

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

BRO I. URIAS

Quotable Quote

God is giving strategies to equip us in the battle that is raging against the soul. God is not threatening us; but He is opening our eyes to see the enormity of the situation, the shortfalls ahead and showing us ways to circumvent them. We will be foolish virgins if we hear these words and they do not impact us to produce action. Blessed are we if we arise and do that which we hear.

The Lord is equipping a people, clothing them, preparing their hearts that they may become a people that will be called trees; trees of righteousness; the planting of the Lord (*the thing that the Lord has planted*).

When the bible talks about trees it is referring to men (*you and me*)

Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me(Jesus); because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; v3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

God has planted us as trees for the purpose of bearing fruit and that fruit is righteousness. God's intention is that when we move about we will disperse righteousness. When we open our mouths righteousness will go forth. If people look at our actions what they will see is righteousness; when we eat, we eat in righteousness; when we do business it is righteousness, when we drive we drive in righteousness, when someone steals our goods, HALLELUJAH, our response should be in righteousness.

May we become trees of righteousness planted by the Lord!

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THE TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

We examine a story in the book of Judges that describes trees as a symbol of the people of God.

Jg 9:8 The trees went forth in a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. v9 But the olive tree said unto them, should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

The olive tree was invited to rule (in other words to become a politician). It replied. "Oh no! How can I, a minister of God leave what the Lord has asked me to do, providing oil (fatness) for the children of God". I believe that like Nehemiah it must have said. "Oh I am doing a great work; I cannot come down". We must not succumb to the temptation of coming down from the mountain to dwell upon the plane. Hallelujah. So this righteous man called the olive tree refused to leave the abundance he was providing, to glorify and honor God and His people to go and become a politician.

v10 And the trees said to the fig tree, come thou, and reign over us. v11 But the fig tree said unto them, should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Likewise **The Fig tree**, another tree of righteousness, refused to leave its precious sweetness, its goodness, to go and dabble into politics. It realized well enough that the moment we depart from that which the Lord has called us to; the moment we come down from the level God has placed us, to the earthy and mundane (ordinary) things of men, it knew that when one begins to love the world (friendship with the world is enmity with God), when one becomes an earthward man (earthbound), we stand in danger of losing the anointing on our calling. This righteous tree refused to leave his precious God-given gift(s) to succumb to the call of worldliness.

v12 Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. v13 And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

The vine also refused to leave his God-given position to join the world. Oh! May we be like these trees that had their choices laid out. They were not confused. They knew their calling and were mindful of the greater reward. They refused to be distracted even though they found themselves in Babylon where temptations abound. Neither the sound of the cornet nor the dulcimer nor the sackbut could move them. They refused to bow, though the music was sweet; they refused to bow though there was a threat of death to any man who would not bow. They stood their ground. These are men who believe in the priesthood of an endless life and cry- "Though He slay me yet will I serve him".

Lastly we examine; **The Bramble**.

v14 Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. v 15 And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

When the bramble received the call of temptation, very quickly, in immediate response, it accepted and secondly it asked that the trees put their trust in its shadow. It is worthy of note here that the bramble was asking them to come under his own shadow and not the shadow of God. Brethren heed this warning; you must be careful who you make king over your life. Let your king not be the bramble tree, lest fire come out of him and devour you. If you choose the bramble bush, fire will certainly come out of it and trouble you.

How to identify the bramble The bramble tree is a tree that is full of thorns and thistles. We liken it to the brother you can not touch. The bramble trees within the church are those men who stand tall. They are easily identified or known. They have a capacity to put men under and to exercise lordship over them. We must not submit ourselves to them.

The bramble tree does not really care about God. He sneaks in under the cloak of godliness, but it is not a tree of righteousness. It says 'come and put yourselves *(not under God)* but under my shadow'.

The bramble tree walks with an overshadowing spirit. We must not only reject the bramble tree but we must strive not to become one ourselves.

Points to note: Unlike all the other trees the bramble tree has no fruits. What the bramble tree produces is fire, thorns and thistles. I personally believe it is the spirit of the bramble bush that prompts men to send forth fire *(curses)* upon their fellow men. Brethren this ought not to be so. Remember the word of the Lord to those disciples who wanted to call down fire to consume men because they were disobedient. *Lu 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? 55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. 56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

From this study we can see that there are a category of men *(trees)* who bring forth life. They bring goodness, sweetness, they bring nourishment and abundance unto the people of God but on the contrary there are certain men *(the bramble)* that bring forth thorns and fire.

THE FIG TREE

The fig tree is one of the trees *(men)* of righteousness. Its products are goodness, sweetness etc which are symbolic of the people of God. When we talk about the fig tree, remember we are talking about the children of God. Jesus told His disciples to learn the parable of the fig tree. This story was an actual event that took place, through which Jesus intended to teach something spiritual to impact on their lives.

THE FIG TREE IS AS A SIGN POST *(Mark 13 v 28 to 30).*

As fig trees we are landmarks. This is demonstrated to us in the following scriptures.

Mt 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: v 33 So likewise ye, (in other words, as the fig tree is so are you) when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Song 2:13 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

The Lord is saying that when you see the fig tree putting forth its leaves; you know it is time to come away *(flee)*. It is a signal that God is calling for separation. And when God begins to call for separation, it is a signal that judgment is coming. It is an indication that God is saying 'go into your closets; I want to pour out my indignation upon the world'

This call to come away is a signal that this is the time of consummation, the time when the Lord will join with His bride. God can save us from the coming destruction only if He can meet us in the Spirit. If we decide to abide in the earth realm *(in the Flesh)* God cannot do any thing for us.

Therefore the fig tree is putting forth its green figs, sending the signal: *come to me now; drop off every thing; leave the world; leave the deceitfulness of riches; leave off the sins which doth so easily beset you; disengage from the soul ties; come out from your father's house; abandon the relationships that are not of God*".

This is the time that God is taking hold of the hand of Lot as it were, and He is taking him outside the gates because of the fire and brimstone which is coming upon the city. We can not afford to waste time, we must hasten up and respond to the call to 'COME AWAY MY LOVE'

We will look at yet another land mark; the state of the fig tree is a reflection of the state and the condition of the earth.

Joe 1:12 The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

Joe 2:22 Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

When you look upon the fig tree you will know whether it is time to flee or not. The bible says if you see the abomination that makes desolate you should flee. When you look at the fig tree (*the church*) and you see it languishing (*there is no joy*), if you find there is no well being, know, it is not a time to relax and make merry. Men can rejoice and relax if on the other hand the fig tree is flourishing. Presently it is obvious that the fig tree (*the church*) is lacking in the production of fruit, we should continue to pray and fast and cry unto the Lord for our souls, for the soul of other Christians and for our land.

Ho 9:1 Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every corn floor.

*Ho 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe (**faithfulness**) in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; (**whoredom**) and their abominations were according as they loved.*

In the time when the Israelites had a heart after God, God saw them as the fig tree in the wilderness, full of goodness and sweetness (*first ripe*) and the Lord loved and drew them near but He made a turn around, when they turned to shame and abomination. Brethren let us ask ourselves this question. "*Deep down in my soul and heart, what is my history?*" Is it still with you as it was when you first met the Lord? When first you met the Lord were you not like the fig tree? But how is it now? Is the relationship getting sweeter and sweeter? Or have you turned around after some shame and have loved the world?

The bible says that there are some that will love pleasure more than God; it states that there are some that will be lovers of their own selves more than God. Let us pray brethren that this will not be our portion. May the love between us and our God get sweeter by the day, may we gain new heights in God with each passing day.

PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

We can understand the excitement of the Lord Jesus then when he saw a fig tree full of leaves. He was drawn towards it expecting fruit (*goodness, sweetness, faithfulness etc*). He must have said. "*There is a son ;there is a tree of righteousness*".

Where one finds green leaves it signifies there is growth, fruitfulness (*goodness, sweetness*) it is an indication of plenty, abundance, well being; using the green leaves as an indication Jesus went to taste of the fruit but on arrival, despite the leaves there was no fruit, He was appalled and disappointed and the curse came.

Mr 11:13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet v 14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

Know these brethren, when there is no fruit; know that judgment is by the corner. Jesus had to bring judgment immediately to the fig tree, because it had no fruit. A fruitless fig tree is an indication that judgment on the land.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LEAVES AND FRUIT Galatians 5 v 22 to 24 and 1 Corinth 13 v 1 to 8 *What* brought the curse on the fig tree was the fact that it had no fruit. One may want to excuse the tree and say why curse it, since the scriptures indicate that it was not yet time for fruit.

The question to ask is; if it was not time for fruit then why the leaves? We can say the tree had leaves of prophecy ,leaves of the gifts of healing and miracles, leaves of the ability to give (*but lacked charity*), leaves of tongues ,leaves of discernment of spirits, leaves of interpretation of dreams, the leaves of preaching the word etc **But The Fact Remained That There Was No Fruit.**

The Lord would not accept such an abnormal situation, so He cursed the tree .Note that immediately after He went ahead into the temple and using a whip put a stop to all the numerous activities and sacrifices of the so-called worship going on within the temple. He was practicalizing His action of cursing the tree.

The Pharisees and Sadducees, a seemingly religious people (*full of green leaves*) had turned the temple activities to business activities to make gain for themselves (*bearing no fruit of righteousness*). They were doing business right in the temple of God. Let us also look inwards brethren, can you identify the merchandising going on in your hearts. Is your house (*your heart*) clean? Jesus was vehement in His actions against them, driving them out with whips and upturning their tables. His action was a clear demonstration that the leaves of deception must die, the leaves of hypocrisy must cease, the outward show must end, so that a dry tree will be known as a dry tree; men must fall on their faces in repentance and cry out to God '*Lord I am nothing without you*'.

May we not be found guilty of turning the house (*your soul*) of God into a den of thieves (*a place where every, manner of wickedness abounds*). The merchandising can no longer go on in the house of God, for Jerusalem (*the church*) is God's dwelling place. May the merchandising be razed down that a new tree may come forth in its place.

HOW DOES CHRIST COME TO LOOK FOR FRUIT IN OUR LIVES

Do we suppose that God will come to us and ask where kindness is? No, what God requires is your heart and as you pour out your heart to Him, out of the abundance of your relationship with him love (*fruit*) will flow out and touch men. Jesus comes looking for fruit in the activities of the day. In your normal day to day activities and work and walk, Jesus comes asking for fruit

Mt 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

v36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

v37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

v38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee?

v39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

v 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

v41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

v42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

v43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

v 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

v 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

v46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

When that taxi driver blocks your way deliberately provoking you to bring forth curses (*fire*), at that moment, Jesus is asking for fruit! When your boss in the office, (*may be some one many years younger*), talks to you rudely, Jesus has come to ask for fruit! When your brother offends you Jesus is asking for fruit. The aspect of being a source of offence is equally as important. The tendency is to concentrate on the aspect of our reactions when we are offended but the scripture states that those who cause offence, its better that a stone be put around their necks and they be left to drown. It also states that God expects that you to go and sort out things with your brethren in the matter of offence before you come to Him with your offerings. **So when you have been a source of offence, and you need to go and apologize**, Jesus is asking for fruit! When someone has stolen your goods, Jesus is asking for fruit in your reaction! When your car type suddenly burst at a time there is no help in sight, will you shout using a swear word (*shit*) or will you give Jesus the fruit of **‘giving thanks in all situations’**

WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Lu 13:6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. v 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? v8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: v9 And if it bears fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shall cut it down.

In the light of all these we may have found ourselves like fig tree, without fruits. God is promising that if our hearts be true hearts, He is ready to dung us this one more time. Today as you hear His voice harden not your hearts. Amen.