



the good news according to

MATTHEW

Chapter 21:18-32

**A Fruitless
Religion**

¹⁸ In the morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry, ¹⁹ and he noticed a fig tree beside the road. He went over to see if there were any figs, but there were only leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” And immediately the fig tree withered up.

²⁰ The disciples were amazed when they saw this and asked, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” ²¹ Then Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don’t doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and it will happen. ²² You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it.”





**GOD HAS NO
interest in an
OUTWARD show of
RELIGION**

²³ When Jesus returned to the Temple and began teaching, the leading priests and elders came up to him. They demanded, “By what authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right?” ²⁴ “I’ll tell you by what authority I do these things if you answer one question,” Jesus replied. ²⁵ “Did John’s authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human?”

They talked it over among themselves. “If we say it was from heaven, he will ask us why we didn’t believe John.²⁶ But if we say it was merely human, we’ll be mobbed because the people believe John was a prophet.”²⁷ So they finally replied, “We don’t know.” And Jesus responded, “Then I won’t tell you by what authority I do these things.”

**A focus on
RELIGIOUS
PERFORMANCE
can encourage a
NARCISSISTIC
SPIRITUALITY**



28 “But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the older boy, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 The son answered, ‘No, I won’t go,’ but later he changed his mind and went anyway. 30 Then the father told the other son, ‘You go,’ and he said, ‘Yes, sir, I will.’ But he didn’t go. 31 “Which of the two obeyed his father?” They replied, “The first.” Then Jesus explained his meaning:

“I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. ³² For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn’t believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.”



**OUR ACTIONS,
not our words,
reveal whose
KINGDOM
WE ARE LOYAL TO**

