

Mark 11:11-14

¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem *and came* into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late. ¹² On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry. ¹³ Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went *to see* if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

There were no figs because it was not the season for figs. How could Jesus expect fruit from this tree?

2 Timothy 4:2

² preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

Even early in the season, a healthy tree should have a few first-ripe figs.

The first-ripe figs are a sign that the tree is healthy and will be producing bountiful fruit in time.

If we are to bear fruit in season and out of season, what is the fruit that God desires?

Micah 7:1-2

⁷ Woe is me! For I am like the fruit pickers, like the grape gatherers.

There is not a cluster of grapes to eat, *Or* a first-ripe fig *which* I crave.

² The godly person has perished from the land, And there is no upright *person* among men.

All of them lie in wait for bloodshed; Each of them hunts the other with a net.

Godliness is the fruit that God seeks when he examines the tree of our lives, and of the church.

God actually craves to find this sweet fruit growing in us, and increasing.

Mark 11:19-25

¹⁹ When evening came, they would go out of the city.

²⁰ As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots *up*. ²¹ Being reminded, Peter *said* to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."

What is at stake: the tree that did not bear fruit had no further use in Jesus' eyes.

When the tree was left without usefulness to God, it withered and died. It's time had run out.

If I am going to be like God, I cannot remain as I am. How can real and lasting change take place?

Luke 13:6-9

⁶ And He *began* telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. ⁷ And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' ⁸ And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; ⁹ and if it bears fruit next year, *fine*; but if not, cut it down.'"

Digging around the tree is the process of breaking up and loosening the compacted soil to receive the fertilizer.

Hosea 10:12

¹² Sow with a view to righteousness, Reap in accordance with kindness; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord Until He comes to rain righteousness on you.

Our hardness has to be softened (humbling), and when we are soft, God administers grace!

Fertilizers generally contain 3 components main: Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium

Nitrogen feeds leaves and gives the tree its healthy, rich green color.

Psalm 42:11

¹¹ Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

Phosphorus is responsible for roots, fruit and flowers.

2 Kings 19:30-31

³⁰ The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. ³¹ For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord will perform this.

Potassium makes strong stalk or branches, able to support lots of fruit!

John 15:8

⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

What is grace able to do?

1 Peter 5:10

¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

Hebrews 4:16

¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

A prayer life is both a work of grace and the means to obtaining the daily grace we all need.

As we become healthier, we come more and more naturally back to the throne of grace to be refilled.

The God of all grace stands ready now to perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you!