

"Something is about to SHIFT"

Echo Church | Week 39 | September 28, 2025 | Rich Saunders Jr. |

"The Shift: From Leaves to Fruit" | Mark 11:12-24 (NKJV)

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Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 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 figs. In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Introduction

Family, let me ask you a question: Have you ever been in a situation where something looked good on the outside but left you disappointed on the inside? Maybe it was a restaurant with a five-star rating but a one-star experience. Or maybe it was a person who talked a big game but couldn't deliver when it mattered.

This is exactly what Jesus encountered in Mark 11. He saw a fig tree full of leaves, but when He got closer, there was no fruit. It looked the part but didn't produce. And here's the truth: God is not impressed by appearances; He's looking for production.

Today, we're going to talk about *the shift*—the shift from looking good to being good, from having leaves to bearing fruit. Because the reality is, God didn't call us to be decorative; He called us to be productive.

Point 1: Don't Be Satisfied with Just Leaves and No Fruit

From the very beginning, God's instruction to humanity was clear: *Be fruitful and multiply* (Genesis 1:28). Not "be leafy and divide." But too often, we settle for leaves—things that look good but don't produce anything meaningful.

We divide ourselves based on our leaves:

- Rich leaves here, poor leaves there.
- Black leaves here, white leaves there.
- Saved 25+ years here, saved 2.5 days there.
- Republican leaves here, Democrat leaves there.

But here's the problem: A divided house cannot produce fruit. Jesus said, "*Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand*" (Matthew 12:25).

Let me ask you this: If God showed up to your meeting with your calling, would He find fruit or just leaves? You've got the gadgets, the social media team, the band, the conferences—but where is the fruit? Could it be that we're hiding behind the leaves, just like Adam and Eve, sewing fig leaves together to cover what God never told us to hide?

Supporting Scripture:

- "*By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples*" (John 15:8).
- "*Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit*" (Matthew 7:17).

"God didn't call you to be a decoration; He called you to be a demonstration of His power."

The shift happens when we stop being satisfied with leaves and start producing fruit for God.

Point 2: Attend to the Needs of the House

Let's talk about the house. Sometimes we're so focused on *having* a house that we forget to *maintain* it. We post pictures with the keys, saying, "Look at what God has done," but we neglect the people inside, outside, and the upkeep of the house itself.

The house of God was never meant to be a cash cow. Your ministry isn't supposed to make you wealthy while your community remains homeless. Hosting conferences and charging for the movement of the Holy Spirit is not what God meant by "be fruitful and multiply."

When Jesus entered the temple, He drove out the money changers because the house was supposed to be a house of prayer for *all nations*. But instead, it had become a den of thieves.

Here's the truth: Just because the house looks nice doesn't mean it's what God purposed for it. Don't be surprised when the enemy starts "enemiying." When people are for God, there's proof. And when people are for the enemy, there's proof.

Supporting Scripture:

- *"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it"* (Psalm 127:1).
- *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"* (1 Corinthians 3:16).

"A house without prayer is just a building, but a house with prayer is a movement."

The shift happens when we stop using the house for personal gain and start attending to the needs of the house—inside and out.

Point 3: Faith in God, Not Faith in Your System

Here's the hard truth: Your assignment will be challenging because you're called to produce. And being connected to the wrong mindset will leave you dried up at the root.

Too often, we create systems and procedures that prioritize our wants over God's will. We trust our abilities more than we trust God. And when our systems fail, we end up sick, frustrated, and out of place.

But Jesus gives us the key: *"Have faith in God."* Not faith in things. Not faith in people. Not faith in the church. Faith in God.

When you pray, believe that you will receive. But how can people believe and receive if the house of prayer has been turned into something else?

Supporting Scripture:

- *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding"* (Proverbs 3:5).
- *"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

"Faith in God is the root; everything else is just the fruit."

The shift happens when we put our faith back where it belongs—in God, not in our systems.

Conclusion

You are called to produce. The shift happens when we stop settling for leaves and start bearing fruit.

So, let's make the shift. Let's be a church that produces for God. Let's be people who attend to the needs of the house. And let's put our faith in God, not in our systems.

Because when God shows up, He's not looking for leaves—He's looking for fruit. And I don't know about you, but I want to be found faithful.

Let's shift. Let's produce. Let's bear fruit.