

The Gospel of Mark  
The Fate of Fruitlessness  
Mark 11:12-14; 20-26

There is a popular proverb that says, "Don't judge a book by its cover." We say this often because we know that things are not always as they appear to be. Appearances can be deceiving. Our experience tells us that people are experts at being one thing on the outside and something completely different on the inside. Unfortunately religion can have that same tendency.

1. Jesus judges the hypocrisy of unfruitfulness.
2. Jesus demands obedience from His followers.
3. Jesus empowers fruitfulness through faith.

God knows that things in this world are not always as they appear to be. That is why He doesn't look on the outside. He looks at our hearts. The gospel doesn't just change our outward appearances. The gospel changes our hearts. It changes us from the inside out so that we live out our faith with integrity, able to fulfill Jesus' purposes for us which is to bear fruit so that others might know God and enjoy Him forever.

For further consideration:

What are some of the ways we can allow our religious practices to become hypocritical? Why do you think the natural inclination for churches is to turn inward rather than outward? If hypocrisy involves self-deception, how can we discover our own hypocrisy? Who do you have in your inner circle that has your permission to point out blind spots in your faith walk with Christ? How do you measure your fruitfulness for the kingdom? Are you discipling anybody? Have you shared your faith with anybody? Have you invited somebody to church lately?