

### 03.24.21 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

**Title:** “A Fig Tree”

**Scripture Reading:** [Habakkuk 3; Mark 11: 12 – 26](#)

**Reflection:** Pastor Evan

Monday night I was reading Mark’s account of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem in Mark 11. The day following his entry (beginning in Mark 11: 12) Jesus returns to Jerusalem. Sighting a fig tree in leaf, he expects to find some figs to relieve his hunger. Since it was early spring, it would have been unusual for a fig tree to be bearing fruit, but since it was in leaf, potentially it had also sprung an early spring crop. But upon reaching the tree, Jesus discovers no figs, only leaves and he curses the fig tree.

The next morning, as they passed this way again, Peter notices and says to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered [from the roots].” Total destruction, no more leaves, no more figs.

What are we to make of this scene? Luke had told a parable (Luke 13: 6-9) about a man who told his vinedresser to destroy a fig tree because for three years it bore no fruit. But the vinedresser begged for one more year; he would fertilize it and see if it would bear fruit. Bible scholars tend to think that the parable is a call to stubborn Israel to repent now (Luke 13:5), or it’s chance for repentance will pass them by. It seems logical then, to think a similar lesson would be applied to the withered fig tree on the Mount of Olives. Stubborn Israel will be withered from their roots because of their failure to recognize Jesus as God’s Messiah/King.

Mark does not travel on that path. He moves into a teaching from Jesus about faith. “Have faith in God, . . . Truly, I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea’, and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.”

Tuesday morning, during the Discipleship Zoom time, hosted by Pastor Henry at 7:17 AM, we reread Habakkuk 3: 17 – 19. Verse 17 begins, “Though the fig tree does not bud” and verse 18 and 19 continue, “yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.”

Habakkuk exercises faithfulness, that even if the fig tree doesn’t bud and produce fruit, his faith in the LORD (the covenant making and keeping God) will move him to rejoice in the LORD. Habakkuk’s faith keeps his feet planted on the Rock of his salvation. Fig trees sometimes do not produce figs, mountains sometimes rumble and crumble, Messiah’s die on a cross, stones are rolled in front of a tomb, but YET “I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

Perhaps Jesus was bringing his disciples back to Habakkuk’s words about faith in times of great distress. Even if fig trees fail to produce figs and become withered from the roots without possibility of ever producing figs again, YET will I trust in the LORD so that even if I say to the mountain the fig tree had been growing on, it will move.

Our faith is to be grounded in God, the LORD and maker of heaven and earth. We should not rejoice in mountains moved, or in trees destroyed, but in God. He desires a relationship in which we offer our WHOLE heart, soul, mind and strength. And when our relationship is in and with him, as Jesus prayed for us (John 17: 20 – 23), then our ministry for God’s glory will move any mountain that needs to be moved, or make it such that what looks like a mountain will be made into a plain.

Israeli deer are sure footed, desert creatures. At En-Gedi, there is a population of deer/ibex that can be viewed by tourists. I once saw a sure-footed ibex up on a cliff.



The ibex wanted to be down below near the stream. So, it took a step of faith down - about 40 feet down. After it jumped, the ibex landed and walked on as if it had just stepped a few inches. No doubt about it, even if the next step was 40 feet down a sheer cliff, YET it trusted that it would land safely and walk on.

“YET I will rejoice in the LORD” needs to be our faith song. God our Father will bring us there as we learn to trust in him, and encourage others to walk by faith, not by sight. Habakkuk also wrote, “the righteous person will live by his faithfulness” (2:4). Living in faithfulness takes us up to mountaintops and down through the valleys. Wherever we are, we are called to live life faithfully.

**Prayer:**

Loving Father, thank you for loving us by sending us your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who moves in our hearts so that we can exercise faith in Jesus, and for the power of your Holy Spirit so that we might walk in faithfulness, bringing glory to your name. We bless your name and offer ourselves to you as living sacrifices, for your glory and honor. AMEN

**Action Item for the Day/Week:**

Invite the Triune God into your heart through daily prayer for a week; wait in silence and listen for his voice.

**Songs for today:**

[By Faith](#)

[When We Walk with the Lord](#)

