**A House of Prayer for All Nations**

Hope Chapel Honolulu

Mark 11:12 - 12:12

7 But those tenants said to one another, ​‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ 8 And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10 Have you not read this Scripture: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 11 this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

(Mark 12:7-11, ESV)

**Introduction**

On the second and third days of Passion Week, Christ says and does several seemingly unrelated things. However, when we look closely, we can find object lessons pointing to the same truth: the God of Israel chose a people and inhabited a temple so that He might reconcile all the people of the earth back to Himself. Arguably, Christ’s disappointment with the fig-less tree—because the figs should appear on the branches *before* the leaves do—prepares us for His disappointment with the moneychangers and vendors in the temple. Why was Christ so disappointed with the fruitlessness of the tree and temple?

**1. A house of prayer for all nations. (Mark 11:12-19)**

 a) Christ curses the fig tree for its fruitlessness.

 b) “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:1-8).

​**2. Blessing, cursing, faith, and dominion. (Mark 11:20-33)**

 a) Why does Christ use the withered fig tree as an object lesson about faith?

 b) The authority of heaven contrasted with the dominion of man.

**3. What does it really mean for Christ to be the chosen yet rejected cornerstone? (Mark 12:1-12)**​

 a) Christ’s parable of the owner, his vineyard, wicked tenants, and the coming judgment.

 b) “…The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone…” (Psalm 118:22-23).

**Conclusion**

While Christ’s use of a business metaphor to describe the relationship between the Jews and Himself might seem odd, the repurposing of the temple made the parable of the landowner and wicked tenants very appropriate. The Jews had repurposed God’s temple from a place of worship, sacrifice, and prayer for all nations into a place of exclusivity where holy people did holy things at inflated prices. Christ overturned the tables of the moneychangers because they required people to convert their money to temple currency in apparent violation of Deuteronomy 14:24-26, thereby discouraging worship. How would Christ respond if He were to walk into our gatherings of the church? Would He be pleased?

**For our prayerful study, discussion, and application:**

1) Read Mark 11:20-33. What was Christ’s expectation of the fig tree and why was He disappointed?

2) Read Mark 12:1-12. Why were the religious leaders afraid of Christ’s parable and the people?

3) What are the Word and Spirit of God showing and telling you about faith in and faithfulness to God?

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