**Title: Leaves, Clouds and Wells**

**Mark 11:12-14; Luke 13:6-9; Jude 1:12; 2 Peter 2:12**

Jesus helps us to understand an important spiritual principle of fruitfulness from both the parable of the fig tree and His experience with the same tree. When a tree is barren, it is of no use to anyone but only good for a bonfire.

Why was the fig tree the target for this lesson?

It is because of what it symbolized in the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cultures of His time. The fig tree, from a spiritual standpoint, symbolizes wisdom, success and abundance. Above all, it is also an allegory of Israel. Hosea 9:10.

Leaves are good, but not good enough. They are good because they represent hope, expectation and promise. They are always a good omen to herald the promise of fruit and harvest; they are the sign of fulfillment, abundance and plenty. But if the promise of a leaf does not mature into fruit, we end up discouraged and disappointed, as Jesus experienced.

I had a similar experience recently. I left the house for an afternoon bike ride in 90-degree weather with not enough water. After I drank up all my water, I was quite dehydrated but knew there was a water refill location not far ahead. On getting there, a sign on the faucet read “out of order”. You can only imagine my disappointment.

Scripture also helps us to understand this principle in other ways as it refers to:

1. Wells without water 2 Peter 2:12 and;
2. Clouds without rain. Jude1:12

We can also use the allegory of a gun without a bullet.

Wells may be promising but are of no use if dry and don’t have water to quench thirst. Likewise, clouds are of no significance without rain.

The irony of our Christian experience is that we value the leaves more than fruit, we crave the well over water and love the cloud but ignore the importance of the rain. However, fruit is the purpose of the tree, water is the reason for the well and rain should be the end goal of the cloud. The value of the tree rests within the fruit and the power of the cloud is the rain.

**Examples of leaves without fruit:**

1. Spirituality without godliness. 2 Timothy 3-7 -If not corrected leads to self-righteousness. Luke 18:10-14
2. Knowledge without wisdom. Proverbs 4:7; James 1:5-6 -Knowledge alone, puffs up. 1Corinthians 8:1-2
3. Prosperity without generosity. Ephesians 4:28 -If unchecked leads to greed. Mark 10:17-27
4. Power without humility
5. Leadership without service