

Not As It Seems  
Series, "Jesus"  
Mark 11:1-25

February 14, 2021  
Pastor Kyle Belden

What would Jesus see if He looked at us, full-looking people that don't produce anything?

Happy Valentine's Day. Happy birthday, Abby.

Really gets rolling, started the week before His journey toward the cross, the grave, and ultimately the defeat over sin and death. His establishment of His Kingdom, which looks so different than what anyone looking expected, and anyone not looking could have ever guessed.

Today we are going to look at three interactions/situations, and the common theme that seems to run through them all is that things are not as they seem. Jesus seems like the only one Who gets what is going on.

Sometimes what seems obvious, or even sometimes confusing, has something deeper at work.

We see that all the time in the world around us. So often our perception or history or bias keeps us from seeing what is true.

We can look at something and think we know exactly what is going on here, because of our perception, but come to find out that we are mistaken and have missed the truth. This happens all the time to us.

Let me give you a quick example to show how often this happens to us.

Talked to my nana this week. White sands national park. Sand dunes. A baby afraid the sand would be freezing cold because all they'd ever known of white expanse of ground was snow.

That is exactly what is happening here

The Triumphal Entry  
Passover  
Celebrated-

Triumphal entry- is it Easter? That's the only time we ever talk about this, and it happens often because this story kicks off the week leading up to Jesus' death and Resurrection. And it starts with a very significant moment.

*Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will*

send it back here immediately.” [Minivan-equivalent to a donkey] And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and He sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark 11:1-10)

‘90s church. It feels like ‘90s churches loved the cheesy theatrics. My church definitely did. It has influenced how I have always looked at and perceived this story. It seemed like a big party. On the surface it might have been, but this is not what it seemed. Jesus was actually making a huge statement here that is one of the big reasons He was killed.

Prophecy-

V 3- donkey: Zechariah 9:9 says, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

V 4- cloaks: In 2 Kings 9:13 after Jehu is anointed king of Israel it says, “Then in haste, every man of them took his garment and put it under Him on the bare steps ...”

It doesn’t even stop there, the crowd itself makes a statement.

V 5- crowd: what a crowd it was- remember who was a part of this crowd that entered in with Jesus. Psalm 118:26

Jesus has made it so clear, I am your king, I am here, and He weeps over this city knowing they have missed the point.

Vs 41-42 *And when He drew near and saw the city, He wept over it saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.”*

In other words, Jesus is looking over this city that was supposed to be the spiritual heart to the country that was supposed to be a blessing and a beacon of how God and humans could have relationship, that would extend to the whole world. And He says you have missed the point. If only you knew what you need, but your eyes are hidden.

Looked at phrases

Disciples

Followers

*And He entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when He had looked around at everything, as it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve. (Mark 11:11)*

We know what He saw: commercialism, moneychangers, exploitation, corruption, and injustice. He saw dirt, filth, and squalor, pride, hypocrisy, and haughtiness. He saw that religious ceremonies were being carried on without any meaning whatsoever.

### Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

*On the following day, when they came from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if He could find anything on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And His disciples heard it. (Mark 11:12-14)*

### PAGGIMS

Blessing

Metaphors for Israel

Disciples saw this, filed it away, no doubt in the back of their minds as they watched what Jesus did next.

After this disappointing breakfast

That tree was a symbol of the nation Israel, as we will see, because what follows here is a dramatic acting out of the symbol of that cursed fig tree. Verses 15-17:

### Jesus Cleanses the Temple

*And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And He would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. (Mark 11:15-16)*

He makes a big scene

*And He was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy Him, for they feared Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching. And when evening came they went out of the city. (Mark 11:17-19)*

Fig tree and Temple are meant to be compared.

What's interesting here is that neither of them were what they seemed.

Fig tree- seemed like it should be producing

Temple- seemed to be doing exactly what it was supposed to. I'm sure they were patting themselves on the back.

They looked good on the outside, but inside was sick and lacking. Jesus makes it clear here that He cares so much less about how "good" we look and is far more concerned with what our life is

producing. We can look and feel like big successes, but if our life is not producing Kingdom values, we have missed the point.

So what does this mean for us?

Here is the reality that I keep coming back to here. I think this season of life we are living in, it's also not what it seems. It seems like something to get past as quickly as possible.

I'm more convinced than ever: it's an opportunity for God to do some hard and significant work in the lives of His followers and His Church. Jesus has been very faithful to shake some branches, what is He going to find?

He isn't looking for a big show, a successful endeavor, all the answers. He is looking for surrender, humility, honesty and dependence. He is looking for people who have counted the cost, and with joy, are willing to participate in His suffering. People who are not messed up by their rights and freedoms, their sin and comfort, their way, when He looks here, is that what He is going to find?

Jesus has been faithful to flip some tables.

Whether we like it or not, this time has shown parts of how we do church that need to change, that have been off, that have held too much weight or not enough, and even though we got used to seeing them there, Jesus has come and knocked them over. The question is, what will we do now?

Those guys, they set up. 40 years later

The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

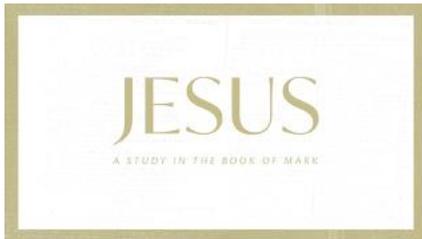
*As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that You cursed has withered." And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses."* (Mark 11:20-25)

This morning we can stand here saying this mountain is huge, but I trust You.

The world and the people in it have hurt me, but I will forgive them.

My plan seems so good, but I will trade it in for yours.

Because when it is all said and done, when people look at me, us, when Jesus looks at us, things will be exactly what they seem.



## MARK 11:1-25

### NOT AS THEY SEEM

FEBRUARY 14, 2021 | PASTOR KYLE BELDEN



**GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER** (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

- 1** When have you felt like you were trying to communicate something important, but no matter how well or often you said it, people still didn't get it?
- 2** There is a saying: "Can't see the forest for the trees." It is when a person or group of people cannot see the big picture because their focus is too much on the details. When have you personally experienced this?

In Mark 11:1-25, we see three stories happening here. Throughout these three stories, the common thread is that nothing is quite as it seems. Jesus seems to be the only one who has a clear view of what is going on. Whether tables are being flipped or branches are being shaken, how do we respond in these circumstances? Do we focus on what is happening right in front of us or do we take a step back to see what God is trying to do and join Him in His mission? As a group of people who are seeking to grow to become more like Jesus, be ready to ask some hard questions and wrestle with the realities that God is trying to make clear.

**QUICK REVIEW** (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

**DIG DEEPER** (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

- 1** Someone read **Mark 11:1-11**.

*<sup>1</sup> Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup> and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" <sup>4</sup> And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. <sup>5</sup> And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" <sup>6</sup> And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. <sup>7</sup> And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and He sat on it. <sup>8</sup> And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. <sup>9</sup> And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! <sup>10</sup> Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" <sup>11</sup> And He entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when He had looked around at everything, as it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.*

**When Jesus mounted the young donkey, what did it signify to the Jewish people? How did they react? Who was conspicuously absent?**

**How were the people's expectations of the Messiah different from Jesus' true intentions?**

According to Zechariah 9:9, the King would come to Jerusalem riding on a colt. Jesus would not simply enter Jerusalem. He would come as the messianic King. However, He would not come as a Warrior-King as the people expected, riding a war horse. Matthew 21:2 states that this was a donkey, specifically fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy and emphasizing the peaceful, gentle nature of the Messiah.

- 2** Someone read **Mark 11:12-14**.

<sup>12</sup> On the following day, when they came from Bethany, He was hungry. <sup>13</sup> And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if He could find anything on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. <sup>14</sup> And He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And His disciples heard it.

**What did Jesus expect when He approached the fig tree? Were Jesus' expectations fair? Why or why not?**

**What do you think went through the minds of the disciples when Jesus cursed the tree? Why would Jesus use His authority in this way?**

Jesus approached the fig tree, expecting figs to be present. When a fig tree grows leaves, it also grows figs. Jesus saw the leaves and expected fruit. When He got there, the tree had no fruit. It looked fruitful but was not. Jesus cursed the tree for having the appearance of fruit yet not bearing actual fruit. The disciples must have been confused that Jesus would curse a tree simply for not having figs on it. Jesus had the right to condemn anything or anyone for not serving its primary purpose. Many scholars believe the tree serves as a metaphor for Israel and its standing before God. By cursing the tree, Jesus signified God's judgment on the Jewish people for being "fruitless": that is, without true worship, prayer, and righteousness. This metaphorical understanding sheds light on Jesus' cleansing of the temple in the verses that follow.

### **3** Someone read **Mark 11:15-19**.

<sup>15</sup> And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. <sup>16</sup> And He would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. <sup>17</sup> And He was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." <sup>18</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy Him, for they feared Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching. <sup>19</sup> And when evening came they went out of the city.

**What was the purpose of the temple? How had the temple been corrupted?**

The disciples went into the temple, the place where God was to be worshiped and praised, and found the temple courts filled with money traders and people selling birds and other animals for sacrifices. These merchants turned the practices of the temple into an opportunity for financial gain. Jesus quoted Isaiah 56:7, stating the temple should be a house of prayer for all nations. Instead, the Jews made Gentiles change out their money to make an offering. Jeremiah said that the temple would be turned into a place to steal and rob, and that was precisely what was taking place in Jesus' day.

**What does this cleansing of the temple tell you about Jesus?**

### **4** Someone read **Mark 11:20-25**.

<sup>20</sup> As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. <sup>21</sup> And Peter remembered and said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." <sup>22</sup> And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup> Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. <sup>24</sup> Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. <sup>25</sup> And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

**What was Jesus' lesson to the disciples about the fig tree?**

**How did the fig tree and the temple demonstrate a lack of faith?**

**How might one misuse Jesus' words about prayer in v. 24?**

Jesus gave a simple lesson with the fig tree: "Have faith in God." Fruit and genuine worship come because there is faith in God to remove anything that can hinder such fruit and genuine worship. Only when people are motivated and driven to God by faith can the faith yield the proper fruit. Faith drives us to worship God and to pray to God, because we believe in His power and His ability to answer prayers that are submissive to His will yet confident in His power.

## LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

- 1 **If you had been a Jew living in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, what would have made you reject and oppose Jesus? How might that be similar in our culture we live in today?**
- 2 **Are there any obstacles in your life that you would sorely miss if God removed them to have you bear more fruit and worship more genuinely?**
- 3 **If you were to analyze the content and frequency of your prayers, what would they communicate about your understanding of God and your faith in Him? What steps can you take to ensure that your prayers more accurately reflect Jesus' teaching in this passage?**
- 4 **In hindsight, do you believe that at some point, you missed out on transformation, correction, or another move of God in your life, because you were just ok with the way things were? Why is it important that we don't allow that same thing to happen in our lives going forward?**

## CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time in prayer with your group.

## NEXT WEEK:

Read **MARK 11:27-12:17** before Sunday and your next home group gathering. Remember to take good notes so you are ready to add to the discussion your home group will have!

## PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to write the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

## TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in a Home Group. Here are some tips to help make group prayer be a life-giving aspect of your group.

**PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME:** Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request or praise during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next request or praise.

**PRAY MORE THAN ONCE:** If your group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one should be required to pray.

**KEEP PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE:** Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one should be required to pray out loud.

### ***How to Use this Discussion Guide***

*This guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and becoming like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.*

*With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel the need to ask every question during your group discussion. This guide is not meant to be*

*something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your group grow in Gospel community. In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!*

**Visit [cpmodesto.org/groupleaders](http://cpmodesto.org/groupleaders) to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit [cpmodesto.org/homegroups](http://cpmodesto.org/homegroups) and use the Home Group Finder!**

## COMMENTARY

### MARK 11:1-25

**11:1.** This verse introduces a new section in Jesus' ministry as He entered Jerusalem. This introduces what is typically called the passion week, beginning with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and ending with His Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Six of Mark's 16 chapters deal with this last week. This shows the importance of these events in Jesus' life. Jesus went through the village Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, two miles east of Jerusalem. Bethphage is less well-known but near Bethany.

**11:2-3.** Most interpreters think the city Jesus sent the disciples to was Bethphage because it was closer to Jerusalem. Some commentators take this verse as evidence of Jesus' omniscience. Others believe that Jesus had prearranged receiving the colt on one of His other trips to Jerusalem. The text does not indicate which view is correct, but neither does damage to the text or to the character of Jesus.

Jesus gave instructions that if anyone asked what they were doing, the disciples were to reply that the Lord needs it. The word "Lord" (Gr. "kyrios") could mean "Lord" or simply "master." It is the first time in Mark's Gospel that Jesus referred to Himself as Lord. While He could have meant simply "master" or "sir," He probably meant Lord in our fullest interpretation of the word. The messianic secret which is so prevalent in Mark's Gospel is slowly being revealed. Jesus has spoken to His disciples of His messiahship, identity, death, and Resurrection. It would not be out of keeping with this gradual revelation for Him to further reveal Himself here.

**11:4-6.** The fact that a great number of details are given here may point to Peter as one of the two disciples sent on this errand. The situation happened as Jesus warned them, and they repeated Jesus' words to the questioners. While a few interpreters think the words had a powerful effect on the listeners—enough for them to relinquish their possession of the colt—the text does not support this. It seems more likely that the owners would have heard of Jesus. Perhaps they knew Him personally and they realized He was an honest man, if not a prophet. They could be sure of having the colt returned.

**11:7-8.** Cloaks were laid on the colt to serve as a rough saddle. The cloaks thrown on the ground along with the branches served as recognition of royalty. There was lavishness in their love, even though their love had not reached full potential. At this moment, they did love Him with all their hearts and desired to honor Him as king.

**11:9-10.** These two verses make it clear what the crowds were expecting. "Hosanna" means literally "save now." It was an acclamation of praise to One Who had the power to save. The same word is used in Psalm 118:25, where it is translated, "O Lord, save us." This psalm is a thanksgiving psalm. Interpretations vary as to what it referred to. It may have referred to deliverance from Egypt, or it could have celebrated release from captivity and the rebuilt temple. In either case, it celebrated deliverance from captivity. It was an appropriate psalm for Jesus, who came to deliver humanity from captivity to sin and death.

The reference to David's kingdom is a clear messianic title. The crowds were acknowledging that Jesus was heir to David's throne. "He who comes" was another euphemism for the Messiah. The crowds expected Jesus to establish His kingdom immediately.

**11:11.** True to Mark's Gospel, the triumphant entry into Jerusalem is a bit more somber here than that recorded in Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew states that the city was stirred, and Luke says that the crowd was singing joyfully. But Mark records that when these events were finished, He went to the temple, had a look around, and then went back to Bethany, most likely to the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. This verse shows Jesus as thoughtful, deliberate. This thoughtful pause here and the actions that follow remind us of a prophecy of judgment in Daniel: "You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting" (5:27). The guilty verdict was in; the sentence would be carried out the next day.

**11:12-13.** Trees in Jerusalem get leafy in March (and remain so for approximately nine months), but they do not produce fruit until June. If such was the case, how could Jesus expect fruit from the tree? Some have suggested that He acted in anger, but the account contains no words of anger. Others suggest that this was a miracle inserted at a later time and thus is not truly a part of Mark. This solution, however, causes more problems than it solves. Why would the later church put in a miracle that would cast Jesus in a dubious light? Perhaps the best interpretation is that Jesus in His omniscience saw that the tree would never produce fruit, so He used the occasion to teach the disciples. The tree, which looked so promising because it was full of leaves, was fruitless. Notice that Mark called attention to the fact that it was not the season for figs. This signals that this was a symbolic action.

**11:14.** Mark made sure that the reader knew that all the disciples heard Jesus pronounce judgment upon the fig tree. They understood the symbolism. The fig tree had long been a symbol of Israel's peace and security (see Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10). Jesus' curse upon it meant that Israel would not again be the God's main instrument for accomplishing His purpose.

**11:15.** Jesus had seen the buying and selling going on in the temple the night before, so His actions here are deliberate and well thought out—not a random act of violence, as some have suggested. Matthew and Luke also record the clearing of the temple at this time. John places this event at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. It is possible that there were two separate cleansings of the temple by Jesus.

**11:17.** Notice the phrase, as He taught them. After throwing out the merchants and overturning their tables, Jesus the rabbi would have explained His actions to His disciples. Jesus quoted from Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. The rest of the passage in Jeremiah predicts God’s destruction of Solomon’s temple. The hearers most certainly noted this and the veiled threat it implied. It is no wonder that the rulers feared Him.

Jesus’ mention of a house of prayer for all nations signifies that He had in mind the Gentiles. They had been pushed out of the outer court of the temple area by the proliferation of merchandise. Gentiles were allowed to worship in the temple, although only in its outer circle. “Den of robbers” does not mean a place of dishonest dealings, although it may have been that. This phrase probably referred to a refuge for unjust persons. The Jews of the day felt secure in God’s acceptance because of their rituals and laws. They were like a tree in full foliage that bore no fruit.

**11:18.** The chief priests knew, as did the rulers, that Jesus was claiming an authority higher than theirs. They feared Him because the crowd loved Him and believed Him to be the Messiah.

**11:19.** It would not have been safe for Jesus to remain in the city with all the plots against His life. They probably returned each night to Bethany, where Jesus could spend time with friends.

**11:20-21.** Peter’s astonishment at the withered fig tree was not because Jesus had worked the miracle. After all, he had seen dead people revived by Jesus. His astonishment arose from the fact that the miracle took place so quickly. There may also have been a note of horror that Jerusalem’s judgment would come soon—as indeed it did in AD 70. Mark’s mention of the tree being withered from the roots up points to its total destruction.

Jesus’ parable is clear. The religious system of the day had plenty of leaves but no fruit. Its surface piety was seen in tithes and prayers and fasts (Matt. 5–7) and in the ritual purity that kept out women, lepers, blind beggars, and those possessed by demons. The foliage of the religious leaders offered much promise but no fulfillment. As the figless tree could not satisfy Jesus’ appetite, so the religious system could not satisfy the spiritual hunger of the people.

**11:22.** The Bible translations have this verse as the beginning of a new paragraph and a new section on the teaching of prayer. But this verse is actually a response to Peter and should finish the scene of the withered fig tree. The disciples understood Jesus’ metaphor and knew that the temple would be destroyed some day. Peter’s fear would have been a natural reaction to the loss of a way of life, no matter how burdensome. This is reminiscent of Habakkuk 2:4. Habakkuk learned that God would punish Israel by using the invasion of the Babylonians. He was horrified but testifies, “The righteous will live by his faith.”

**11:23-24.** This saying is not in Luke or Matthew, probably because Jesus taught on prayer more than once. Jesus was using hyperbole as He did in 10:25. He did not intend for Christians to try to move literal mountains. But He did expect us to believe that our prayers can overcome great difficulties. We must have faith when we pray. But our faith is not in the strength of our prayers, nor in the size of our faith.

**11:25-26.** This is not Jesus’ only teaching on prayer. We know that Christians are to pray within God’s will, as taught in the Lord’s prayer (Matt. 6:10). John states this clearly. “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him” (1 John 5:14-15). God’s will is a prerequisite of the prayer of faith. We know that God’s will is for us to forgive as we have been forgiven. If we cannot forgive, then we are not praying in God’s will.