

LESSONS FROM THE WITHERED FIG TREE

INTRODUCTION

“*And as they were passing by in the morning,*” tells us that this occurred on the third day prior to the Passover of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (11:20).

All of the disciples saw the withered tree but Peter noted that the same fig tree that Jesus cursed yesterday had withered – “*Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which you cursed has withered.*” (11:21)

It was the curse of Jesus upon the fig tree that had caught the attention of Peter. The suddenness of the total destruction of this fig tree surprised Peter and the disciples.

We will study the lesson text by the following seven homiletical points.

- Roots (11:20) - rhiza
- Recall (11:21) – anamimnesko (a.p.ptc nsm)
- Rule (11:22) – “Have faith (echo/p.a.ind/ pistis) in God”
- Remove (11:23) – airo (a.p.impv.2ps) this mountain (touto oros)
- Receive (11:24) – lambano (a.a.ind 2pl) – formula of effective prayer life
- Rebound (11:25) – aphiemi (p.a.ind 2pl) – forgive trespasses (ta paraptoma)
- Removed (11:26) – not in Nestle’s Greek text

<p style="text-align: center;">This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the LESSONS FROM THE WITHERED FIG TREE.</p>
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1. Jesus didn’t address Peter’s curiosity about the withered tree or the curse but gave His disciples needed categorical bible lessons (11:21-22).

Jesus took this opportunity to teach pertinent doctrinal lessons needed in the lives of the disciples. Jesus always looked for opportunities to teach important categorical bible doctrine to the disciples.

“They saw (horao/ a.a.ind 3pl) the fig tree withered (xeraino/ perf.p.ptc asf) from the roots up.” (11:20)

Horao (saw with the mind) set up remembrance (anamimnesko/ a.m.ptc nsm/ memory center/ recall) in Peter curiosity of the curse made yesterday.

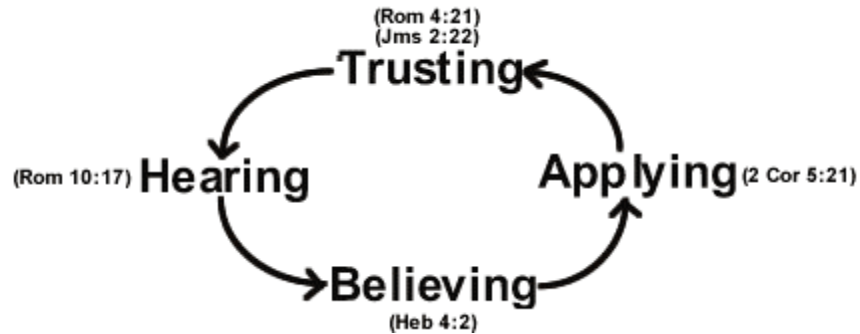
The participles (ptc) show the acknowledgement of the power of Jesus over creation (Mark 11:14, 20-21, Col.1:16-17).

2. One of the two lessons that Jesus taught to His disciples regarding the withered fig tree was the faith cycle.

- The first Categorical Bible Doctrine (CBD) that Jesus taught was the faith cycle (11:22-23) – “Have (echo/ p.a.impv2pl) faith (pistis/ faith cycle/ no definite article) in God (theos/ gsm/ objective genitive/ object of faith).”

Jesus used the Mount of Olives rather than the fig tree in the faith cycle lesson (11:23/ to touto oros/ this mountain). This mountain will be removed at the Second Coming to the sea (Zech.14:4-8).

The divine miraculous power behind the withered fig tree was the exercise of the faith cycle in the life of Jesus (11:21-22). “Have (echo/ p.a.impv.2pl) faith (pistis/ no article/ faith cycle) in God (object of faith/ no article/ performance of God).” (11:22)



4. Jesus taught that the major hindrance to the faith cycle was doubt (11:23).

Point of doctrine – “Truly I say (amen lego/ p.a.ind1ps) to you (humin/ dplm/ dative of advantage or benefit).” (11:23)

Three protasis clauses and one apodosis were used in this verse to establish the hindrance to an effective prayer life.

- First protasis – “Whoever (hos-an/ relative pronoun + probable condition/ an + subj) says to this mountain, ‘be taken up (airo/ a.p.impv.2ps) and cast (ballo/ a.p.impv.2ps) into the sea.’
- Second protasis – “**And does not doubt (me diakrino/ a.p.subj 3ps) in his heart.**” (James 1:6-8)
- Third protasis – “*But (alla/ contrast to doubt) believes (pisteuo/ p.a.subj 3ps) that what he says is going to happen (ginomai/ p.m.ind3ps).*”

Apodosis – “It shall be granted (eimi/ f.m.ind 3ps) him.”

Note that the **heart** is the sphere of both faith and doubt (Prov.23:7; Matt.13:13-15).

5. The second CBD lesson that Jesus taught was the *formula* for an effective prayer life (11:23-25).

“**Therefore (dia+ acc of cause/ touto/ because of this/ 11:23)** I say (lego/ p.a.ind) to you (humin/ dplm/ dative of advantage), all things for which you pray (proseuchomai/ p.m.ind.2pl) and ask (aiteo/ p.m.ind.2pl), believe (pisteuo/ p.a.impv.2pl/ 1 John 5:14-15) that you have received (lambano/ a.a.ind 2pl) them, and it shall be granted (eimi/ f.m.ind 3ps) you.” (11:24; note the verbs/ present, aorist, future)

6. Jesus taught the disciples that a major hindrance to an effective prayer life was an **unforgiving heart**.

“And *whenever (hotan/ temporal conjunction of time)* you stand (steko/ p.a.ind.2pl) praying (proseuchomai/ p.m.ptc.nplm), **forgive (aphiemi/ p.a.impv.2pl)**, if (ei/ 1cc/ debater technique) you have anything against anyone; so that (hina/ result) your Father also who is in heaven may forgive (aphiemi/ a.a.subj 3ps) you your transgression (ta paraptoma/ apln/ Psa.66:18).” (11:25)

The doctrinal point regarding prayer is not the posture but the heart being free from sin (MAS; ST; and OS/ 1 John 1:9; Eph.4:30-32; Jude 20) (Matt.6:14-15 is probably why 11:26 was added to English text).