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Mark 11:12-25

The Failure of Figs

1. Why is there such a disparity between the positivity toward Jesus the man, God, and the spiritual life and the negativity toward attendance and commitment to the local church?
2. The Purpose and Failure of the Temple - "The Garden of Eden was a place where God's presence dwelt. And the Temple was the place where God's presence dwells. The role of the people of God was to till and take care of the temple and expand the temple throughout the whole created order."

Read Mark 11:12-14. From the failure in the garden, the fig tree has become a symbol for the temple and the people of God. Look closely at the details in verses 12-14. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?

Read Mark 11:15-17, (Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:9-11) What do Jesus' words and these Old Testament verses tell us about the purpose and failure of the temple?

3. Discuss this quote from Kevin. *"This story is about ways that Christians, religious leaders, etc...can and do use God to cover up for their hypocrisy. They hide out in church piety to cover for how they want to live however they please throughout the week."*
4. Read Mark 18-21. How does the cursing and the withering of the fig tree illustrate God's intention for the future temple of God?

What does Jesus desire for His new "temple" community?

What can it look like for a Community Group to be a “House of Prayer?” A praying community....

5. Discuss the idea of religious hypocrisy in light of this quote: “What God detests is empty praise. And what is empty praise? It is words and religious veneer that projects an image of fruit, without actually bearing fruit.”
6. Read Mark 11:25. Why is prayer and forgiveness critical to being the temple of God? Consider how confession, repentance, forgiveness and grace defeat a hardness of heart in the face of truth.