

Reflection Friday Week 8 2023

Rather than offer an explanation of the Gospel which people are very good at doing, it is far better to reflect on the questions that the gospel raises for us. Jesus spoke in parables to allow people to reflect on them, realising that they can mean different things to different people and reading the parable this year may offer a very different insight to the one we will have in a years' time?

It's rather sad to hear that the fig tree withered because figs are delicious and it could not possibly have had figs on it at the time Jesus cursed it. However, the tree did have leaves which should not have been open at that time of year. It suggests that some people can be all show, do things really well and with great ceremony but completely lack substance. In his Gospel, Mark often raises this question about the Jewish leaders, *"Do what they say but do not do what they do!"* Jesus said.

Preachers, too, are able to tell you how to live Christian lives, care for the poor, the homeless, the needy, but do not live this kind of charity themselves.

What kind of fruit do we have to show Jesus? Or are we all just show?

A young businessman has just set up his own company. He rents an office and buys some trendy furniture. Sitting behind his new desk, he spots a potential client enter the outer office. Wanting to appear busy, he picks up the phone and pretends that he's calling an important client. *"Offer them no more than £3 million!"* he shouts down the phone. *"And tell them that if it isn't finished by next week, they won't get a penny!"* After hanging up, the man says to the visitor, *"Hello? Can I help you?"* And the visitor replies, *"Yes, I'm from the phone company. I've come to connect your phone line."*