



**A Week to Live**  
**“Jesus Curses the Fig Tree”**  
**April 9, 2017**  
**Courage Church, Detroit, MI**

We are going through the significant moments that took place during the last week of Jesus' life in these weeks

leading up to Easter Sunday, we can't cover them all before Easter, so we are going to do some now, and the rest we will try and get through next year during the season of Lent.

and today really is a continuation of what we talked about last week. Last week we talked about how Jesus was given this amazing Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem... how when he arrived it was already late, but he wanted to see the temple so he went in, and looked around, then went to Bethany where he went to bed...

the following day he got up, and he cursed a fig tree because it had no figs on it, **EVEN THOUGH IT WAS NOT THE SEASON FOR FIGS** (which a lot of people find odd and somewhat disturbing)... then we went into the temple again, and turned over the tables, and chased away the money changers and wouldn't let people carry their sacrifices that they had bought in the Gentiles Court in the temple...

That was basically as far as we got, and we will read some of that again today... the way that Mark records these events taking place, is on Monday morning Jesus wakes up, curses the fig tree, then goes and cleanses the temple... and then on Tuesday morning they go back to the Fig Tree, and Jesus teaches about it.

So the temple cleansing is sandwiched between these two sections about a withered fig tree... last week we focused on the temple, and this week we are going to focus on the withered fig tree and the lesson that Jesus draws from it.

So lets get started... please open your bibles with me to Mark 11:12-25

## **Jesus Curses the Fig Tree**

<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.**

## **Jesus Cleanses the Temple**

<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.

## **The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree**

<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.”

## *Lets Pray*

One observation about Holy Week is this:

On Monday, Jesus does a lot.

On Tuesday, Jesus teaches a lot.

On Monday you see *action*. You see him get irritated with a fig tree so he curses it... you see him get irritated with the money changers and the business taking place in the Gentiles Court of the Temple, so he drives them out...

Both things that seem a bit uncharacteristic of Jesus... cursing a Fig Tree for no figs when it is not fig season?

Flipping tables and driving people out of the Holy Temple...

But I want you to notice something, something, again, that shows us **WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO JESUS...**

When He goes crazy in the temple, He does so declaring that the temple is for everyone, not just the Jews, and that it is for **PRAYER**.

Then, the next morning, they pass that fig tree that Jesus had cursed, and they say "look! your curse worked Jesus!" and then Jesus goes off on this bit about faith and about how you can move mountains if you would just believe... and once more, just like in the temple, he centers the whole thing on **PRAYER**.

These are two of the most peculiar moments in all of the gospels, where Jesus seemingly does something very out of characteristic of him...

It is the most aggressive we see Jesus.

and both times he speaks of prayer in the middle of those things.

Prayer is obviously **VERY IMPORTANT TO JESUS**.

Discipleship (another thing **VERY** important to Jesus) is all about learning from, and *becoming like* your mentor... your rabbi, your teacher...

Pastor Brad Reed is one of Dawn and I's mentors... which, by the way, He is going to be coming here this July... He is going to teach at 4 Days this year, and then He is going to stay over and teach at Courage that Sunday, July 30th... so please please put it on your calendar now...be here that

day, bring a lot of friends, I can't wait for you to hear from one of the most influential men in Dawn and I's life... Lots of what I teach you I learned from Him... some of what I am teaching you today, I learned from Him.

Jace and Alyssa, during the time that they were living in New York, visited the Dream Center and I remember them telling me after they heard Pastor Brad teach, how much they could tell that I was influenced by Him... it reminded them of home a bit... and it is not that we are trying to make photo copies of each other, but I took that as a compliment because I believe that He is very good at what He does... and when I was there I learned everything that I could from Him so that I could continue to pass that on to others...

I definitely was disciplined by Him.

My point in saying all that is this: we are disciples of Jesus. and if that is TRUE of us... then our lives should LOOK LIKE JESUS. Obviously we will never be perfect, but we have a model by which we should hold to as our standard.

That is why we are studying these last few days of Jesus' life so closely, because if you knew you only had a week left to live, you wouldn't do things that JUST DON'T MATTER... you would focus on the things that will have the absolute biggest impact.

and Jesus Christ was the most *intentional* person to ever live... so we need to pay close attention to the way he spent these last few days.

Jesus says it like this in Luke:

"A disciple, when he is fully trained, will not be better than his teacher, but HE WILL BE LIKE HIM" (Luke 6:40)

and we study the life of Jesus so intently, because we want to be like Him.

And one thing that is absolutely certain about Jesus is this:

Prayer is VERY important to Jesus.

In the last week of his life, the two most dramatic actions that he took toward someone or something else, he tied to prayer.

Two days later, on Thursday evening in the Garden of Gethsemene, Jesus was with His disciples and He told them to *wait for him* while he went and prayed (Matthew 26:36, Mark 14:32) - He modeled a prayer life...

Of constant communion with God... He did it His whole life.

Mark 1:35 says that very early in the morning, WHEN IT WAS STILL DARK OUT, Jesus would get up, go to a solitary place, and pray.

Prayer was the one thing that Jesus' disciples, after watching Jesus do over and over, finally just asked Him: Lord, teach us to do that! Teach us how to pray! (Luke 11:1)

and Jesus' response is something you need to make a note of... because the way that Jesus modeled prayer, AND THE WAY THAT HE TAUGHT PRAYER, was that it is was personal thing... an individual thing... a time between you and God.

That is not to downplay the power of coming together, or of prayer meetings and corporate prayer...

We pray here every Sunday morning at 9:30... you are all invited, its not a "pastors" thing, its an everybody thing. In fact WE WOULD LOVE IT if you would show up for church at 9:30 and pray with us for our city... and for our church... but even the fact that that happens every week is something that you need to realize, BECAUSE is that by the time that YOU get here... you have already been prayed for...

The Holy Spirit has already been invited into this place... and what we tend to do, is we come to church, and it is really easy to pray in church because it is an atmosphere where that feels appropriate, right?

But what you may not realize is that it is actually an atmosphere that has ALREADY been created by the people who have been here ALL MORNING praying...

Here, the atmosphere is created for us... but at home and throughout our weeks, we are responsible for that... and the truth is, that is how it is supposed to be. Jesus says “when you pray, DON’T PRAY LONG PRAYERS that everyone can hear, and then think you are heard for your many prayers (Matthew 6:5-6)- no, when you pray, go into your room... close the door, and pray like this:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name  
Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

In other words, “God... CONNECT ME TO WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART for my life... to what is in YOUR HEART for my city...”

“God, How do I bring what is already up there (heaven), HERE... (to earth)”

We think that God is just ignoring us when we pray selfish, “me filled” prayers and then we don’t get what we want, but what we are doing when we pray that way is WE ARE PRAYING FOR OUR KINGDOMS... not His.

Jesus says don’t babble when you pray... and then he gives us this laser beam focused prayer about bringing Heaven to earth... and I can’t help but wonder: could one of the reasons for that be... the more we talk, the more likely we are to just start talking about ourselves? Isn’t that normal, when you are in a conversation with someone and it starts to get awkward because there isn’t much left to say... what do you do? You either end the conversation, or you talk MORE ABOUT YOURSELF. And before long, it gets awkward for EVERYONE.

Most people I know think that prayer is a bit awkward. I wonder why?

but to the Hebrew people, prayer was always much more about *listening* than it ever was about talking.

Here is why I think listening is more important than what we say when it comes to prayer...

I think that where a lot of us go wrong, is we “trust God” to give us whatever it is we think we need in that moment...but we don’t “TRUST GOD, enough that we align our whole lives with the things that He tells us to do!”

of course you would trust God if you prayed for a billion dollars and the next day it showed up on your doorstep... Who on earth wouldn’t after that?

but do you TRUST GOD SO MUCH, that IF He tells you to do something, and He tell tells you that He will take care of you through that... but its not what you want to do...

do you trust Him enough to do it?

and do you trust God, when you actually DO step out, and a year, or two years, or five years later, it still doesn’t seem like God is going to keep His promises... do you still trust Him?

Here is an easy example, I talk to people all the time who tell me they feel a call to Detroit. Its one of the main things that people tell me... but years later, they still aren’t here. Years later they still aren’t making arrangements to move their families here, or doing anything at all to move in the direction of that call.

When we hear a call and deny it, we actually build our lives on doubt, - you could call it selfishness... but ultimately we are doubting whether or God actually knows what is BEST FOR US... we build our lives on doubt, and then get frustrated when it feels like our prayers are powerless.

Doubt robs prayer of its power.

Jesus always responded to faith more than he ever did to needs.

and if you have enough FAITH to align your life with Kingdom purposes, God WILL move on your behalf.

This is such a hard reality, but this is the truth. The reason that people don't spend as much time in prayer as they do out doing works of compassion, or other types of ministries, is because, even though they would never say it, somewhere deep in their spirit they think that it is a waste of time... They don't actually TRUST that Jesus will hear them, or that they will really be able to HEAR FROM JESUS... so when they throw up prayers to heaven, they do so reluctant that there will actually be a result. They pray, doubting.

But look at what Jesus says about doubt.

Verse 23-24:

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.

We don't think it works. We don't believe that if we actually look at a mountain and say "throw yourself into the sea" that it will do that... and do you want to know why?

Because of pride.

Because pride (like doubt) also robs prayer of its power.

Because in our little minds, we can't comprehend a mountain doing something that a mountain was NOT DESIGNED TO DO. So in our logical reasoning, we say "God can't actually do *that* because it is physically impossible" and suddenly we "know" better than God.

You can't reason your way to faith... if we could, it wouldn't be faith...

but that is why our generation of intellectual, knowledge driven people have such a hard time seeing the miraculous signs and wonders that have taken place in previous generations, all throughout history. Because we are "too smart" for our own good, and it quenches the spirit.



It is not that it CAN'T happen here, it absolutely CAN happen here, and it needs to.

But our daily walk typically looks more like us feeding ourselves things to make us smarter, rather than on our face seeking the one who actually gives us POWER.

It is crucial that we are really intentional to NOT fall into the “appearance of godliness” that Paul warns Timothy about (3:1-8)

those who are always learning... but never coming to the truth.... they have the “appearance of godliness, but they deny its power.”

Jesus tells us with the example of the Fig Tree... you actually have the power to say to a tree “you will never bare fruit again” and it will happen. You have the power to say to a mountain throw yourself into the sea and it will happen!

But what we tend to do is we walk around with knowledge but no power, and then when something catastrophic happens, THEN we turn to the power... and we call the corporate prayer meeting...

and we all cry:

IF MY PEOPLE...

WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES...

and we shout these loud, long, wordy prayers up, and in most cases they are ALL ABOUT OURSELVES!

What is humble about that?

2 Chronicles 7:14

“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

I want us to look at this, because this verse is so misused. And I am not even going to go where lots of people like to go with it... in saying “oh this was written for a specific group of people, for a specific time...”

EVERYTHING in the bible was written for a specific group of people and for a specific time, and EVERYTHING in the bible is, *still today* profitable for: teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, and for equipping the saints to be complete and equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

But even if you just read it... you isolate it, you take it at face value... we STILL misuse this one... we love to speak it over our cities... we love to speak it over the nation... over the blatant evils... but the very first thing in that this says is IF MY PEOPLE.

If the people who belong to God... if the church. If the ones who are supposed to be different, would *actually live differently*... **THINGS WOULD BE DIFFERENT.**

IF.

That is a very big if, and one that we seem to find ourselves on the wrong side of quite often, right?

But we are so caught up on what is happening to US, that we can't turn our eye toward others and in reality, and if we can't get our eyes off of ourselves, we will never be able to get a view of what God is actually doing in our world... and in our midst...

pride in the Hebrew means TO LIFT UP STRENGTH...

its always about you... you are good, others are not.

You don't have struggles, others do.

So if God's people are going to humble themselves, it means that they need to stop thinking less of other people, and stop thinking that God wants

to do more in THEM than in someone else... and they need to realize that the WORLD AS A WHOLE NEEDS JESUS... and you are NOT better than they are, just because you have found Him.

Humble in ancient Hebrew means to tear down the wall.

Why is that so significant here?

Everybody has stuff that makes them broken.

When we pray, our prayers are hindered, when we hide behind the walls of what we really are, and instead boast in our strength.

We know all the reasons why we are just as screwed up as the next guy... but we mask who we are, and we condemn who THEY ARE.

From the beginning of time, we have been hiding... think about this... Jesus cursed a fig tree... if you go back in time to the very first time we read about figs in the bible, it is all the way back to Genesis, in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve use FIG LEAVES TO COVER THEMSELVES... to hide their shame behind a cover. It was, at the beginning, a cover for something else.

Luke 11 (11-14) records a story of a Pharisee and a Tax Collector who both go to the temple to pray, look at this:

Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> **The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ <sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.**

The one who came humbly was heard, the other was NOT. The other one went in with a wall... he was wearing fig leaves. He said "I don't need forgiveness... this guy does..."

but Chronicles says that IF you humble yourself... IF YOU TEAR DOWN THAT WALL... I will hear you, and I will forgive you...

But Jesus puts it another way...

"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"

When you stand praying... if you have built up the walls against other people because of the things that they have done to you... or because of the way that you think that they live... if there is something you have against someone else that makes you feel like they deserve one thing, and you deserve another... that makes you feel like you are worth more than them...

Those walls will prevent your prayers from being heard.

*That* was what was happening in the temple, we talked about it last week... "my house will be called a house of prayer for the GENTILES" - but the dividing wall of Hostility that was put in place by the Jews WAS KEEPING THE GENTILES OUT.

Because of pride. The Jews lifted up their own strength, and they held things over the Gentiles, all the way down the very race and families they were a part of.

It was a mentality that had been passed down from generation to generation and had to be broken, so Jesus brought it to light in the temple.

We bury things in our hearts and we let them build up and up and up... sometimes they are completely inexcusable. Sometimes people just do really awful things.

and as I was praying about this message and thinking about this, I thought that I was going to put this at the end and I just felt like it needed to be here. In this moment. I don't know why. I think these things out very intentionally and strategically and I really feel like the Spirit had this for us right now, in this moment.

Unforgiveness robs prayer of its power.

You can go through your whole life angry... you can do that. Some of you would even feel justified in doing that... it may be the only thing that feels JUST...

but you will waste your life.

and the walls that you build, you will keep bumping in to them. It is the thing that is preventing you from moving forward... God won't answer the prayers of someone like that. You have to forgive.

It is impossible to forgive without humility... you have to tear down that wall. and in some situations, the only way that it would even be possible to forgive, is just to set your eyes on Jesus. On the one who forgave you of such an incredible debt. Of the one who demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still sinners, dying for our sins, He died for us... He took the weight of all of the terrible things that we have done to each other, and to ourselves, and to God.

If you have the power to throw a mountain into the sea then why can't you get past this wall that you have built up that is preventing you from even seeing the sea. From even seeing what is on the other side.

look at what Chronicles says next...

*"if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways..."*

This is so significant. **If they will pray**, and seek my *face*.

one of the Hebrew word picture for the word “pray” (*těphillah*) is made up of a head facing one way, and then it facing another way, and then the head of an ox which means strength...

It was the concept of a person turning their head, in order to face the one who *is* strong enough. Because Lord knows WE AREN'T.

Maybe for you it is what we just talked about... maybe it is unforgiveness. You say to me “I want to forgive...” but it just keeps coming back to my mind...

turn your head, in order to FACE THE ONE who is strong enough to bare the burden that you obviously can't lift on your own.

It is the turning of the head toward the one WHO IS ALREADY MOVING and seeing “how do I align my life with *that?*” We view prayer as this huge opportunity for us to tell God everything we want from Him, and when we read about moving mountains it can be easy to justify that... but Jesus was very clear, when you pray, you ask for the Kingdom of God to COME HERE NOW ON THIS EARTH. TODAY.

Last thought from Chronicles:

“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, *and pray and seek my face and turn from their **wicked ways**...*”

Jesus doesn't use the word “wicked” a whole lot in His ministry... He does use it... He says “a *wicked* generation seeks a sign and no sign will be given except for the sign of Jonah” (Matt. 16:4) and he does us it in the Olivet Discourse, which was another thing that took place on that last week of His life, in a parable that he gives about *stewardship* (Matthew 25:14-30, The Parable of the Talents)

and this is so so significant... because this is the picture that Jesus paints for us about being wicked...

is that of usefulness. of a LACK OF FRUITFULNESS in your life on account of incredibly poor stewardship of what you have been given.

He tells the story of a master who goes on a trip and gives his three servants talents for them to manage... one gets 5, one gets 2, and one gets 1. And the one who gets 5 doubles it, and makes ten, and makes his master PROUD... and the one who is given two DOUBLES IT, and makes his master proud... but the one who was given one, BURIES IT.

and when the master comes back, he can't believe that someone would bury a talent instead of using it. So he casts him out, and those are his words: You *wicked* and slothful servant!

I gave you something... something valuable. Something THAT WAS MINE... THAT I ENTRUSTED TO YOU... and you buried it.

Jesus says it this way in the sermon on the mount... nobody takes a light, and puts it under a basket... you are taking away its only purpose. and a light is so powerful, that you could be a room that is totally dark, and you can't see anything, and your whole world may feel uncertain... but the moment that someone lights a single light, everything changes. Even if it is not that bright of a light, at least you have an idea of what is going on... and it doesn't take that much to light an entire room... and Jesus tells the CHURCH - YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!

so let it shine... because NOBODY would take a light, and put it under a basket, when the rest of the room is dark.

can that be said of us? Can that be said of the church of Jesus Christ in our broken world? Where God's greatest treasure is people, and he has entrusted them to us to live the love of Christ in such a way that demonstrates their worth...

that shows people who feel like they DON'T MATTER...

THAT THEY MATTER?

can it be said that our light is under a basket?

Because it certainly COULD BE SAID of the religious leaders, and the temple leaders, on the day that Jesus cursed the fig tree.

And when Jesus sees this tree, on his way to cleanse the temple, He sees Israel. He sees God's chosen people... He sees His church.

The people with the light... and it was under a basket.

but like most things with the Jews in those days, the whole thing was just a repeat of history.

In Ezekiel 17 we get an old testament parable called "The Parable of Two Eagles and a Vine"

and this odd parable that was written in the form of a riddle, is all about the previous time that the temple had been destroyed...

Here is just one of the things it says: Ezekiel 17:24 - "I bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it."

and the when you think about it, It is the exact same thing as what happens with the Fig Tree. God himself says, "I decide what I want to do with the tree, and look at what I did to this one..."

and when Jesus saw that Fig Tree that wasn't bearing fruit even though it wasn't the season for fruit, he saw the temple.

He saw the religious systems.

He saw a church that wasn't actually THE CHURCH.

He saw the things that were built to bring hope and instead were bringing isolation... something built to bring life and instead sucked life out...

and He declared exactly what was going to happen to it. This temple will fall. There will be no fruit.



This temple will end up JUST LIKE THAT TEMPLE DID.

I love what Charles Spurgeon says about the withered fig tree, and I hope that this helps put this into context for you:

“The Jewish race became, for centuries, a withered tree: it had nothing but profession when Christ came, and that profession proved powerless to save even the holy city. **Christ did not destroy the religious organization of the Jews: he left them as they were;** but they withered away from the root, till the Roman came, and with the axes of his legions cleared away the fruitless trunk.”

But Jesus didn't leave them as they were without trying to stir them awake.

See one thing that we forget about Jesus is that He also is a prophet. He had many things to say about what was to come... He had many warnings. and we read things like Jesus cursing trees when they weren't bearing fruit when it was out of season anyway, and we think... WHY?

But He did it to paint a picture... to lead us somewhere.

Because a church without the power of the Holy Spirit is just a country club. A church without prayer is just an assembly. A pep rally.

and a “church” that *takes* when it is called to *give* needs to be destroyed.

Because the thing that represents Him to the world is turning the world off to Him.

Jesus didn't spend the final days of his life in some desperate attempt to save as many people as He possibly could, or raise as many people from the dead as He possibly could. He spent those days teaching the disciples, and rebuking the church, because the reality is, the church is the only Hope that the world has... we are the living, breathing body of our head, Jesus Christ.

and if we think that we can get lazy... that we can bury our talents... if think “oh, its okay that we aren't bearing any fruit right now because it is

FEBRUARY” and THERE IS NO FRUIT IN FEBRUARY!!! what does that say about us?

Jesus just got done flipping tables because the church wasn't praying, the church was excluding people, and it was robbing people... and Jesus says “don't you understand that prayer is way more powerful than money.”

And “if this temple to you is your source because of the way that people pay you when they come in, then we can burn it to the ground”

and if your prayer life is just gimme gimme gimme you won't get a response because you don't trust God. If you trusted God, you would trust Him enough to do what He says... if you were truly connected to the source, you would know how to pray... and it is NOT “Jesus give me a mercedes, and let it fly”

because we know the heart of our Father is not flying cars, the heart of our Father is and always has been PEOPLE. Start living for people, and before long, your prayers will start becoming about people. and then you will see just how powerful your God really is.

Jesus loved people so much that he died for the ones who were killing Him. He died for the ones that the withered Fig Tree represented... The hypocritical, cold, religious people who said everything and did nothing...

and this is the last thing...

When Jesus went into the temple, and He took on the entire thing, it was very obvious that He had the authority to do it... He was one man against many, and He prevailed... and do you know what the religious leaders asked Him after these two things?

ON WHAT AUTHORITY DO YOU DO THESE THINGS? (Mark 11:27)

“Because it went against everything that we have built our hypocritical lives on... and yet we ALL felt like you have the *authority* to do it.”

Think about that!

They didn't know what it was... they didn't know where it comes from...

but they knew it was there.

and on that same authority, you can say to the mountains in your life, move... and they have to.

When we took the team to New Orleans, on the last night of the trip, they had us get with our team, the ones who came up from Detroit... they created a little "Detroit" station for us, and then they handed us a couple sheets of paper describing some of the absolutely terrible things that have been going on in our city.

The stories that haunt people, and keep people from coming here... the stories that lead families to pack up and go somewhere new.

Is it faith for us to read those stories, and to accept that this is just what happens in Detroit, and if we don't like it, we just need to go somewhere else?

no... of course not! we need to look at that mountain and say MOVE! We need to look at Detroit and say "WE WANT THAT CITY!"

Let THY KINGDOM COME HERE! and anything that we may gain in the process, may it only be a pathway for the Kingdom.

You need to look at that mountain that is your drug addicted brother, or your wayward son, or your friend who has cancer, and you say to that mountain "throw yourself into the sea" because you can't have my family.

You can't have my friends.

You need to look at that mountain that is your dying marriage, that is telling you every day all of the ways that it WILL NEVER GET BETTER, and the way that HE WILL NEVER CHANGE, and the lie that YOU WILL NEVER BE HAPPY... you need to look to that mountain and say:

You can't have my marriage.

Because I already know what God says about marriage, and it is good. I already know the plans that God has for me, and they are good.

There are promises for your life, and they are good! And YOU HAVE THE POWER AND THE AUTHORITY to reach out and claim those promises. If you can kill doubt... and you can kill pride... and you can kill unforgiveness... you can say to whatever mountain is waging war against the Kingdom: throw yourself into the sea, and it has to listen to you.

Why do you have that authority? Because you are connected to the source.

When Jesus cursed the fig tree and it withered, He demonstrated authority.

and when He resurrected, He told the disciples... wait for the Spirit... Because He is going to empower you to do the same... in another place he said "I have given you the KEYS to the Kingdom" - whatever you bind... whatever you loose... its bound... its loosed. You have the power.

But with power comes responsibility...

We already know that God wants Detroit to heal. We already know that we have the cure.

we aren't going to be a withered fig tree in the midst of a drought... in the midst of the season that it's not even time to bare fruit. We are going to be ready in season and out. We are going to be avenues of change, and we are going to live lives of power as we work diligently, and pray without ceasing, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done...

on earth, as it is in Heaven.