

Every one of us BATTLES with a DEEP SENSE of FAILURE

- IT'S the HORRIBLE EFFECT of HAVING BLOWN it in LIFE, & in our OWN WAY, we have ALL BEEN IN DENIAL about it.
- WE HAVE ALL BEEN INSECURE.
- We're ALL HOPING to make a GREAT COMEBACK.
- THAT'S REALLY WHAT WE ARE BELIEVING FOR EACH of YOU . . .
- AS GOD HAS HELPED US . . . WE'RE HERE to HELP YOU MAKE a GREAT COMEBACK.
- GOD is CALLING EACH of US to COMEBACK to WHO HE CREATED US TO BE.
- to be CONFORMED to His IMAGE...which is ETERNAL
- . . . & NOT TO THIS WORLD'S IMAGE . . .
- . . . WHICH LASTS for FEW MOMENTS.
- HERE'S a MOVIE EXCERPT THAT CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES the BATTLE WE ARE IN.

VIDEO – “LORD OF THE RINGS” – 5 MINS.

- Last week, We (Bob) looked at Jesus' TRIUMPHANT RETURN to JERUSALEM.
- It was only a WEEK before HE would be CRUCIFIED.
- . . . WHICH was only a FEW DAYS before HE would be RESURRECTED.
- His DISCIPLES think HE'S GOING to JERUSALEM to LIVE & REIGN on EARTH.
- HE'S ACTUALLY GOING to JERUSALEM to DIE & REIGN in HEAVEN.

SLIDE – MESSAGE TITLE: GREAT COMEBACKS - Pt. 1

- Many times in life, we'd all like a DO OVER.

- I.E. **Mrs. Carney's FIRE**

SLIDE - Interactive Question #1

Q. Are you in need of a comeback?

- A. I am in desperate need of a 2nd chance
- B. I used to want a comeback, but I've given up
- C. God's helping me in my comeback
- D. Why would I need a comeback?

- WE have NO IDEA what JESUS is COMING to DO in our LIVES.
- He's actually COMING to JERUSALEM LOOKING for a FIGHT.

SLIDE – Matt. 10:34 – Jesus said,

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.”

- A lot of us want God to BRING PEACE to our lives.

- He will . . . but **FIRST HE has to BRING a SWORD.**
- To **CUT AWAY WHAT is DEAD.**
- The **CRUCIFIXION came before the RESURRECTION**

SLIDE – Mark 11:12-13

The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus felt hungry. He noticed a fig tree a little way off that was in full leaf, so He went over to see if He could find any figs on it. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit.

- **GOD’S COMING in a SEASON of your life that YOU LEAST EXPECT.**

SLIDE – Mark 11:14

Then Jesus said to the tree, “*May no one ever eat your fruit again!*” And the disciples heard Him say it.

- He’s **LOOKING for a FIGHT.**
- The tree was a **Picture of “FALSE ADVERTISING,” having LEAVES, BUT NO FIGS.**
- This is **NOT NORMAL . . .**
- Because **THIS TYPE OF FIG TREE,** usually **DOESN’T HAVE LEAVES WITHOUT ALSO HAVING FIGS.**
- This **TREE WAS CURSED** because **IT PROFESSED TO HAVE FRUIT, BUT DID NOT.**
- The **TREE WAS “LIVING a LIE.”**
- WE can’t **KNOW the TRUTH** if we’re **LIVING a LIE.**
- **We will ALL BE JUDGED for OUR FRUIT (OUR LIFE) . . . NOT for our LEAVES. (i.e. AMERICAN CHURCH)**
- In **ALL of the WORKS** in the ministry of **JESUS,** this is the **ONLY “DESTRUCTIVE” MIRACLE.**
- The **OLD TESTAMENT IS FILLED WITH MIRACLES OF DESTRUCTION & RESTORATION . . .**
- **. . . but JESUS MOST PERFECTLY SHOWED US the NATURE OF GOD.**
- **Yet, in this CASE, HE’S WILLING To KILL a TREE IN ORDER TO KEEP US FROM KILLING OUR FUTURE.**

SLIDE – Mark 11:15-16

When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the merchants and their customers. He knocked over the tables of the moneychangers and the stalls of those selling doves, and He stopped everyone from bringing in merchandise.

SLIDE – Mark 11:17

He taught them, “*The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a place of prayer for all nations,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.*”

SLIDE – Mark 11:18-19

When the leading priests and teachers of religious law heard what Jesus had done, they began planning how to kill Him. But they were afraid of Him because the people were so enthusiastic about Jesus' teaching. That evening Jesus and the disciples left the city.

- **PRIESTS & their COHORTS ROBBED THE PILGRIMS by FORCING THEM to PURCHASE "APPROVED" SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS AT INFLATED PRICES.**

- **I.e. MOVIE THEATER - \$30**

- Also, **EVERY JEWISH MALE had to PAY a yearly temple TAX - an AMOUNT EQUALING about 2 DAYS PAY.**
- It had to be **PAID IN THE CURRENCY OF THE TEMPLE, & the MONEY EXCHANGERS WOULD CHARGE OUTRAGEOUS RATES.**
- They **DID ALL THIS IN THE OUTER COURTS OF THE TEMPLE, the ONLY AREA WHERE GENTILES COULD COME & PRAY.**
- Therefore, this **PLACE OF PRAYER was MADE INTO A SWAP MEET FOR THIEVES.**
- **Q. Are you WILLING TO LET JESUS TURN OVER the HYPOCRITICAL PARTS of YOUR HEART?**

SLIDE – Mark 11:20

The next morning as they passed by the fig tree He had cursed, the disciples noticed it was withered from the roots.

- The **PRIESTS in the TEMPLE had LEAVES, but NO FRUIT**
- They were **THIEVES with LEAVES, BUT THEIR ROOT HAD NO FRUIT.**

SLIDE – Mark 11:21

Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the tree on the previous day and exclaimed, "*Look, Teacher! The fig tree you cursed has withered!*"

SLIDE – Mark 11:22-23

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "*Have faith in God. I assure you that you can say to this mountain, 'May God lift you up and throw you into the sea,' and your command will be obeyed. All that's required is that you really believe and do not doubt in your heart.*"

That expression, "Have Faith In God" in the ORIGINAL LANGUAGE, MEANS "HAVE GOD'S FAITH"

- **MOUNTAINS SYMBOLIZE = INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEMS**
- **JESUS WAS SAYING, "AS WE BELIEVE, GOD CAN OVERCOME ANY OBSTACLE."**
- **We must REMEMBER that JESUS was PROMISING THIS to HIS DISCIPLES, NOT the MULTITUDES.**
- **IT WAS a COMMITMENT to THOSE . . . WHO WERE COMMITTED to HIM.**
- **"WE REAP WHAT WE SOW."**

- **“NO DEPOSIT . . . NO RETURN.”**

SLIDE – Mark 11:24-25

“Listen to me! You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you will have it. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.”

This does NOT MEAN, “If you PRAY HARD ENOUGH & REALLY BELIEVE, God is OBLIGATED to ANSWER YOUR PRAYER NO MATTER WHAT YOU ASK.”

- The **GREATEST OBSTACLE** to **GETTING YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED** is **UNFORGIVENESS**.
- Sometimes, a **HARD & UNFORGIVING HEART** is **BIGGER THAN ANY MOUNTAIN**.

SLIDE - Interactive Question #2

- Q. Have you completely forgiven those who have hurt you?
- A. No, I have a hard time forgiving those who have hurt me
- B. There is no one I need to forgive
- C. Right now, I'm in process of forgiving
- D. I have forgiven as much as I know how

- **RANGERS** in Yellowstone Park say the **ONLY ANIMAL GRIZZLY BEARS WON'T MESS WITH** are **SKUNKS**.
- They'll even **let SKUNKS eat with them**. Why?
- Because the **cost of GETTING EVEN** is **just Too HIGH**
- The **COST of NOT FORGIVING** is **WAY TOO HIGH**.

- For 42 years, every week, **David Thomas** slipped a **LOVE LETTER UNDER THE DOOR** of his neighbor, **Rachel Jones**.
- Each letter attempted to **MEND THE LOVERS' QUARREL** that parted them when **BOTH WERE 32**.
- Rachel Jones **BURNED EACH LETTER & REFUSED EVEN TO SPEAK** to David.
- When he finally **SUMMONED THE COURAGE TO KNOCK on her DOOR & PROPOSE**, she **ACCEPTED**
- Both were 74 years old when they finally got married

SLIDE – American Humorist, Josh Billings

“There is no revenge so sweet as forgiveness.”

- Our **FORGIVE OTHERS OPENS** the **DOOR** for **GOD** to **FORGIVE US**.
- The **HARDNESS** in our **HEARTS**, **SHUTS HIM OUT**
- If we have **HARD, UNFORGIVING HEARTS**, it **CALLS INTO QUESTION IF WE HAVE EVER RECEIVED** or **APPRECIATED GOD'S FORGIVENESS**.
- The **FORGIVEN HEART** . . . will **FORGIVE OTHERS**

- The **FORGIVEN HEART . . . will RELINGUISH your RIGHT to PUNISH that PERSON.**
- The **FORGIVEN HEART . . . will NO LONGER HOLD THAT PERSON RESPONSIBLE for WHAT THEY DID.**

SLIDE – Mark 11:27

By this time they had arrived in Jerusalem again. As Jesus was walking through the Temple area, the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the other leaders came up to Him. They demanded,

SLIDE – Mark 11:28

“By whose authority did you drive out the merchants from the Temple? Who gave you such authority?”

- The **CULTURE is SAYING the SAME THING to the CHURCH TODAY.**
- They say, **“WHO ARE YOU TO TELL US WHAT TO DO?”**
- **IF we are LIVING a LIE OURSELVES, we LOSE OUR RIGHT to even CHALLENGE those AROUND US.**
- **JESUS then ANSWERS THEIR QUESTION with a QUESTION.**

SLIDE – Mark 11:29-30

“I’ll tell who gave Me authority to do these things if you answer one question,” Jesus replied. *“Did John’s baptism come from heaven or was it merely human? Answer Me!”*

- **THIS QUESTION WAS NOT A TRAP!**
- It was **another OPPORTUNITY for them to REALIZE & CONFESS their SIN, & ASK FORGIVENESS**
- **If JOHN WAS FROM GOD, then HE WAS RIGHT ABOUT JESUS, that HE WAS the MESSIAH.**
- **If WHAT JOHN SAID WAS TRUE, then JESUS HAD ALL AUTHORITY.**

SLIDE – Mark 11:31-32

They talked it over among themselves. *“If we say it was from heaven, he will ask why we didn’t believe him. But do we dare say it was merely human?”* For they were afraid that the people would start a riot, since everyone thought that John was a prophet.

SLIDE – Mark 11:33

So they finally replied, *“We don’t know.”* And Jesus responded, *“Then I won’t answer your question either.”*

- **JESUS isn’t wanting to TRAP YOU TODAY, HE WANTS to TRANSFORM YOU.**
- In the **INTERNSHIP**, we **NEVER ALLOW** our **INTERNS** to **ANSWER “I DON’T KNOW!”**, **BECAUSE we DON’T WANT THEM TO HIDE**, because we want them to be **HEALED**
- Saying **“I DON’T KNOW”** means, that **EITHER WE HAVEN’T LOOKED HARD ENOUGH** or **WE DON’T WANT TO ANSWER.**
- This **WHOLE STORY of JESUS QUESTIONING THEM is a VIVID EXAMPLE** of

WHAT HAPPENS to PEOPLE who REFUSE to FACE the TRUTH.

- **THESE MEN KNEW that JOHN said “JESUS was the MESSIAH,” & yet THEY WERE NOT WILLING to DEAL WITH IT.**
- It is **ALWAYS DIFFICULT to FACE the TRUTH & ADMIT YOU ARE WRONG, but it is the ONLY PATH with a REAL FUTURE.**
- **TODAY, If we WANT GOD to ANSWER OUR QUESTIONS, we MUST ACCEPT WHAT HE HAS ALREADY REVEALED TO US.**
- **TODAY ... BE WILLING to LOOK HARD INTO your HEART.**
- **TODAY... BE WILLING to ANSWER the QUESTIONS GOD is ASKING you.**
- **BE WILLING to FORGIVE.**
- You can make your heart a **HOUSE** of **PRAYER,** by **CLEANSING** it from **UNFORGIVENESS.**

Let's PRAY!