



DEVOTION

No Fruit

By Greg Laurie on Apr 3, 2025

"The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. He noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so he went over to see if he could find any figs. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit. Then Jesus said to the tree, 'May no one ever eat your fruit again!' And the disciples heard him say it."

-Mark 11:12-14

Staying in Jerusalem during the Passover celebration was out of the question for Jesus, especially after His hero's welcome on Palm Sunday. The crowds would have mobbed Him and interfered with the vital work of His final days. So He stayed in Bethany, which was less than two miles from Jerusalem. He likely stayed in the home of His friends, the siblings Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

On the day after His triumphant entry, Jesus returned to Jerusalem. On the way, He saw a fig tree that had leaves on it. Usually, fig leaves indicate that a tree has fruit. Jesus was hungry, so He approached the tree to pick a fig to eat. Instead, He discovered that the tree had no fruit.

"May no one ever eat your fruit again!" He said. Jesus cursed the tree because it bore no fruit.

This may seem out of character for Jesus, as though He lost His temper because He was fooled by vegetation. But this wasn't the first-century equivalent of kicking a broken vending machine. Jesus wasn't "hangry." He was giving His followers a real-life parable—an unforgettable lesson on the importance of being fruitful.

The Old Testament prophets used the fig as a symbol of Israel. Micah 7:1–3 says, "How miserable I am! I feel like the fruit picker after the harvest who can find nothing to eat. Not a cluster of grapes or a single early fig can be found to satisfy my hunger. The godly people have all disappeared; not one honest person is left on the earth" (NLT).

The passage is referring to the spiritual condition of God's people. They give the outward appearance of being holy and obedient, but they produce no fruit—no real evidence of their holiness and obedience. Appearances can be deceiving, but genuine fruit can't be faked. If a fruit tree doesn't produce fruit, it's useless. Likewise, if God's people don't produce spiritual fruit, they are useless.

In cursing the fig tree, Jesus was denouncing Israel's relationship with God and warning the people of Israel of the coming judgment. He was also sending a warning to people who claim to be Christians but show no evidence of a personal relationship with Him.

In John 15:8, He said, "When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father" (NLT).

James was a little more blunt: "Faith is dead without good works" (James 2:26 NLT).

And the apostle Paul wrote, "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" (Galatians 5:22–23 NLT)

Those qualities please the Lord because they show that our faith is genuine and that our spiritual fruit can nourish others. If you nurture those qualities and allow them to blossom in your life, you'll help others see just how life-changing a relationship with Christ can be.

Reflection Question: What spiritual fruit has God produced in you? Discuss this with believers like you on Harvest Discipleship!