

Wisdom not Worry
Monday, April 6, 2020
Mark 11:12-17

“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.”

As much as I miss gathering for corporate worship, I’ve been wondering if there might be some good that comes from shuttering the church doors. Matthew and Mark record two events on the Monday before Jesus’ crucifixion. While each could be taken separately, like peanut butter and jelly, they are better together. The account of Jesus cursing the fig tree explains why He started table tossing in the temple. The fruitless fig tree is a picture of fruitless faith. Fig trees are meant to produce figs. From a distance, a hungry Jesus expected figs but found nothing but leaves. In the same way, genuine faith is meant to produce fruit.

By all appearances, Israel’s worship looked vibrant. But when Jesus entered the temple, he found their worship to be as empty as that fig tree. No doubt we would have been impressed by the religious activity on that day as spiritual leaders and laymen alike made busy preparations for the annual celebration of Passover. Yet, as Jesus drew near, he saw how barren it was. Quoting the prophet Jeremiah, Jesus levels two indictments - “My house will be a house of prayer but you have made it a den of robbers.”

First, their feverish activity revealed their lack of prayerful dependence upon the Lord. Second, in robbing the poor by price gouging the sacrifices they needed for the feast, they exposed their lack of justice. Their worship was all leaves and no fruit. When Jesus “shut down” the worship service, he found there was nothing left. Might this season of suspended weekly worship activity be an opportunity for us to evaluate the fruitfulness of our faith? When the worship service is “shut down” does our prayer and care remain?

Grateful,
Pastor Ben