HAVE FAITH IN GOD

Mark 11:12-26

Key Verse 22

“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered.

**Introduction**



Still in this pandemic time, we might remind of what Jesus says in Matthews 28:18-20, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” The key word in His words here is “authority”. Thanks to Jesus’ death and resurrection, everything is under His feet. So His words are absolute and final. “Have faith in God” means that we better have personal, real, and absolute faith in His living words of promise. May the Lord help us to have such faith so that we may serve God’s will and purpose even in this troubled time.

1. Read verses 12-14. What did Jesus expect to find when he approached a fig tree? (12-13a) What did He say to the tree when he found nothing but leaves? (13b-14a) What might His disciples have thought when they heard Him say this? (14b)

1-1, Read verses 12-14.

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14 Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

1-2, What did Jesus expect to find when he approached a fig tree? (12-13a)

***12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit.***

* According to verse 11, Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts and looked around at everything. It seems that his inspection was done there.
* Then He went out to Bethany with the Twelve and spent time with Mary and Martha and raised their brother from the tomb. The next day He left them.
* Jesus was walking with his disciples from Bethany when he saw a fig tree in the distance. Jesus was hungry that morning.
* Figs are very nice fruits to eat in the morning as breakfast. Jesus was looking forward to having a nice breakfast consisting of several juicy figs.

1-3, What did He say to the tree when he found nothing but leaves? (13b-14a)

***When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14 Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”***

* Yet when he looked here and there on the tree, he found nothing. It was very leafy. But there was no fruit. Jesus was very disappointed.
* The disciples knew that it was not the season for figs, and surely so did Jesus. Something was up.
* But surprisingly enough Jesus cursed the fruitless tree, so that no one might ever eat fruit from it again. The disciples heard him say it.
* It was so out of character for Jesus. Jesus was usually so patient, though his disciples were often so dull. Jesus was always mindful of them.
* Jesus is the gentle Savior King. Yet he cursed the fig tree in the presence of his disciples for failing to produce any fruit, though it was not the season for figs.

1-4, What might His disciples have thought when they heard Him say this? (14b)

***And his disciples heard him say it.***

* This moment really stood out for the disciples. Obviously, Jesus acted this way precisely so that his disciples would remember this event.
* Perhaps Jesus wanted to reveal the power of faith to his disciples. Jesus challenged them to have faith in God who enables them to do His work.
* And it is certainly true that his disciples remembered Jesus’ cursing of the fig tree vividly, so that his lesson about faith was unforgettable.
* Through his curse of the fig tree, Jesus reminds us that God’s authority as the Creator of all the earth is absolute.
* But God is also the Judge. And as the Judge he has the authority to bring anyone or anything of his Creation before his judgment seat and demand an accounting.
* At the time of giving an accounting, there are no excuses. At the time of God’s judgment, there must simply be fruit fit for God’s purpose of creation.

1. Read verses 15-18. What did Jesus do at the Jerusalem temple? (15-16) What did He teach about the purpose of the temple? (17) Why did the religious leaders begin looking for a way to kill Jesus? (18)

2-1, Read verses 15-18.

15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. 17 And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24658c)]? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24658d)]” 18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

2-2, What did Jesus do at the Jerusalem temple? (15-16)

***15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.***

* When Jesus entered the temple, it was filled with merchants and money changers to provide services for the many tourists and visitors during the Passover Feast.
* The moneychangers enabled people from every corner of the known world to do business in Jerusalem.
* The merchants, selling animals for sacrifices and other sacred items, enabled the religious pilgrims to make offerings at the temple according to the Bible.
* But Jesus was not pleased by these activities. Like the leaves on the fig tree, these activities.
* Jesus began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.
* Jesus had come as the Judge, and he was now demanding an accounting from His people regarding their use of the temple.

2-3, What did He teach about the purpose of the temple? (17)

***17 And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24658c)***]? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’[***[***d***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24658d)***]”.***

* Jesus taught the crowd that the temple is His house and it should be a house of prayer for all nations.
* This was what God had in mind. God had provided the temple to his people Israel through kings, David and Solomon.
* But the Jews of Jesus’ time had forgotten this and treated the temple as their personal playground, useful for satisfying their desires.
* He had given the temple as his prayer to make his people a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
* The Lord’s purpose in giving the temple to Israel was that they might be stewards of the temple so that all nations might eventually come to God in prayer.
* But the temple courts, where foreigners were allowed to go on Jesus' day, were overcrowded with the merchants and moneychangers.
* Now, Jesus has become our temple through his resurrection. Through our faith in Jesus, we have become living stones and temples for the Holy Spirit.
* In short, we need to know God’s standard for the right use of God’s temple, before we will face God’s final judgment.
* ‘A house of prayer’ is a place where sinners can come into God’s presence and know that they will be welcomed and they will be heard.
* It is the place that God provides for them, because sinners cannot create such a place for themselves. The temple was God’s house.
* It was provided to the people of God to help them come into his presence, grow as his people and eventually fulfill God’s purpose for them.
* In the same way, Jesus is now God’s temple where sinners like us can be welcomed into God’s presence as his children and servants of his kingdom.
* We can present our requests in Jesus’ name, and we can receive God’s wisdom and direction from him and by his Spirit, dwelling in us.
* A den of robbers is the place robbers go after committing their evil acts in order to be safe. Jesus said that the Jews had made the temple a den of robbers.
* They lived in disobedience to God’s commands, refusing to serve him as his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
* Then they came into the temple and made their sacrifices to feel better, with the expectation that God had to forgive them, because he owed them his mercy!

2-4, Why did the religious leaders begin looking for a way to kill Jesus? (18)

***The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching***

* The religious leaders did not repent nor pay attention to Jesus’ warning. Rather they looked for a way to kill Him.
* We must be faithful to come into God’s presence through prayer and repentance. Our confession of faith in Jesus is not a cover for a sinful life.
* People who have hardened hearts against Jesus have no other option than rejecting his words and trying to remove his presence.

1. Read verses 19-26. What did Peter remember the next morning and what did he say to Jesus? (19-21) What did Jesus teach about absolute faith in God? (22-23) What can we learn about prayer in terms of faith? (24) Why is it important to forgive others? (25-26)

3-1, Read verses 19-26.

19 When evening came, Jesus and his disciples[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24660e)] went out of the city.

20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. 21 Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

22 “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. 23 “Truly[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24664f)] 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. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. 25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” [26] [[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24667g)]

3-2, What did Peter remember the next morning and what did he say to Jesus? (19-21)

***19 When evening came, Jesus and his disciples[***[***e***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24660e)***] went out of the city.***

***20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. 21 Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”***

* As they took the same path from Bethany to Jerusalem in the morning, they came to the place where Jesus had cursed the leafy but fruitless fig tree.
* The disciples happened to see a fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered the scene from the day before and excitedly brought it to Jesus’ attention, saying “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

3-3, What did Jesus teach about absolute faith in God? (22-23)

***22 “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. 23 “Truly[***[***f***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24664f)***] 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.***

* Jesus told the disciples, “Have faith in God!” Disciples of Jesus need more than an oral confession of faith.
* Disciples of Jesus need to practice having faith in God’s power moment by moment in their lives.
* Jesus gave the disciples God’s promise that any one of them had the authority to cast the Mount of Olives into the sea.
* Jesus does not want us to admire him merely for his authority. Jesus wants us to have the same authority by having his faith in God.
* Jesus wants his disciples to have the faith to move mountains. No surprise, we call it “Mountain moving faith.” In contrast we faced mountain-like obstacles.
* But Jesus challenges us to ‘have faith in God.’ Heb 11:1 says, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”
* Faith in God is not an abstract vague concept, but it is a real and concrete thing. Real faith leads to action. We see Jesus’ faith in God was absolute.
* Therefore, we need the faith of Jesus. We need to practice the faith of Jesus that God is sovereign over each and every event over the entire world.
* We need the faith of Jesus that God’s will and heart are what is best for mankind and for each man and woman in particular.
* And we need the faith of Jesus to submit to God’s will for our lives, even as he submitted to God’s will for him to be the Lamb of God for the sin of the world.
* May God have mercy on us to have the faith in God that can make this nation a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, especially in this unprecedented pandemic!

3-4, What can we learn about prayer in terms of faith? (24)

***24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.***

* Jesus gives us practical advice on how to have his faith in God. First, Jesus’ faith is faith in God’s absolute goodness. God would do what we asked.
* Jesus had the right to ask God to save him from trouble. Jesus trusted God’s will for his life, even if it meant that he should face trouble, hardship and even death.
* We must have the faith of Jesus that God wants to help us carry out his will, even in the face of the darkness and evil of the world.

3-5, Why is it important to forgive others? (25-26)

***And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” [26] [***[***g***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24667g)***]***

* Jesus also taught his disciples about forgiveness. Faith in God that moves his heart is faith in his mercy to forgive sinners.
* Faith in God’s mercy is faith to practice his mercy toward others by forgiving them. We must forgive our enemies and even our friends if they betrayed us.
* Forgiveness is not just simply forgetting, but changing the way we relate to that person entirely based on God’s grace and forgiveness received in our lives.
* God’s grace and mercy flow through us to others if we truly receive it in the first place. May God bless us with faith in God’s goodness and mercy and love!

**Conclusion**

“Have faith in God.” When we have Jesus’ exemplary faith in God, we can challenge every situation and problem with a sense of God’s victory. Most of all, with Jesus’ faith in God, we can truly be instruments of God’s righteousness in our generation. May God raise 30 disciples through our 300 one to one battles by faith! May God bless North America to be raised as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

**One word: Have faith in God!**