

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, May 27th 2016

“Have faith in God.” (Mark 11:22)

I can only imagine what the disciples were thinking in today’s Gospel reading. First they heard Jesus curse a fig tree for not having any fruit on it when he was hungry and in want of food. It was not the tree’s fault after all. It just was not the right season for the fig tree to bear fruit. Then, the disciples saw Jesus get angry and overturn tables in the temple area. I am sure the disciples were trying to understand why Jesus was acting in such a way that was so out of character for him. I wondered if Jesus had something weighing so heavily on his mind that it distracted him from his teaching.

Well, Jesus did have something on his mind. He wanted his disciples to know of his identity and who he is as well as know of his authority and power. Through the story about the fig tree, Jesus teaches us about faithfulness, love and forgiveness. Jesus says that he chose us from the world and appointed us to go and bear fruit that will last for all eternity (John 15:16). Jesus came looking for fruit, but he found none and was disappointed. Jesus certainly did not see any fruitful, good works happening in the temple area. In essence, Jesus “sweeps” through the temple cleaning up all the ungodly behavior and tell us that his house, the temple, is to be a house of prayer for all people.

Jesus shows us that we will wither like the fig tree if we reject his teachings. He wants us to place our faith and trust in God and to have no doubts in our heart. He wants us to come to the Father in prayer for all our needs believing that whatever we ask for in prayer shall be ours. According to his will and in his perfect timing, God always keeps his promises and answers our prayers. We are never alone and can trust that he will work out all things for our good because nothing is impossible with the Lord.

Prayer purifies or cleanses our heart and can remove the guilt. Jesus wants us to forgive others as the Father forgives us and to love one another. The apostle Peter urges us to let our love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins (1Peter 4:9). St. Augustine, whose feast day we celebrate today says “Since love grows within us, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul.”

On the surface, I found it striking to see Jesus portray the human emotion of anger in the Gospel reading. We can all relate to the experience of having been in a situation in which we were doing or saying things that may not have exemplified Christ like behavior. Maybe our hearts and minds even wandered into an area of unforgiveness. However, this story about the fig tree expresses a deeper message. Although we may have slipped and messed up, thankfully in this story, Jesus teaches us many lessons that can be applied to us today. Through prayer and God’s faithfulness and grace, he can turn the unforgiveness in our hearts into love. What better way to bring honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ and to bear fruit for him in every season.

Father, help me to deepen my faith and trust in you by believing instead of doubting. When I come to you in prayer, surrendering my thoughts and ways, it is here that you will provide in ways more marvelous than I could ever ask or imagine. I can rest in you knowing that you will take care of the rest. May the joy of the Lord be my strength.

In Jesus’ name, I pray.

What area in our lives do we need to surrender and entrust to the Lord? Let's spend some time lifting up prayers and praises to Him today.

Theresa Abbott-Creighton University's Student Health