



Jesus and the Fig Tree

- **Context**
 - Last week of Jesus life
 - Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem the day before (Mark 11:1-11) = Day 1
 - Mark 11:12-14 = in the morning of Day 2
 - Mark 11:19-24 = the morning of Day 3

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- **Mark 11:12-14**

12 On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry.

13 Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went *to see* if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening. ...

Understanding Fig Trees

- Figs grow on the branches **before** the leaves sprout.
- If a fig tree has leaves it should have figs, unless they have been picked.
- Since it was not the season for figs, there should not have been leaves on the tree.



Why did Jesus curse tree?

– **John 5:19** Jesus answered ..., "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

Why did Jesus curse tree?

– **John 5:30** "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

– **John 8:28** I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

– **John 8:38** "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father;

Why did Jesus curse tree?



- Answer:
 - Not because He was hungry.
 - Not because it was going to be a good object lesson on faith for his disciples.
 - Because He had heard and seen that this was the Father's will.
 - Jesus **knew** that it was the Father's will for him to curse the fig tree.

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- 19** When evening came, they went out of the city.
- 20** As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots *up*.
- 21** Being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."
- 22** And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God.

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- 23** "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be to him.
- 24** "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be to you.

What is faith in God?



- **Romans 10:17** Now faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 - Faith comes by hearing God's word.
 - Faith is **always** based on the word of God.
 - Hebrews 11:6 – Faith ...
 - Believes what God says
 - Obeys what God requires
 - Trusts in and rests on God's promises [i.e., His faithfulness to keep His word.]

Examples of "Great Faith"



- **Matt. 8:5-11 – The Centurion**
 - Centurion: "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed." (v. 8)
 - Jesus: "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel." (11)
 - Key Elements of Centurion's Faith
 - Jesus is able to heal
 - Distance is not an issue

Examples of "Great Faith"



- **Matt. 15:22-28 – The Canaanite Woman**
 - **22** And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and *began* to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."
 - 23** But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."
 - 24** But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Examples of "Great Faith"



25 But she came and *began* to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

26 And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

27 But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

28 Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

Examples of "Great Faith"



• Key Elements of Canaanite Woman's Faith

- Jesus is able
- Distance is not an issue
- Jesus is merciful (despite appearances)
- She acknowledged she was undeserving
- She persisted until she received a final answer.

Examples of "Great Faith"



• Acts 19:11-12 – Paul the Apostle

- **11** God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, **12** so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.

Examples of "Great Faith"



• 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

- **7** Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me-- to keep me from exalting myself!
- 8** Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

Examples of "Great Faith"



9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

- Key elements of Paul's faith
 - God is able
 - God is merciful
 - He persisted until He received a final answer.

What is faith in God?



- **Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the certainty of things not seen.
 - "things hoped for" and "things not seen" = what God has promised, which we have not yet received.
 - This verse describes faith's attitude as it rests on God's promises.

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- **23** "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be to him.
- Under what conditions would we do this?
 - The same conditions under which Jesus cursed the fig tree.
 - We have "seen" and "heard" the Father's will, and thus we know that God wants the mountain moved.

Jesus and the Fig Tree

- Faith believes ...
 1. God is able.
 2. God will do what He has said.
 3. God will do what is best.
 4. God will act when the time is right.
- "and does not doubt in his heart"
 - Doubt is questioning any of the four elements above.

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- "but believes that what he says is going to happen"
 - Q: On what basis does he believe that what he says is going to happen?
 - A: Because He knows that God has said that He wants the mountain to move. I.e., His faith is **not** in his own asking. His faith is based solidly on God's known will.

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- "it will be to him"
 - God always keeps His word
 - When we ask for what God has said He will do, we can be absolutely confident that it will be done.
 - When? In God's perfect time
 - How? In God's perfect way
 - Why? Because God is absolutely faithful.

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- 24** "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be to you.
- KJV: "believe that ye receive them"
 - NASB: "believe you have received them"
 - There is some question regarding which reflects what Jesus actually said.
 - Either way, the point is identical: You are to be fully confident that God's will is being done.

Wisdom for "Praying Through"

- Deuteronomy 18:20-22
 - **20** 'But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'
 - 21** "You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'"

Wisdom for “Praying Through”



22 "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

– Key statement: “To the best of my ability to discern the voice of God, I believe God has said If I’m wrong the fault is entirely with me and not with God.”

The Essence of Great Faith



1. God can.
2. God cares.
3. God will do what HE has promised.
4. God will do what He knows is best when He knows is best.
5. We are undeserving
6. We persist in asking until we receive a final answer.

Questions & Answers



- Can we ask for things we want, if we don’t know whether they are God’s will?
 - Yes, as long as it is conditioned by “not my will but yours be done.”
 - NT Example: Peter
 - There is no Scripture promise that a person can walk on water if they ask.
 - Peter asked and Jesus granted his request.

Questions & Answers



- What can we learn from Peter’s walk on the water?
 - God sometimes grants us the desire of our heart.
 - When God has told us we can do something, to question whether it can be done is to doubt God.
 - Asking for the humanly impossible, as long as it is done with a “not my will, but yours be done” attitude, is appropriate and is glorifying to God.

Questions & Answers



- Can we believe God for a specific outcome if we don’t know it is His will?
 - No. If neither God’s word nor the Spirit have made known God’s will, then we are not in a position to exercise faith regarding that outcome.
 - Biblical Faith is always based upon God’s known will.
 - In this common situation, we pray in faith when we pray, “Lord, here’s what we would like, but we gladly say, ‘Your will be done,’ for Your will is always best.