

INTRO

- What's your favourite fruit and why?
- Is anger good or bad? Discuss.
- When you think of Jesus, do you think of him as a Judge? why/why not?

Mark ch11-15 cover the last week of Jesus' life. He begins by triumphantly entering Jerusalem making an open declaration that he is the fulfillment of prophecy around the Messiah (Zech 9:9). He then does 2 powerful acts of judgement involving the tree and temple.

READ

Mark 11:12-19

REFLECT**The Tree**

At that time of year (Passover=April), if only leaves appeared without early signs of figs (as in this case), it was a sign that the tree would not bear any fruit that year.

Qu: Why does Jesus curse the tree? What does the fig tree represent in the Old Testament?

Fig tree stands as a common metaphor for Israel —Jesus is passing judgement on faithless & fruitless Israel that has a form of religion (the leaves) but lacks the fruit of true religion.

Qu: People don't often think judging others is a good virtue. How does Jesus model judging others (as seen in the Temple event too)?

Qu: what does this event tell us about how Jesus judges his people?

The Temple

The temple was central to the life, worship and faith of Israel. It represented the place where God inhabits, where heaven meets earth. It became necessary ever since we were banished from God's presence in the Garden of Eden.

On entering the temple, Jesus displays outrage and anger at what he sees.

Qu: why is Jesus so angry (hint: see v17)? Is there a way to be angry and not sin? How?

The temple, God's house, was always meant to be for all people. Israel's leaders had turned a worship place for the nations into a marketplace. This hindered Gentiles especially from drawing closer to God.

Qu: how do we as Christians sometimes hinder unbelievers from drawing close to God?

Qu: why is the temple no longer central to our lives as believers?

Jesus is the greater temple. Temple was always a temporary foreshadowing of Jesus.

- Temple represents heaven and earth overlapping; Jesus is God become man dwelling/tabernacling among us (Jn 1:14).
- Temple was where you went to make a blood sacrifice to atone for sin; Jesus is our sacrifice atoning once and for all for all of our sin.
- Temple required priests to act as mediators between God and man; Jesus is our mediator restoring us back to God.
- Temple is where you went to encounter God's presence; Jesus tore the veil of the temple to allow God's presence come to us everywhere 24/7.
- Temple was the centre of faith, life and worship of God's people; Today, to be a Christian means to centre and reorient your faith, life and worship around Jesus.

RESPOND

- What encouraged and challenged you the most out of today's discussion?
- How can you practically apply what you're learning to your personal life?

PRAY