

Broken People [Mark 11]
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INTRODUCTION

1. I'm not sure if you're familiar with TMZ (believe it or not, started in 2005)
 - a. FYI: Thirty Mile Zone, circle around Los Angeles, started as gossip website
 - b. It's now become a pop-culture force, breaking news with legions of sources.
 - c. But it's business model is based upon people's obsession with flawed celebs
2. That's what keeps people tuned in: we love to see celebs fall
 - a. THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT BROKENESS that draws us in.
 - b. Perhaps it's our celebration that at least we aren't that bad.

TRANSITION: We're monitoring Jesus' march to the cross.

VERSES 12-14

¹²The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³Seeing 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.

¹⁴Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

1. Last week, the Triumphal Entry, with Jesus leaving the temple immediately after.
 - a. This took place during the feast of the Passover
 - b. People would ascend the temple mount in order to offer sacrifices.
 - c. Along the road in the morning, no Dunkin Donuts, looking for breakfast
2. Fig trees were common in Judea and bore fruit twice each year
 - a. Early figs in May and June and late figs from August into October.
 - b. "In leaf" Here, March or early April, only figs from previous season or unripe ones
3. He curses the tree, calling it out because it did not hold any fruit.
 - a. It sounds like Jesus was doing this out of anger.
4. We will take note of this as we continue: it was done as an aside BUT . . .
 - a. . . . his disciples heard this happen.

VERSES 15-18

¹⁵On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area 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, ¹⁶and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" [\[C\]](#)? [\[M\]](#) But you have made it 'a den of robbers.' [\[Q\]](#)" ¹⁸The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, [\[Q\]](#) because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. [\[P\]](#)

1. This was the 3rd incarnation of the temple, and Herod made it grand.
 - a. One of the notable feats was a large platform which added much space.
 - b. This space became a place to change currency & sell sacrifices to pilgrims.
 - 1) Understand that the "selling doves" is on purpose. Doves were for poor.
 - 2) **Leviticus 14:21,22** "If, however, they are poor and cannot afford these . . . to make atonement . . . two doves or two young pigeons, such as they can afford, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering."
 - 3) The poor were the ones who paid the price.
 - c. The Talmud traces this practice to 40 years before the destruction of the temple,
 - 1) This would've put the practice as starting during Jesus' adulthood.
 - 2) His driving out commerce was truly dramatic.
2. His teaching is a summary of two O.T. texts: Jeremiah 7 and Isaiah 56

a. The Isaiah one is most convicting, it establishes Jesus' concern [**Isaiah 56:6-8**]

"[Those] who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

b. Just as the disciples heard Jesus' cursing of the fig tree so chief priests heard Jesus

c. The Sadducees who ran the temple knew Jesus was bad for business

1) This would end up hastening Jesus' death.

3. It does bring up a topic we can't fully explore: spirituality and commerce

a. Christians are their own market: US church-goers spend \$5.1 trillion annually.

b. Beware that our definitions of "doing church" doesn't marginalize the poor

VERSES 19-23

¹⁹When evening came, they^(e) went out of the city. ^(Q)²⁰In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. ²¹Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi,^(S) look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"²² "Have^(I) faith in God," Jesus answered. ²³"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

1. Next morning in for the festival, the tree had dried up completely

a. Confirmation of Jesus' curse: that no one would ever eat fruit from it again.

b. The fig tree was a symbol for Israel, destruction was a sign of God's judgment

c. **Hosea 2:12** "I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them."

2. Peter is impressed at the feat, while Jesus wants to emphasize the power of faith

a. Jesus holds that faith in God is the key issue for his followers to embrace.

b. Only when that issue is settled do others issues become relevant.

3. OK, let me pause now so we can pan out and look at this entire scene

a. First, allow me to explain the difference between **Exegesis** and **Exposition**

1) Exegesis: pulling the meaning out of the text

2) Exposition is the personal application of the biblical text

b. Tonight I'm going to offer you some exposition that speaks beyond the text.

1) If it makes you feel better, preachers do this all the time.

2) I believe I'm being faithful to the concept of the text here.

CONCLUSION

1. There is a theme that seems intertwined between these narratives.

a. Both the fig tree and the temple existed for people:

1) The fig tree's purpose is to provide sustenance for people.

2) The temple existed to allow people to worship their God.

b. And both of those entities here were not fulfilling their intended purposes.

1) As such, Jesus had to curse the tree and cleanse the temple.

c. Similarly, an essential part of Christian living is our interaction with people.

1) But many of us internalize faith while marginalizing interaction importance.

2) God's people are called to engage people with the gospel and love.

2. Years ago, my father-in-law gave me the autobiography of sportswriter Dick Schaap

a. Schaap had interviewed numerous famous people throughout his career.

b. He started his book with this simple sentence: "I collect people."

1) He didn't *literally* collect people—keeping them in his hallway closet

2) Rather than acquiring possessions, his time spent with humans was his hobby.

c. If only we truly adopted this outlook?

3. My burden: we need to love people where they are.

a. I've been obsessed with people lately? Why aren't more people coming to church?

b. This stays in my mind, because usually people can show gospel effectiveness.

- c. In our lives, many of these people are extremely far from God.
- d. Some of these relationships take years. It's painful
- e. HOMEWORK: Share two meals this year with people far from God.
*Broken People are made whole through the grace of Jesus.
- f. SONG: Over the Rhine, "All My Favorite People Are Broken"

4. Look at the conclusion of this text:

VERSES 24,25

²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

*AFTER FAITH, THE KEY IS FORGIVENESS: YOU MUST FORGIVE THE BROKEN:

- a. WHY? You are the most broken person there is.
- b. Until you realize this, you cannot truly reach out to others.