



The Gospel of Matthew

“The Danger of Outward Appearances”

Matthew 21:18-32

“Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry.

And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing except leaves only; and He said to it, “No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered.

And seeing this, the disciples marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?”

And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it shall happen.

And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

Matthew 21:18-22



Outward Appearances

Lessons of the Fig Tree

1. An acted parable condemning hypocrisy
 - symbol of the judgment on Israel/temple for the lack of real fruit
 - Jesus is cursing any who make a show of bearing fruit but are spiritually barren



Outward Appearances

Lessons of the Fig Tree

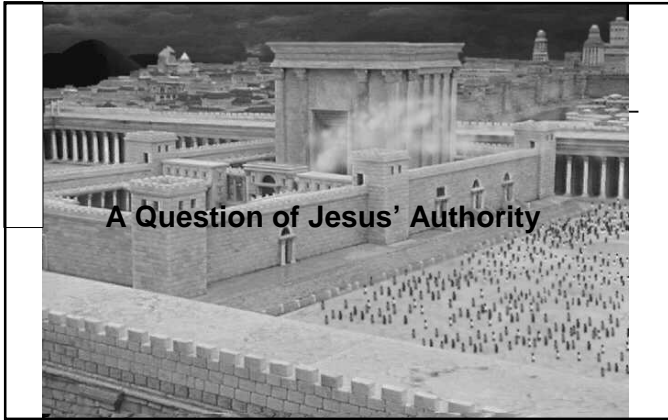
2. The power of believing prayer
 - by faith God enables us to do what He calls us to do, even what is humanly impossible



Outward Appearances


Lessons of the Fig Tree

2. The power of believing prayer
 - the faith which receives answers to prayer is the practical trust in God’s power and His willingness to respond



“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’
 And he answered and said, ‘I will, sir’; and he did not go.
 And he came to the second and said the same thing. But he answered and said, ‘I will not’; yet he afterward regretted it and went.


“Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The latter.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax-gatherers and harlots will get into the kingdom of God before you.
 For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe.”
 Matthew 21:28-32

 **Outward Appearances**

Parable of the Two Sons

1. The Meaning


- those who give “lip service” to God without real obedience will not enter the kingdom
- those once disobedient who repent and obey will enter the kingdom of God

 **Outward Appearances**

Parable of the Two Sons

2. The Application

- the Jewish leaders said “yes” to God but never did/believed what He said – fail to enter
- the scum of society repented and believed and will enter the kingdom of God

 **Outward Appearances**

Application

- to those disobedient and non-religious, Jesus offers the hope of forgiveness in Him
- to those outwardly religious but who have no genuine faith or heart of obedience, Jesus gives a sobering warning