

PRAYERS

Chanice - She is dealing with arm and knee issues.

Ralph – Recovering from surgery after a heart attack. He is doing better

Bob Olson – Suffered a serious stroke last week.

Congregation News:

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Constructive criticism is when I criticize you--
destructive criticism is when you criticize me.

Those Privileged to Serve

Sunday Morning Service:

8/26/18

9/2/18

Bible Class	Paul Darling	Paul Darling
Announcements	Tom Bright	Colby Crawford
Song Leader	Paul Darling	Paul Darling
Opening Prayer	Paul Darling	Paul Darling
Lord's Supper	Tom Bright	Colby Crawford
Closing Prayer	Tom Bright	Colby Crawford
Sermon	Tom Bright	Colby Crawford

Bible Classes

Sunday Morning

Wednesday Evening

Adult	Paul Darling	Tom Bright
Children	Colby Crawford	Linda McBrayer
Toddlers	Cindy Bright	
Babies	Anissa Crawford	

Birthdays & Anniversaries

August 27th Cody Bonen

Building Cleanup

August - McBrayer
September - Crawford

Aberdeen church of Christ

1801 S. Lincoln St.

Aberdeen, SD 57401

605-225-3621

www.aberdeenchurchofchrist.net

Bulletin Submissions

If you would like anything added to the bulletin such as prayer requests, news, or events, please make submissions by Friday night to: tlbj@sbcglobal.net

Aberdeen church of Christ

August 26, 2018

The Fruitless Fig Tree

Who planted that fig tree "by the way" oh those many years ago? Was it planted in that precise location to satisfy the hunger of some poor stranger? Was it planted to provide shade to some weary traveler? Perhaps it was planted to beautify the pathway, along with many other fig trees in abundance in that part of Judah. I suppose the answer to those questions will have to wait until we see the Lord and inquire as to why He selected that particular tree as an object lesson for those with Him on that Monday morning of the Passion Week.

Think about the fig tree and its fruit for just a moment. The health benefits of figs come from the presence of minerals, vitamins, and fiber contained in the fruit itself. Figs contain a wealth of beneficial nutrients, including vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, calcium, iron, phosphorus, manganese, sodium, potassium, and chlorine. The medical benefits are amazing. They are high in fiber and contribute to regularity. Eating figs regularly has been proven to reduce cholesterol, prevent coronary disease, and helps stimulate the elimination of cancer causing substances. It has also been shown to help prevent breast cancer, and control diabetes. Figs are native to the Middle East and Mediterranean and were held in such high regard by the Greeks that laws were once created to prevent their export. But Jesus would not use the fruit from that particular fig tree because there *was* no fruit. Therein is the lesson to those who witnessed the curse of the tree, and the withering thereof. This week's article is not intended to be a lesson on the values of eating figs, or to try to persuade you to go out and buy a package of Fig Newtons and gorge yourself on some delectable treat of sweet delight. When Jesus cursed the fig tree, He sent a message to His disciples, to the nation of Israel, and to all men. Consider four words that capture the essence of our Lord's encounter with the fruitless fig tree.

Appearance: The leaves on the tree implied that there was fruit. Fig trees usually put on the fruit *before* the leaves. So when our Lord saw the leaves He properly assumed there would be fruit as well. Upon closer inspection, however, Jesus learned there was no fruit; the tree was completely barren. The *appearance* of the tree describes the tree itself, and not so much from the standpoint of the onlooker. One man may find the tree beautiful,

another find it ugly, but neither changes the fundamental appearance of the tree itself. Like that fig tree, there are multitudes who *appear* to be happy, contented, and their lives full of joy, peace, and goodness. They put on a good show, but inwardly they are miserable and sad. I have learned over the years that some people are capable of seeing through the façade, but the vast majority do not possess that ability. Consequently, a person's *appearance* may deceive the wisest of men. This is precisely why it is dangerous to judge a person from outward appearances; they can sometimes be very deceiving.

Assumption: When I speak of assumption I am speaking of how the tree looks from the perspective of those *viewing* the tree. I have already pointed out that appearances can be deceiving. On the other hand, the one who is deceived assumed something that simply was not true. I am not assuming that Jesus was deceived; in fact I think He was fully aware that the fig tree had no fruit. Surely, He Who could see Nathaniel sitting under a fig tree from afar could see the fig tree as well. One danger of making a judgment solely on appearance is that we may observe the goodness of a person, and then *assume* that he is a good moral individual; and indeed they may very well be of wonderful upright character. This, in turn, has a direct bearing upon our evangelistic zeal. It is an easy step from assuming a person is morally upright to assuming that person is just as "upright" in the sight of God. We must never forget that God does not look at things like we are prone to do. God once told Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:17). Without the cleansing blood of Jesus, the soul remains stained with sin and all the moral uprightness that might be visible on the outside does nothing to cleanse the sin sick soul.

Application: Israel was just like that "fruitless fig tree." Appearance was deceiving. The temple and sacerdotal system may have looked good. It may have been very appealing to those seeking a superior religion. Its leaders appeared pious and prayerful. On the outside they fasted more than expected, prayed with feigned humility, and gave beyond measure. They were just like the fig tree - leaves that looked good, but a tree that bore no fruit! Fast forward to our generation. Religious organizations abound that *appear* pious and prayerful. Outwardly they put on quite a show. If you doubt that, take some time to watch the pompous platitudes espoused by "televangelists," with their attractive stage props, lighting, and who love the praise of men. This should not surprise us. The devil never sleeps as he goes about seeking to make error look like truth, and sin look like that which is good for spiritual digestion. We could go one step further and narrow the focus on those who have their names on the church roll, but who find themselves more at home with the world than

they do with the righteous. Yes, they appear to be righteous, but that is as far as it goes. The tragedy in all of this is that those who observe such hypocritical "righteousness" of said characters *assume* that their message and/or their manner of living must be wholesome and worthy of imitation. Without proper investigation, they plunge head long into the error of Balaam, or they walk in the way of Cain, unaware that if the "blind lead the blind, they both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14).

Accounting: The object lesson in the cursing of the fig tree was a stern warning that national Israel was now cursed. All that remained was for it to completely wither and eventually to be pulled up by the roots and cast into the fire. National Israel was completely destroyed in 70 A.D. The time for reckoning had come, and the fruitless fig tree of the physical and national seed of Abraham came to an end. The same end awaits every single "plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted" (Matt. 15:13). There is a time of accounting awaiting all men (2 Cor. 5:10). "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

The "fruitless fig tree" is an object lesson in guarding against judging according to *appearance*, or *assuming* that what you might see is, in reality, the truth of the matter. May we be wise to *apply* the lesson to our life that all of us may give an *accounting* on that glorious day when our Lord comes again. Will He find us faithful? Or will He find nothing more than a "fruitless fig tree."

Who Am I?

He was a king of Judah.

He became a leper and lived in a separate house.

Answer last week. **Ehud (Judges 3:15)**

Welcome to our Assembly. . .

Whether you are a first time visitor or a long time member of this congregation, we are happy to have you with us this morning. For those visiting, please make yourself comfortable. A good deal of information about this church and its activities can be found on this sheet. We encourage and invite anyone interested to participate in the activities offered throughout the week. If you have any questions about the facilities, our worship service, or want more information about the church, feel free to ask anyone present. Someone will be glad to help you!