

A Cursed Tree and A Cleansed Temple

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[0 : 00] Take your copy of God's Word and turn with me to Mark chapter 11. We'll remain standing as we're able. Mark chapter 11.

And we'll begin reading in verse 11. He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree and leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves because it was not the season for figs.

Then he said to the tree, May no one ever eat fruit from you again. And his disciples heard him say it. On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there.

He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise throughout the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, Is it not written, My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?

[1 : 14] But you have made it a den of robbers. The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

When evening came, they went out of the city. In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, Rabbi, look, the fig tree you cursed has withered.

Have faith in God, Jesus answered. I tell you the truth. If anyone says to this tree, go, this mountain, go, throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your sins. You may be seated. On Monday evening, my voice went on vacation, and I don't know where it went, but it was slow coming back, and so I've been trying to save all my words the last half of this week for you right now.

[2 : 35] So let's just dig in. We have two events recorded in our text today that happened during that Passion Week of Christ.

There's the cursing of the tree and the cleansing of the temple. And the way that these two accounts are interwoven by Mark indicate to us that they belong together, and the one sheds light upon the other.

So notice with me, verse 11 is the visit to the temple. Verses 12 to 14, the cursing of the fig tree.

Verse 15 to 19, the cleansing of the temple.

Verses 20 to 26, we're back to the cursed fig tree. They're interwoven because they belong together, and they carry important lessons for us today.

So let's look first at the cursing of the fig tree, and the lesson is your fruitfulness matters to Jesus.

Jesus. So after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus goes into the temple and takes a quick look around, not as a tourist looking at the beautiful decorations of the temple, but as the Lord of the temple.

[3 : 52] He comes to inspect it. And then because it was already laid, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. Now that's just a couple hours, or two miles outside of Jerusalem.

And during this last week of Jesus' life leading up to the cross, he will come into Jerusalem each day, and then go back out to Bethany each evening. Verses 12 to 14, the next day, this is Monday

after Palm Sunday, as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree and leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, may no one ever eat fruit from you again. And his disciples heard him say it. Once again, even as we sang this morning, we're confronted with the true humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's one person with two natures. There's no one else like that. He's God, as much God as the Father and the Spirit are God. And yet he's also man, as much man, human as you and I are human.

[5 : 09] That means he has a human body and a human soul, just like yours, except that there is no sin. His human body is seen here in that he was hungry.

Kids, his stomach started to growl and hurt and say, I need some food, just like yours does. And his human soul is seen in that he did not know whether that fig tree in the distance had figs on it or not under those leaves and had to go and find out, just like you would have had to find out.

This is how far the Son of God stooped to save us. He became one of us to stand in for us. He was tempted and tried for us.

He suffered and died for us. And believer, this means he knows what you're going through. He knows what you're feeling. He knows what you're suffering because he's been where you are. And therefore, you can take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there. Go tell Jesus your troubles. He's a friend that's well known.

[6 : 22] You've no other such a friend or brother. Tell it to Jesus alone. He's a brother born for adversity. So make use of him as such.

Now, some tree huggers may feel sorry for this fig tree that Jesus cursed, even though it had done nothing wrong and it wasn't even the season for bearing figs.

That is to forget and to miss the whole point of this event. This is an enacted parable of our Lord who's teaching an important lesson.

J.C. Ryle says this was a parable in deeds as full of meaning as any of our Lord's parable of words. And so though Jesus doesn't explain this parable, its meaning is not hard to discern.

Perhaps that's why he doesn't even need to explain it. It should be clear. Due to its connection with the next enacted parable of cleansing the temple.

[7 : 27] And also due to his earlier parable about a barren fig tree in Luke's gospel. And due to the Old Testament use of the fig tree as one of the key representatives and symbols of Israel.

So let's consider the simple facts of this cursing of the fig tree. Jesus is hungry. He sees this fig tree at some distance. And he has reason to hope that he might find some figs there to eat.

So he goes looking for fruit, but when he reached it, he found nothing but leaves. And Mark adds, because it was not the season for figs. You might ask, well, if it wasn't the season for figs, why did Jesus bother to go look for them?

And why did he curse the tree? Several explanations have been offered. Alan Cole says the Lord was looking for the early ripe figs that ripen with the leaves before the main crop that comes later. Robertson adds, this fig tree was perhaps in a protected and sunny spot. Maybe you have some plants like that. They're in a protected spot, and so they flower, and they leaf out, and even bear fruit sooner than the others.

[8 : 36] And so he says, maybe it was in a protected and sunny spot such that it had already put out leaves as a sign of fruit. So it had the promise of fruit without the performance, unquote.

But whatever the explanation is, the point seems to be that this particular tree gave some outward indication of possessing fruit, but upon closer inspection, was without any fruit at all.

And that was exactly the condition of Israel at this time. There were so many reasons why Israel should be expected to have fruit in their lives.

Fruits of righteousness to the glory and praise of God. They had the privilege of being the only nation out of all the nations of the world of being the covenant people of God that he had chosen. They had the scriptures given to them, more light than anyone else. They had the temple worship that portrayed the coming Christ. They had the presence of God with them, providing and protecting them, fighting against their enemies, freeing them from Egypt and Babylon, forgiving them time after time after they would turn their back on him and go after other gods.

[10:00] Surely they, of all people, should be expected to bear a rich harvest of love and gratitude, reverent worship, holy and obedient lives unto the Lord, their covenant Lord.

But although they had the outward fig leaves of righteousness and appearance of worship, keeping up all the religious ceremonies in the temple, yet upon closer inspection by Jesus, he comes looking for real fruits of righteousness.

And instead he finds only the outward trappings of religion. The leaves simply hid the absence of the real fruit that was not there until he drew up close to see it.

Well, people were having a form of godliness without the power of godliness, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 3.5. Jesus says, They draw near to me with their mouth, and they honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

That's what he sees. In the very place with the greatest expectation of fruit, Jesus finds nothing but leaves. So Old Testament Israel is fully deserving of God's curse to never again bear fruit to God as a political theocratic nation of Israel.

[11:26] And sure enough, just 40 years later, in 70 A.D., Jerusalem was sacked and burned down by the Romans. The temple destroyed, the people scattered over all the earth as the kingdom of God was taken from them, as Jesus says, and given to a people who will bring forth its fruit.

Matthew 21.43. This would be the newly constituted Israel of God, made up of all believers, Jew and Gentile alike. And in this newly constituted people of God, all unbelieving Jews would be pruned out, and all believing Gentiles would be grafted in, as Romans 11 teaches.

This newly constituted Israel of God was established by the new covenant that Jesus sealed with his blood on Calvary. So this interpretation of the enacted parable of the cursed fig tree agrees with Jesus' earlier parable about a barren fig tree.

Let me read it for you in Luke 13.6-9. Then he told this parable. A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any.

So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, for three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down. Why should it use up the soil?

[12:52] Sir, the man replied, leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine. If not, then cut it down.

Can you see the similarities with our text? How can we miss them? He comes looking for fruit. For three years he's been looking for fruit. That's the length of Jesus' public ministry to Israel.

But he doesn't find any fruit, nothing but leaves. They were expected to be fruitful due to their peculiar favorable spot in God's world in covenant with him.

And so judgment will fall after little more patience. And then if no fruit, cut it down. So this was Jesus' earlier warning of God's impending judgment coming upon Israel.

He had just told them before that parable, I tell you, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

And that's exactly what was to happen. They didn't repent, but crucified their king.

[14:00] And so judgment fell 40 years later in 70 AD. The tree was chopped down. The theocracy destroyed and ended. Now just the day before, on the Sunday, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, he had again sounded this note of coming judgment in an amazing account that Luke gives us.

You have the crowd rejoicing and praising Jesus as their Messiah King. And in their midst, King Jesus is sobbing.

Luke says he wept over Jerusalem when he saw the city and said, if you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace.

But now it's hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.

They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.

[15:13] He was coming to them gentle and riding on the colt of a donkey and they did not recognize him but crucified him.

And Jesus sobs to see them coming under the judgment of God that was sure to come. They were sealing their impending destruction by crucifying their king.

Now all of this is meant to pull from your heart and mine to cry, search me, O God, and know my heart and see if there be any fruits of righteousness in me.

Underneath my profession of being a Christian is there fruit. Now fruits do not earn my salvation but they are the proof, the result of my salvation.

The fruit of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Fruits of holiness, fruits of the Spirit. So no fruit, it's the evidence that there is no life and God's judgment is hanging over you.

[16:30] There's a great danger in our day just as in Jesus' day of having merely the outward forms of religion. We go to church, we sing the hymns, we give some offerings, we make our sacrifices, and we've been baptized, we join the church, we take the Lord's Supper.

We do all these things but merely as the outward forms of religion. The mere leaves of professing Christ but without the real fruit of holy living which is the proof of possessing Christ.

Many profess to know the Lord but Jesus says by their fruit you will know them. So professing Christian, your fruitfulness matters to Jesus.

He's serious about that. He comes looking for fruit. If you're spiritually alive, you will bear fruit.

That's the power of the new life within. You can't be united to the fruitful vine receiving sap from Him, the sap of His grace, and not bear fruit. It's impossible. The life of God in the soul of man will be seen in good fruits of holy living, loving the faith and forgiving others, obedience and love for Christ, wanting to please the one who went to the cross for you.

[17:58] Revelation chapter 1 through 3 tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ takes His walks among His golden candlesticks, that is His churches.

He's here today by His Spirit, taking His walk among us. And what did He do as He walks among... What does He do as He's walking among... He's doing what He did that evening when He went into the temple and was observing their worship.

And He's seeing what's going on here today, just as He did those churches in Revelation 2 and 3.

And He comes as inspector and where He sees good fruit, He praises it.

And where He sees the absence of it, He rebukes it. He says to some people in the church, it's Sardis. I know your deeds. You have a name that you live, but you're dead.

Wake up! For I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you've received and heard. Obey it and repent.

[19:02] But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief and you will not know at what time I will come to you. Revelation 3, 1 to 3. Yes, He takes His walks among us.

Do you know that Jesus Christ did not go to the cross and die for you to have you go on bearing the fruits of the flesh? He did not die for you so that you would not bear good fruit.

He's expecting fruit. He's looking for it. And even when He finds it, He longs for more. He says in John 15, 8, this is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourself to be my disciples. You see, fruit is the proof that we're disciples of Jesus. And the more, the better, He says. Whereas the unfruitful branches are picked up and thrown into the fire and are burned, while every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes it so that it might be even more fruitful.

John 15, 6. You see, God is so intent in having His children bear fruits of righteousness that He will put you through the painful process of pruning.

[20:13] You know, there's some times when a tree that's been pruned looks like you're killing it. How can that thing ever live? But it's, oh, it's so different. It's rather bringing about more fruit.

And that's the way our God is with us. He's the vine dresser. He's got the lopping shears. And He's after more fruit. Our Lord Jesus Himself was willing to die that He might bear fruit unto His Father. A redeemed family. Redeemed from sin. The family of God. Well, that's the, that's the first lesson in the cursing of the fig tree.

Now we come, secondly, to the cleansing of the temple. And the big lesson here is your worship matters to Jesus. Now when we come to Jesus cleansing the temple, Mark wants us to see in this irreverence in their worship, to see it as one glaring example of the fruitlessness of Israel.

So they are really two enacted parables with really one and the same meaning. Just like the fig tree, their temple worship. had all the outward dress and appearance.

[21:35] Appearance of worship. But upon closer inspection in the temple, Jesus finds only leaves. No fear of God. No loving reverence for His worship and glory.

It was a beautiful temple. The ornate decorations were amazing. Remember the disciples said to our Lord, Lord, did you see those stones? It was the priestly garments, all the sacrifices.

It was a show to not miss. But all of the outward show simply had the, was missing the inner reality of an awe of this God that they were supposedly worshipping.

It was the outer form of worship, missing the inner heart of true worship. And Malachi had prophesied of this very event. In Malachi 3 and verse 1, he prophesied of God's Son coming in

judgment to the temple with fire to purify.

Malachi 3, 1 to 5, see, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way for me. Then suddenly, the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple.

[22 : 44] Even the messenger of the covenant whom you desire will come, says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears?

For He will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness. And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord as in days gone by, as in former years.

So I will come near to you for judgment. There it is. He's coming to the temple to purify it.

So as Jesus comes into the temple precincts to inspect their worship, what does He find? He finds in verses 15 and 16, on reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there.

[23 : 47] He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. Now, some of these things were providing a need for these pilgrim worshipers who had come from afar to celebrate the Passover.

It'd be a great burden to bring their animals along for the sacrifice. Beside, they would run the risk of that animal not passing the inspection of the priest there as an acceptable sacrifice.

So what they would do is they would just bring their money and they would buy an already approved animal, lamb, and thereby have a sacrifice to make during Passover.

The same was true for the doves. That was the biblically prescribed sacrifice for one too poor to offer a lamb. And then there was the money changers. They were there because people came from all over and there was different coinage and they needed to have it in the right monetary system to make their payment of their annual temple tax and to buy and to sell.

So many money changers as well. And then there was all the traffic of people tramping through the outer temple courts with their merchandise using the temple courts as a shortcut to get where they were going.

[25 : 16] So you know the temple complex was a huge, a huge area. And there were doors all around on each side.

And so it became a shortcut instead of going around. Well, let's just come in that door and go right out that door. But this is the temple of the Lord. And so you see what was going on.

These might be serving a good purpose but the main fault of it all was that it was brought right into the place that was set apart for God's worship without distraction.

It more resembled an oriental market or a cattle mart perhaps even haggling over the prices as it was all under the supervision of the priests and perhaps there was taking advantage of these pilgrims who had come so far.

Can you imagine trying to meditate and pray with all of that going on? The noise, the stench, the confusion? Try it the next time you're in a lively market or a cattle barn.

[26 : 23] And Jesus sees this going on and his heart begins to burn with zeal within him. He was angry. But this is no flying off the handle.

This is no sinful response of uncontrolled anger. Remember, he had walked around the temple the evening before and he had observed it all. And then he had gone home and he had thought about it and he had thought about his response.

The scripture passages he would quote. He comes with a prepared response, a controlled response, and yet one that was boiling with zeal and anger.

His father was not being honored in the very worship that he ordained for him to be honored in.

They were profaning the temple, treating God in his worship as if it was nothing special at all when it was intended for reverence as they met with God and talked to God in prayer.

Now, this wasn't the first time Jesus cleared the temple. You remember at the beginning of his earthly ministry. John tells us in chapter 2, he did the same thing then. And what we see is that they're right back at it again.

[27 : 45] Those changes that he made didn't last. It's just as before, profaning the temple, treating as common something that God has set aside for his worship.

So, here again, he clears, he cleanses the temple. Verse 17, as he taught them, he said, is it not written, my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

That's Isaiah 57. But you have made it a den of robbers, and that's Jeremiah 7, 11. Perhaps robbing people with their high prices that they were charging for the exchange and so on, but especially, definitely robbing God of the reverent worship he deserved.

And all of this was going on in the outer courts of the temple, which was the court of the Gentiles. That was as close as a Gentile could come in worshiping God without becoming a Jew first.

And so, Jesus quotes Isaiah 56, verse 7, where God foretells a time when Gentiles, as Gentiles, would be welcomed into the worship of God.

[28 : 54] For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. That's the passage Jesus grabs and puts in the teeth of these profaning the Father's worship.

Here they are profaning the one place where the Gentiles could worship God, violating the very purpose of God's heart toward the Gentiles. The second text he quotes from is from Jeremiah 7, 11, where the Israelites were charged with making the temple a den of robbers, a hangout of thieves. And these words are taken from Jeremiah's famous temple sermon that he preached in the temple just as Jesus is preaching in the temple here. Jeremiah was confronting Israel with their wicked ways, and yet, after committing adultery and murder and thievery and robbery, they would come into the temple and carry on with their ritual and think that because of it, they were safe from God's judgment.

And so, Jeremiah says, you come trusting in the temple, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, that's your trust. God surely can't touch us here.

We're on safe ground. Safe while living wicked lives. And so, Jeremiah says, will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you've not known, and then come and stand before me in this house which bears my name and say, we're safe, safe to do all these detestable things.

[30 : 31] Has this house which bears my name become a den of robbers to you? That was, it was true of Jeremiah's day, it was true of Jesus' day, and he confronts them with it.

So what does your worship reveal? The Lord comes to observe every time we gather, he's here. And he looks beyond what we put on and how we look, he looks right at the heart.

Did you come to hold real fellowship with the living God? Did you come here today to meet with God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Are you having dealings with him?

Are you listening to him? Are you singing to him? Are you talking to him? Or is it just the leaves of the outward ritual of worship?

Jesus comes up close to inspect. A shipbuilder who attended church came to the minister one day and said, I used to be able to build a whole ship while you preached.

[31 : 43] But today, I couldn't lay a board. You know, you can visit the market. You can visit the places of the, you can visit the recreation, all sitting there.

And that's what our Lord is pointing out. Do you stand in awe of the Lord who comes to meet with his people? He is majestic in holiness. He's awesome in glory.

He's the one working wonders and his name will be great among the nations from the rising to the setting of the sun. Incense and pure offerings will be brought to his name because he is a great king.

So Jesus is here exercising his authority as king for what happens in the worship of his father. We'll see next week the religious leaders will question that authority.

Who are you to come in here and do this? We're the priests. Well, he is the Lord of the temple. He is God in the flesh.

[32 : 44] And they think that they are judging him when in reality their actions are God judging them as guilty. So we're not surprised to read in verse 18 that the chief priest and teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him for they feared him because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

They hated him but they feared him. They feared losing power. They feared him for his popularity with the people. They were all hanging on his every word just the day before they're singing his praises.

They had been plotting his death since back in chapter 3 and verse 6. But now they're really in earnest and they will succeed because now is the time for God's son to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Four days from now they'll have him stretched out on the cross. So when evening came verse 19 says they went out of the city and still interweaving the two accounts were back to the fig tree. Verse 20 In the morning as they went along they saw the fig tree withered from the roots and Peter remembered and said to Jesus Rabbi look the fig tree you cursed has withered. Now here we'd seen the humanity of Jesus.

[34 : 00] Here we see the divine power of his word. He just speaks and a tree that the day before was flourishing with leaves is now withered from the root. Oh the power of Jesus' words.

Now we've already seen the lesson of the enacted parable of Israel's fruitfulness. God is coming to judge them but since Peter is here amazed at the power of Jesus Jesus uses it to teach the twelve a lesson on the power of God in answer to believing prayer.

Two things needed in prayer to see God's amazing power displayed. He says first of all faith verse 22 have faith in God Jesus answered I tell you the truth. You'll be able to do more than move a fig tree or to curse.

He says if anyone says to this mountain go throw yourself into the sea and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you whatever you ask for in prayer believe that you have received it and it will be yours.

Faith is required in order to see God's amazing power doing things that man cannot do pulling down obstacles as tall as mountains impossibilities they are possible through God.

[35 : 31] Not doubting is just believing prayer is just taking God at his word this is not some other kind of faith some deeper faith to not doubt this is the kind of faith that all faith is it's taking Jesus at his word believing and Jesus has already told us that faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains it's not the size of the faith but it's the one in whom you're placing that faith and so faith is essential to the success of prayer remember Hebrews 11 6 without faith it's impossible to please him for those who come to God there's prayer must what believe that he exists and believe that he is the rewarder of those who earnestly seek him faith is required but there's a second thing essential to the success of prayer not only that they must believe but they must forgive they must forgive verse 25 and when you stand praying if you hold anything against anyone forgive him so that your father in heaven may forgive you your sins

Robertson says God's willingness to forgive us is limited by our willingness to forgive others J.C. Ryle says we have no right to look for mercy if we are not ready to extend mercy to our brethren if you don't like Robertson and Ryle listen to Jesus that Lord's prayer he teaches us to say forgive us father our debts in the same way that we forgive those who have sinned against us and then Jesus says for if you forgive men when they sin against you your heavenly father will also forgive you but if you do not forgive men their sins your father will not forgive your sins you show by that but you're not one of his children because those who have tasted forgiveness from God for the whole mountain of your sins will then extend mercy and forgiveness to those who have sinned against you oh we look around and we see the bitter spirits often in churches that refuse to bear and forbear refuse to give and forgive they have no reason to believe that they are forgiven

Christians those who know they've been forgiven much will forgive others may no root of bitterness be your unending unending undoing forgive as you have been forgiven so faith and forgiveness what are these these are good fruits you see these are the fruits of those who are attached to Jesus this is this is the life of God in the soul of man so Jesus has come to Jerusalem the nation's center of worship he's inspecting he's looking for good fruit for reverent worship and he finds none so God's judgment is well deserted and is coming and Jesus is showing his zeal for the purity of God's temple by cleansing it driving all out that distracts from the worship of God in four days Jesus will show his zeal for the purity of his temple his church by dying on the cross for their sins do you realize we're guilty of profaning the worship of God we treated

God as a nobody we've we've sinned against him in this very same way we were not bearing fruits of righteousness before we were saved we were bearing fruits of the flesh we didn't care about God we cared about our way and Jesus has come into this into Jerusalem this final week to do what to purify his temple his believers you are the temple of the living God the New Testament teaches us and yet you will not be a fit instrument and a fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit unless a holy Jesus dies on the cross bearing the curse the judgment you deserve that you might be accepted as holy in Christ that's why he's here that's why Mark Luke John Matthew all slow down this week because that's where it's all coming Jesus will have a pure temple and he's put his spirit in our hearts and he's continuing to purify us the blood of Jesus

God's son purifies us from all sin and one day we will stand without fault and with great joy in the presence of Jesus and we will say the king the lord of the temple has come and he's born my sins hallelujah praise the lord worthy is the lamb that was slain to make us presentable as his temple to God well let's pray and thank him shall we lord it was only hell deserving sinners that you had to choose from to become a temple of the living God and so we are humbled and we take our place with Israel of old as guilty we did not revere you we did not want you we wanted our way and we are so thankful that you showed your your mercy your grace and sending

[41 : 13] Jesus to purify our hearts with his blood and we pray that more and more fruit might be born on our lives to his glory and praise that others would see by our good fruit that we are your disciples so we give you thanks in Jesus name amen