

The Character of Jesus 68
The Fig Tree
(Matthew 21:18 – 22, Mark 11:12 – 14, 19 – 25)

- Characteristic: Rememberable demonstrations
 - Following the Mark account
 - (13) It was not the season for figs. In this agricultural country, this would be common knowledge.
 - (14) Based on Jesus' demonstrated character, cursing the tree was not petty vindictiveness. Besides, the tree was just doing what trees do. So, this must be the start of a dramatic illustration.
 - (20) The Matthew account seems to imply that the death of the tree was immediate. But, Matthews definition of "immediate" is not given. The two accounts may be made to harmonize rather than be in conflict. A tree going from fully leafed to totally dried up in 24 hours could accurately be called "immediate."
 - (21) Peter knew there was something to be learned there, so he asked.
 - (22 – 25) Jesus had set up the cursing of the fig tree as an illustration of faith. Successful prayer has certain requirements:
 - Without doubt.
 - Confident that the request will happen.
 - Forgiving others so that God will push aside your past "missteps" (the literal translation of trespass, implying the error was due to trying clever circumvention).
- Application: Rememberable demonstrations
 - The fig tree has no religious significance and no literary connection to faith or prayer. Jesus demonstration was almost silly. But I doubt anyone forgot either the event or the point. What might we do that is similarly odd but obviously miraculous?
 - Do we think we can do such things through prayer?
 - Are we confident (without doubting) in the efficacy of prayer to the point that we say it in front of others?
 - Do we forgive (push aside past missteps to re-establish a relationship)?