

# Tuesday: Curses & Bargains

For today's journey, read Matthew 21:18–22; 26:14–15

## REFLECT

Tuesday begins with an early stroll by Jesus with His disciples. He sees a fig tree seeming to be in full bloom before all the other trees, He explores the tree thoroughly but finds no figs at all. Then Jesus suddenly curses the fig tree so that it rots from the roots and dies within a day. By the end of that same day, Judas bargains for his best price to hand over Jesus to killers. The connection of Judas to the fig tree is striking. Like Judas, the fig tree put on a good show, but there was nothing really there. Similarly, Judas put on a good show, but harbored a vapid heart toward Jesus. Judas lived a lie.

Some followers of Jesus are simply not genuine. They look good on the outside, attending church, and helping the poor. But inside, they are frauds like Judas. In multiple other passages, Jesus identifies “one” of the disciples as a “thief”, “devil”, “unbeliever”, or “spiritually unclean.” The disciples did not know to whom Jesus was referring! Judas looked like they did. He did ministry like they did. Even when he left the Upper Room to gather those who would arrest Jesus, his own group thought he was just going to buy more items for ministry.

The cursed fig tree and Judas' story are intimately connected on this day. Jesus is calling for an authentic faith. We don't need to try hard to look right on the outside while ignoring decay going on inside. We need to allow God to change us from the inside-out and give us a genuine love for Him that bears true fruit through our lives. But remember: our goal is not to earn God's gardening affection but to yield to it. May He create in each of us a deeper genuineness about our own devotion to follow Him and a yielded heart to let Him work in us.

## ASK

- How can you discern if someone's faith is genuine or just for show?
- What can we learn from Judas' story about the danger of appearing to be righteous while harboring unbelief or spiritual decay inside?
- How can you cultivate a genuine heart that yields to God's transformative work in your life?
- How can you avoid becoming like the cursed fig tree?

**Pray that God would create a more genuine and surrendered heart in you to do His will above your own.**