

- 1) When we left last time Jesus had cursed the fig tree, cleansed the temple, left Jerusalem and was on his way back with the disciples when they noticed the fig tree completely dead.

Mark 11:20-21 (NIV)

- 2) What Jesus does now is turn this to a faith and “power of prayer” lesson for the disciples.

Mark 11:22-25 (NIV)

- 3) This, at first glance appears to be an odd set of teachings in response to Peter’s comment (assuming it was a response).
- 4) First, we know that there is a need at this point for continued instruction for the disciples. Their time with the Lord before His crucifixion is now quickly coming to an end.
- 5) But, we also know that the events described in these past verses were truly miraculous.
- 6) One possible explanation for this lesson is to give the disciples confidence in how they would be able to carry on, even after Jesus leaves them.
- 7) He may have sensed their uncertainty in Peter’s statement – we just do not know.
- 8) Looking at this passage, however, there are two related but distinct ideas we can know.
- 9) First, faith – “Have faith in God”.
 - a) Faith in God as explained here is an absolute connection to God’s power.
 - b) Saying to a mountain “Go throw yourself into the sea” must have seemed a ridiculous thought to these men.
 - c) Yet, Jesus says clearly if the person who says that it will happen, it will be done for him.
 - i) Note, the strong sense of the verb usage “will happen” – not can or might but **will!**.
 - ii) Note also, it is not the person who is doing the action – the person is in essence asking God thru faith and thought to accomplish this and – “IT WILL BE DONE FOR HIM”.
- 10) God is obviously the judge of the legitimacy of any request.
 - a) If the mountain throwing itself into the sea serves His purpose then it will happen.
 - b) If it is a frivolous request or selfish request or a request that goes directly against God’s desires it will not be granted.
 - c) Jesus was absolutely NOT not saying that God is a cosmic Santa Claus!
- 11) Jesus then steps logically into the practical – normal life prayers.
- 12) Logically it follows if I can say to a mountain “go throw yourself into the sea” and it will happen, I can pray for other things and expect them to happen as well.
- 13) Again, the same set of criteria apply:
 - a) If it is a frivolous request or selfish request or a request that goes directly against God’s desires it will not be granted.

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- b) The conclusion of this statement “whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it” is quite interesting.
 - i) The concluding phrase “believe you have received it” is based on a Greek verb aorist tense expressing the certainty of a future action.
 - ii) This is one of the true strong points of the Greek language – being able to place emphasis in this manner.
 - iii) To us, the idea should be that of unwavering belief that whatever we ask for in faith and in harmony with God’s desires we can CONSIDER IT DONE!
 - c) Again, only two real criteria apply.
 - i) On the personal side, the request cannot be frivolous or selfish.
 - ii) On God’s side, it must fall in line with his desires – only He has the ultimate say and control – it must fit His purposes.
- 14) Jesus adds here an important part of prayer and faith – “if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”
- a) If a person becomes bitter and angry over a wrong done, prayer is impossible.
 - b) God wants us to deal with our "*horizontal*" relationships in order to have a clear "*vertical*" relationship.
 - c) We see this echoed clearly in Jesus’ comment in the Sermon on the mount Matt 5

Matt 5:23-24 (NIV)

15) As continuation of this thought, in Matt 6:15 we find:

Matt 6:15 (NIV)

16) Regarding this entire last portion of this passage, the LABC makes some, what I think are excellent points regarding this concept.

Why would this matter? Because all people are sinners before God. Those who have access to him have it only because of his mercy in forgiving their sins. Believers should not come to God asking for forgiveness or making requests, all the while refusing to forgive others. To do so would be to reveal that they have no appreciation for the mercy they have received. God will not listen to a person with such an attitude. God wants those who are forgiven to forgive others.

Forgiving others is tough work — so much so that many people would rather do something totally distasteful, like run a mile uphill, shovel gravel all day, wash greasy pots, or clean diapers . . . anything but forgive that rotten, no-good scoundrel.

For a person to pray while bearing a grudge is like a tree sprouting leaves and bearing no fruit (11:13). True faith changes the heart. Real prayer dismantles pride and vengeance, filling the holes with love. Real faith seeks peace. For our churches to

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have prayer power, there must be harmony and forgiveness evident in the body of believers. Let go of hurts, abandon grudges, and forgive others.

Agree / Disagree?

17) One further note before we conclude:

18) Vs. 26 is likely missing from your translations – this is not a mistake.

19) For you who do not have it, it reads:

"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

20) This verse is not found in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts.

21) Its absence from early witnesses that represent all text-types makes it highly probable that the words were inserted by copyists in imitation of Matt 6:15. (from Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th Revised Edition)

witnesses

all text-types

- 1) As we mentioned earlier, it is important that we see the significance of this cleansing of the temple.
- 2) It is the triggering event that actually leads to God's planned conclusion of Jesus' life – His crucifixion and thus His sacrifice for all of humanity.
- 3) Beginning here in verse 27 and going thru the end of chapter 12, we see the events of Jesus' last day in the temple.
- 4) Multiple confrontations from various groups (all sent by the chief priest and other leaders) trying to trap Him.
- 5) There are two goals that these leaders agree upon.
 - a) They want to force Him into anything they can use as an excuse to arrest Him, try Him, and by that legally kill Him.
 - b) But, the second goal is also to discredit Him in the eyes of the people.
 - i) Those who, by the thousands, two days before had welcomed Him with praise as He made entry into the city.

Mark 11:27-28 (NIV)

- 1) From the events of the day before, combined with the fact that he is walking in the temple courts, I think we can infer one of two things.
 - a) Either the merchants did not show up this day or as Jesus was walking in the courts, they were making a hasty withdrawal. Perhaps an ongoing cleansing as he walked?
- 2) In either case, the chief priests (this was Annas and Caiaphas), the teachers of the law and the elders (all their cronies) confronted Jesus.

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- 3) They were obviously not happy – Jesus had stuck His hand squarely in their pockets by clearing all the merchants and money changers from the temple.
- 4) One must assume that this is a confrontation – not just a friendly chat.
- 5) In fact, this is the last confrontation Jesus will have with these religious leaders as a free man.
- 6) It begins here and goes all the way thru chapter 12 when He and His disciples leave the temple.
- 7) These leaders were, as we saw in verse 18, plotting to kill Jesus.
- 8) So they brought him a question that they hoped would trap him into saying something for which he could be arrested.
- 9) They asked for his credentials and demanded that he tell them who gave him the authority to cast the money changers and merchants out of the temple.
- 10) If Jesus answers that his authority comes from God, He would be saying in essence that He was the Messiah and the Son of God
- 11) This is the answer they were hoping for.
- 12) In this case, they would accuse him of blasphemy and since blasphemy was punishable by death under the Jewish law, they would be able to try Him and kill Him legally.
- 13) On the other hand, if Jesus says that His authority is His own, they would not be able to legally kill Him.
- 14) So, they would either dismiss Him as a fanatic. and trust that the crowds would soon return to those with true authority (themselves).
 - a) Or, they would have to find other ways to kill Him.
- 15) Jesus would not let himself be caught in their trap.
- 16) He turns the question back on them, and by doing so, exposed their motives and avoided their trap.

Mark 11:29-33 (NIV)

- 17) We see that they really were trapped – they cannot give either answer that Jesus proposed.
- 18) They are basically shut down at this point.
- 19) As we will see, this is the beginning of a long day for Jesus.

- 1) Jesus continues immediately with a series of parables that “poke the bear” that just attacked Him.
- 2) Mark records one parable whereas, Matthew records three that Jesus uses here.
- 3) All of them are aimed directly at these religious leaders.
- 4) The first exchange is recorded in Matthew goes like this:

Matt 21:27-33 (NIV)

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- 5) Jesus' closing remarks here circle around to the very reason these leaders would not answer his rebuttal question.
- 6) From this parable and exchange, we move back to Mark.
- 7) He and Matthew both record the next parable. >>>>>