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Swift Creek Baptist Church (swiftcreekbaptistchurch.com)
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Mark 11:11-21 “Jesus, Examining Our Lives”

Intro. I just read to you an account of the last miracle performed by Jesus in Mark’s gospel prior to His death. On the Monday morning before His crucifixion, Jesus was hungry and He saw a fig tree that was full of leaves. But when he looked for any fruit, He found none whatsoever. So He did something unusual: He cursed the fig tree, and by the next day it was completely withered from the roots up.¹ What an amazing miracle!

Jesus used the miracle to make a visual statement concerning what will happen to Israel because of their unfruitfulness. Israel was like this fig tree, full of big “leaves” of religious works and rituals, but fruitless to God.

Even so, this is not just a problem with Israel. *We* may have an outward display of religion and morality that people admire, but too often there is no spiritual fruitfulness in our lives. Christ is still seeking fruit from His people. Just a few nights later, Jesus said in John 15:16, “I chose you ... that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain....” So for us to be *unfruitful* is sin.

Now in this text of Scripture, Jesus examines both the fig tree (v.12) and what was going on in the temple (v.11). In both cases, He responds with acts of judgment: Jesus curses the fig tree and He cleanses the temple. Our Lord’s condemning of the tree and cleansing of the temple were both symbolic, attention-getting acts that illustrated the sad spiritual condition of the nation of Israel. In spite of their many privileges and opportunities, Israel was outwardly fruitless (the tree) and inwardly corrupt (the temple). They remain spiritually unfruitful to this very day. The same can be said of our nation and to some extent the church. We are becoming outwardly fruitless and inwardly corrupt.

So I invite you to join me in examining this text of Scripture today. And as we do so, I want us to allow Jesus and the Word of God to examine our lives and our church as well. Now when we go to be examined by a doctor, he or she will ask a series of questions as part of the exam. So in my message today I will ask a series of questions. I hope this message will prepare us for the observance of the Lord’s Supper. Paul says that we are to examine ourselves and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup (1 Cor. 11:28). And if God shows us that there is something not right in our lives or in our church, we will confess it, repent of it, and receive God’s forgiveness. So the first question of our exam is this:

I. IS THERE ANY FRUIT IN OUR LIVES?

Again, v.13 says, “And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs².” The sprouting of leaves was the first sign that fruit should follow. Even this early

¹ Barclay has trouble believing that this miracle literally took place yet I do not! Jesus created the tree, is the true owner of the tree, and He has the sovereign right to destroy His tree to teach a spiritual lesson. We destroy plants all the time for food.

² Normally the season for figs would have been late May or June (Barkley, p. 281), and even as late as November (Brooks, p.182). This event almost certainly took place in April.

in the season there could have been some small, green figs on the tree, though hardly edible. Yet there were none whatsoever, not even early green figs. Now look down to the parable of Jesus in 12:2, “Now at vintage–time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers.” Like the owner of the vineyard, God expected to receive fruit from Israel. God blessed Israel in order that they may be a spiritual blessing to the nations (Gen. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4).³ Yet when God sent prophets to remind them of this, they persecuted and even killed the prophets.

In the Old Testament the fig tree is a symbol of Israel. For example, Hos. 9:10 says, “...I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, ...They became an abomination like the thing that they loved.”⁴ In later years they finally gave up idolatry and seemed more devoted to God, but they still were not truly fruitful. In Isaiah 29:13 the Lord said, “Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me.” They were outwardly religious but spiritually dead and without fruit unto God.

Likewise, when Jesus came to Israel, they had the outward “leaves” of religion. And yet, Jesus found no real fruit in most of the people. They were still just going through the form of religion. By the time of Jesus Judaism was a spiritually dead religion. They trusted in their temple sacrifices rather than their Messiah Jesus, the true sacrificial lamb.

This demand of fruitfulness applies to each individual today. Christ comes to us, as He came to that fig tree, seeking from *us* this fruit which He delights in receiving. Having sowed so much in our lives, He does look for a harvest of spiritual fruit.

So to reflect on this, I ask two related follow-up questions:

A. Do *You* Have Just “Leaves”? - We must not settle for just the “leaves” of outward religion. Leaves benefit the tree and assist in the production of the fruit. And so the symbol suggests things that are good in themselves, but fall short in being true fruit. Would you rather eat an apple or the leaves of an apple tree? And if you want to know what leaves represent, remember the condition of the spiritual leaders of Israel at that time. They prided themselves upon their external, hereditary connection with Abraham (Mt. 3:9; Jn. 8:39). They thought that because they had been born Jews, and circumcised, they were God’s chosen people. They trusted in mere ritualism, including the daily sacrifice in the Temple. They possessed the Law of Moses, and the rest of the Word of God. They may have had many leaves that people admired, but there was no fruit in their lives. They had the profession of religion but not the possession of a true relationship with God. They were to be a missionary nation. Instead, they were spreading the “gospel” of circumcision, law keeping and good works, which do not impart life but only death.

That is exactly what hosts of unbelievers, masquerading as Christians, are doing today. In any Christian community, there is a group of people who have a nominal and external connection with religion, who have been baptized, and are on a church roll. They think that religion lies mainly in coming to church on Sunday, and going through the outward ceremonies of worship, including taking communion. They even have some interest in the sermon, especially if it contains a lot of humor or interesting stories. What describes such religion more accurately than “nothing but leaves”? If you dress up on Sunday, wear a cross and carry your Bible, I think that looks good, but *alone* it is nothing but leaves. Beware lest your religion is just producing leaves instead of fruit! The church or the individual whose religion has leaves only is useless to the world. What does the

³ God always wanted a relationship with all people, not just Jews (see also Isa. 56:7; 1 Kings 8:41-42).

⁴ See also Jer. 8:13; 29:17; Hosea 9:16-17; Joel 1:6-7; Micah 7:1; Nah. 3:1

world care about the ceremonials and the externals of worship? Nothing! Only fruit nourishes and reproduces!

Now to determine if your religion is nothing but leaves, let's consider the next related question:

B. Are You Bearing Fruit to God? – What kind of fruit should be in your life as a Christian? First, there should be the fruit that comes from true repentance. In Matthew 3:8 John the Baptist preached, "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance." The fruit of true repentance is a changed life. Once we are saved, we should bear the fruit of righteousness and holiness (Rom. 6:22; 2 Cor. 9:10; Php. 1:11; Heb. 12:11; Jas. 3:18). We should bear the fruit of the Spirit, such as love, joy, and peace (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9). We should bear the fruit of good works that bless people (Col. 1:10). We should bear the fruit of the true worship of God, including that of thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15). We should bear the fruit of souls won to Christ (Daniel 12:3b; Rom. 7:4; Php. 1:22; Col. 1:6). How many have you influenced to be converted to Christ? Finally, if we produce godly children, that is also being fruitful to God (cf. 1 Cor. 7:14; 1 Tim. 2:15). So as Christians we should be FIGS: Fruitful in God's Service! Without such fruits as these, we must question if we are truly saved.

So is there indeed any fruit in your life? Spiritual fruit is one of the most important evidences that you have been born again. That's because only life produces life. Spiritual deadness produces no fruit. I am afraid that there are at least some professing Christians who are only Christians outwardly, but not inwardly. Jesus said, "by their fruits you shall know them" (Mt. 7:20).

Now let me show you why this matter of fruitfulness is so important. We also see from this story that:

C. If You Are Not Fruitful, Judgment Will Come – Since this tree had no fruit, Jesus does a very unusual thing. He pronounced judgment on the fig tree. In fact, this is the only thing Jesus ever cursed!⁵ Notice what He said to the fruitless fig tree in v.14, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." To be fruitless is sin, and sin invites chastisement or judgment. John the Baptist preached in Matthew 3:10, "...Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." If there is no fruit, there is no spiritual life. So God judged Israel 40 years later. Their nation and temple were destroyed, and the remaining Jews were scattered to the nations. If God spared not His chosen people, don't think for a moment that God will spare America, or a church, or an individual that fails to bear fruit unto God.

In Luke 13:6-7 we have another parable about a fig tree, "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'" That is what we would expect would happen to a fruit tree that doesn't bear fruit year after year. But the keeper of the vineyard went on to say, "Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down." The owner of the vineyard represents God and He was willing to be patient for another year. In fact, after Jesus pronounced this judgment, it was a whole generation before God judged Israel in 70 A.D.

I wonder if there is someone here today that is like the fig tree in that parable? Perhaps God looks at your life and finds no fruit, and no evidence of real salvation. And God, in His mercy, says,

⁵ Though He did pronounce woes and warnings of judgment in Matthew 23. There was one other miracle that resulted in death and that is the time Jesus cast out demons and they entered a herd of swine.

“I will give him one more year.” If you’re here today and you are not yet truly saved, God is giving you another opportunity to be saved, and begin to bear fruit unto Him. But don’t presume that you will be given even more time. Be saved today!

If you realize that your spiritual life is nothing more than leaves without fruit, that your religion is all on the surface, you can take the steps needed to put you in touch with Him who gives life, and from whom comes our fruitfulness. Repent of your sins. Put your faith in Jesus, and maintain a daily connection to Him. Jesus has said to each of us, “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me” (Jn. 15:4). A vital life connection to Jesus is the only way we can bear fruit to God.

So as Jesus examines our lives, our first question was, “Is there any fruit in our lives.” What is the truthful answer? Now, as we move in our text to v.15, we ask the second question:

II. IS THERE ANY FILTH IN OUR LIVES?

This question comes up as we see Jesus going into the Temple. You see, dirt or filth is a common analogy of sin in Scripture.⁶ We must examine our lives for any filth that should be cleansed from our lives. If we are going to please God, we must be both clean (Jn. 15:2-3) and fruitful. Now let’s see first of all:

A. What Jesus Found in the Temple – Jesus has entered the large outer Court of the Gentiles. Though the temple was beautiful, what a sorry spectacle greets His eyes, ears, and even nostrils! He notices that this court, hence the temple, was being desecrated. It now resembled a large marketplace! What were they doing wrong? First of all, they were:

1. Buying and Selling Sacrificial Animals *in the Temple* – Notice in v.15 that Jesus began to “drive out those who bought and sold in the temple...”, including “those who sold doves.” They were selling sacrificial animals. The main sacrificial animal for sale at this time would have been lambs. You see, it was only a few days before Passover, and each Jewish household was to offer a lamb for sacrifice. When people came from many miles away, it was much more convenient to buy a lamb there in or near Jerusalem.⁷ Certainly they could have been buying and selling sheep in the countryside around Jerusalem, but evidently most were bought there at the temple.⁸ You see, each lamb had to be inspected and approved by the priest. If you did not buy your sheep from their approved venders, they could be less inclined to approve the sheep for sacrifice. So the same people who were inspecting and approving the lambs were probably profiting from the selling the lambs (merchants had to pay a fee or percentage).

Those who were poor could buy doves for some of the sacrifices at the temple⁹. And so whether you were rich or poor, the High Priest, his family, and their merchants had a booming business selling sheep and doves, evidently at inflated prices, for in the last of v.17 Jesus called their market “a den of *thieves*.”

Furthermore, they were:

⁶ Job 15:16; Prov. 30:12; Isa. 4:4; 64:6; Ez. 16:36; 22:15; 24:13; 36:25; Nah. 3:6; Zech. 3:3-4; 2 Cor. 7:1; Jas. 1:21; Rev. 17:4; 22:11.

⁷ Such a practice was permitted (Dt. 14:22-26).

⁸ Brooks indicates that the market had only recently been brought to the temple. Prior to that it was set up on the Mount of Olives according to various passages in the Mishnah and the Talmud (p.184).

⁹ See Leviticus 12:8; 14:12; 15:14.

2. Exchanging Currency – Notice in the middle of v.15 that Jesus “overturned the tables of the money changers.” Among the buyers were pilgrims from countries far away. They carried with them currencies from other countries. But in the temple area foreign, Gentile money was not accepted in payment for the sacrificial animals. It had to be in genuine, Jewish currency. So the money-changers were in the temple, sitting behind their coin-covered tables. Also, the temple tax of half a shekel had to be paid this time of the year in Jewish coin (Ex. 30:11-16). This business, too, was very profitable, for the money changers added a surcharge and made a nice profit.

Now the businessmen and the priests who allowed it would have argued that they were performing a good service for the Jews who were coming from other parts of the world. But was *the temple* the place for it? Wasn't their motive to make a nice profit? Jesus evidently had cleansed the temple during His first Passover visit (John 2:13-22),¹⁰ but three years later, here they are back at it again, no doubt authorized by the religious leaders.

There was something else going on at the temple that Jesus found fault with. They were:

3. Using the Temple for Common Use - V.16 says, “And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.” The entire temple complex was at least 1000 feet on all four sides, the length of about 3 football fields.¹¹ The temple was surrounded by walls, but there were gates at several locations along each wall. The gates were to serve as access points to enter the temple for worship. Instead, some people were entering the gates to cut through the temple court as a convenient shortcut; for example, between the city and the Mount of Olives. They didn't bother going around the temple. They just cut right through it. We all love shortcuts! Have you seen certain parking lots where shortcuts in the grass are clearly evident? However, in so doing, the sacred place was being used for a purely *secular* purpose. What Jesus saw was that for the sake of convenience, people were carrying all kinds of “vessels” containing various goods¹² through the temple area. They lacked reverence for the strictly holy function of the house of God.

How do you feel about what was going on? Would *you* have objected to it? Would it bother you if the sanctuary of your church was used for a secular concert or theatrical production?

B. What Jesus Did in the Temple – We have already read what Jesus did in vv.15-16. Basically, He put a stop to what has going on.¹³ It is not difficult to picture the righteous indignation that must have flashed from the eyes of Jesus when He drove out all who were engaged in this nefarious business, and overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those selling doves. He drove out those who had turned God's house into a marketplace. He turned away those who were taking a short cut through the temple complex.

Why did Jesus take this action? What was wrong with what was going on?

1. It Was Contrary to the Purpose of the Temple - In v.17 Jesus said to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’?” The Jews looked upon the temple primarily as a place of sacrifice, but Jesus saw it as a place of prayer and missionary outreach. Jesus quoted words that are found in Isa. 56:7b and Jeremiah 7:11. It is clear from this that the temple was intended to be the place where God met with His people. This area had been

¹⁰ Though Brooks states that John placed the cleansing early in the ministry of Jesus for theological reasons (p.184).

¹¹ Barclay says that each side varied in length from 1000 to 1300 feet (p. 283). Brooks states that the outer courts were roughly 1000 x 1600', surrounded by beautiful colonnades are covered porches (p.185). See John: 23; Acts 3:11; 5:12. It is likely that the merchants were seated under the covered porches on one side of the temple, in particular the Royal Stoa in the southern part of the temple mount (Garland, p. 434). The

¹² While the word literally refers to vessels, at times it refers to the goods in the vessels (Mark 3:27).

¹³ Even the Mishnah (Berakhot 9:5) says, "Nor may he make of it [the temple] a short by path." (Translation Danby).

specifically set aside for the purpose of prayer and devotion. It was not at all the proper place to conduct a for-profit business enterprise. But as it was, the people who came to the temple to pray, and worship God, had to work their way past all this buying and selling. While some were trying to pray, they could hear the merchants calling out to people to come buy their sheep or doves. They could smell the stench of animals. They were doing common business in a holy place.

Also, this “religious market” was set up in the large Court of the Gentiles, the one place where the Jews should have been busy doing serious missionary work and being fruitful to God. Instead, they kept foreigners away from the core of the temple complex with inner walls and signs.

2. They Were Cheating the People - They had not only turned the temple of God into a marketplace, but in the last of v.17 Jesus said, “you have made it a ‘den of *thieves*.’” Around this same time Jesus accused the Pharisees of being full of greed and extortion (Mt. 23:25; Luke 11:39). G. Campbell Morgan points out that “a den of thieves” is the place to which thieves run when they want to hide. The dishonest merchants were hiding under the cover of religion, and who would question their honesty right there at the temple? Mark especially mentioned the people who sold doves. The dove was one of the few sacrifices that the poor people could afford (Lev. 14:22). The poor also had to pay the temple tax. Even the poor were victimized by the merchants and moneychangers in the temple, and this in itself must have grieved the Lord Jesus, for He was always sensitive to the poor (see Mark 12:41-44).

3. They Were Trusting in Automatic Forgiveness - There is another interpretation of our Lord’s quotation of “the den of thieves” that fits better with the prophetic context. In Jeremiah 7:9 the Lord rebuked the way they broke His 10 Commandments and then entered the temple and said, “We are delivered to do all these abominations” (v.10). Then God asked, “Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves...?” (v.11).¹⁴ Thieves and robbers seek refuge in caves from those who would hold them accountable for their sins. Even so, these Jews saw the temple as a place of protection from God’s judgment. Jesus assured them that their temple and their sacrifices would not protect them from God’s judgment upon their ongoing sin.¹⁵ It is like the Catholic who thinks he can go ahead and sin on Saturday night as long as he goes to mass and confession the next morning.

Omit ¶? Notice in v.15 that Jesus not only drove out the sellers, but those who were buying as well. Sellers were guilty of swindling the pilgrims. But why should the buyers be included in the number of those against whom the Lord vented His keen displeasure? It was because they accepted conditions as they were. It was surely far more convenient to buy your animal in the temple court than to bring it along with you (Lev. 17:1-6; Jer. 17:26) and run the risk that it would fail to pass the official inspection. If there had been no buyers, there would have been no sellers. When the priest permitted the market to be brought to the temple courts, the people should have boycotted that market.

What Jesus did was a symbolic act of judgment. As the merchants and others were expelled from the temple,¹⁶ even so the time would come when God would expel Israel from their temple. The fact that He quoted from Jeremiah 7:11 is significant. In that context God warned that just as He destroyed the tabernacle at Shiloh, even so He would destroy the temple of Solomon. Then He said, “I will cast you out of My sight...” (v.15). In addition to the actions of Jesus, God’s intention

¹⁴ He goes on to say, “Behold, I, even I, have seen [it],” which corresponds to the description of Jesus in v.11.

¹⁵ Brooks points out that the temple was the last refuge of the rebels in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed the city (p. 186).

¹⁶ Those involved were probably stunned by the power of our Lord’s moral fury. In their hearts they knew they were wrong!

to put an end to the sacrifices of the temple was indicated when He tore the curtain of the temple when Jesus died. That temple in Jerusalem was never rebuilt. The church, built on Jesus and His sacrifice, has replaced the temple (Mt. 16:16-18).

Omit ¶? Then we read in v.19 that “the scribes and chief priests heard it....” The actions and words of Jesus aroused counter indignation on their part as they were stung by His rebuke and faced loss of their lucrative business. You see, the priests were no doubt making money off what was going on. The temple merchants had paid the priests generously for the privilege of selling in the temple courts. Some of this money finally reached the coffers of sly, wealthy Annas and of clever Caiaphas. So indeed, there was the filth of greed and extortion in the temple. To give further evidence of their spiritual corruption and deadness, they even plotted to kill Jesus after He cleansed the temple! (v.18a).

C. The Application - Well how does this apply today? Before we quickly condemn the Jewish religious leaders for *their* sins, we should examine our own ministries in light of this Scripture. So to make application, we must first ask:

1. Is the Church a Holy Place? - In Eph. 2:21 we see that the Church of God is a holy temple to the Lord. The church is *not* a building, but the people of God and wherever the people of God gather *is* holy, and certainly that gathering is a temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17). So we learn from this passage how reverently we ought to use places which are set apart for public worship. A Christian place of worship is not as sacred as the Jewish temple. It is not modeled after the heavenly temple. But it does not follow that a Christian place of worship is to be used with no more reverence than a private dwelling or a business. God takes notice of people’s behavior in places of worship, and all irreverence is an offense in His sight.¹⁷

Also, do you realize that your body is also the temple of God? (1 Cor. 6:19). The remaining questions apply to the body of a believer as well. So let’s examine ourselves with some additional questions, based on this text of Scripture:

2. Are We Fulfilling Our Purpose? Do the outsiders in our community think of our church buildings as houses of prayer? By declaring that the temple must be a house of prayer for *all* nations, Jesus gave His endorsement to the wonderful cause of Christian Missions. And the nations have come to America. Are all nations welcome here? Is this a house of prayer for all nations or a private club for certain individuals? Are we evangelizing and inviting people among us who come from other nations? Is our church being fruitful? God has not called us to engage in secular activities. We are to fulfill our purpose and focus our energies on sacred activities.

3. Is There Greed in the Church Today? Have we become more interested in material things than in spiritual? This story is one reason why many Baptist churches have not turned the church into a marketplace. Yet I’m seeing more and more churches opening up coffee shops and so forth. They are selling tickets for concerts and seminars. No ministry should give the impression that they are hawking a religious commodity.

Do you realize that Jesus and religion has become big business? There are some people who make hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in the religion business. The Christian music industry has become too much about making money. Not only are some singers and their promoters demanding thousands of dollars upfront to do a concert, the same is true of popular conference speakers. You can’t get into certain Christian concerts or conferences without paying at least \$25. They are no different from their secular counterparts. Even preachers are getting more and more

¹⁷ In 1 Cor. 11:10 Paul is speaking of propriety in worship and he says, “For this reason the woman ought to have [a symbol of] authority on [her] head, because of the angels.” Evidently, angels observe our worship service!

interested in how they can make extra money selling books, and so forth. I do not think the Lord is pleased with the way the church is becoming more and more commercialized.

4. Does the Church Need Cleansing Today? As Jesus looks upon the church today, what practices would He wish to cleanse from His church? Read Revelation chapters 2-3, for example. Jesus wrote letters to seven churches that came under His scrutiny, and He had words of rebuke for five of those churches. If Jesus or the apostle Paul were to write a letter to *this* church, what would he say? Are there things or behaviors in the house of God that ought not to be there? Is there any filth there that needs to go? When revival comes, God cleanses His church, or we need to repent and be cleansed *in order that* revival may come.

Martin Luther saw the terrible things that were happening in the Church in his day. Priests were selling indulgences and committing other abuses. God used him to try to reform His church. What would He put a stop to today? Perhaps you could answer that question during or after lunch!

Conclusion: So if Jesus were to examine your life, would He find spiritual fruit? Would He find unconfessed or willful sin? Jesus died on the cross that you might be forgiven and fruitful. If you are a Christian, He has given you the Holy Spirit. You have all the resources you need to live a fruitful and holy life. If you haven't been truly saved, trust in Jesus to help you live that kind of a life! 2 Pet. 1:10 says, "... be even more diligent to make your call and election sure...."

Sources: William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: Mark* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956); James A. Brooks, *New American Commentary: Mark* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991); Stephen Felker, *Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible* (Col. Hghts, VA: Published by Author), 2024; David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975); H.A. Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948); Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977 reprint); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 4 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1983); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 5:80] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2021); J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), *Mark: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993); notes from Jerry Vines' sermon tape of 3/4/84; Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Diligent: Mark* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).

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