

Tuesday, April 7: Jesus Goes to the Mount of Olives

Day three, Tuesday, after an evening spent back in Bethany Jesus and his disciples again return to Jerusalem. On their way they pass the withered fig tree that Jesus cursed the day before and Peter observes in Mark 11:21 “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” Jesus answers by speaking about the importance of faith in Mark 11:22-26. Faith in God is the life changer.

Let us pray ...

Almighty God, Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Tuesday’s events are recorded in Matthew 21:23–24:51, Mark 11:20–13:37, Luke 20:1–21:36, and John 12:20–38.

Later that day they were back at the Temple, returning to the scene of Jesus turning over tables and declaring to all in the Temple that it was a house of prayer. A house of prayer. How dare Jesus challenge current religious authority. Who is he that he declare what is appropriate and not appropriate in the Temple the center of religious life. The center of one’s heart, mind, and soul. Jesus’ previous behavior and now His declaration has upset the religious leaders as Jesus not only questions their behavior and authority, but, establishes himself as a spiritual authority. Their response to the threat of Jesus is to organize an ambush with the intent to place him under arrest. But Jesus evaded their traps and pronounced harsh judgment on them, saying:

"Blind guides!...For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness...Snakes! Sons of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell?" (Matthew 23:24-33)

Later that afternoon, Jesus left the city and went with his disciples to the Mount of Olives, which sits due east of the Temple and overlooks Jerusalem. Here Jesus gave the Olivet Discourse, an elaborate prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the age. He speaks, as usual, in parables, using symbolic language about the end times events, including His Second Coming and the final judgment.

Tuesday is a day of increased activity challenging the religious and cultural norms of the center of life in the Temple. As you search your heart, soul, and mind what is the center of your life?