are powerful.

Jesus pointed this out to Peter. The example given was of the potential to cast mountains into the sea by speaking to the mountain. An important key, however, is doing so without any doubt. As our example, Jesus spoke with faith and with authority. He could also perceive whether others had faith. This truth is very important when it comes to receiving from God.

So, are the words we speak powerful? The Bible says, “yes”. In Proverbs we are told the power of life and death is in the tongue. With the tongue we speak. We speak words!

In James we are again reminded that the tongue can cause a lot of problems. We need to control our spoken words so that they do right by the Kingdom and not hinder the gospel of our Lord and Savior. With our words we need to praise God. The psalmist wrote that God inhabits the praises of His people. Our praises come from our words that we speak or even sing out.

As a final thought, the gospels record that during Jesus’s ministry on earth, people developed faith in Him. He healed the sick, cleansed lepers, cast out demons, and even raised the dead. Most of the people depended on the physical presence of Jesus; that was their level of faith. On the other hand, a Roman centurion understood the authority of Jesus Christ; he knew that Jesus did not have to be physically present but that He only had to speak the Word and healing would take place (see Day 13). Let us remember, Jesus gave authority to His disciples. There is power in the spoken word... WORD POWER.

Lord, of all the words that I speak, may the most powerful words be the words I say in prayer. Amen.

--By Ted Andreas

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs)

A

C

T

S