

FIGS

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Mark's text:

On the following day, when they came from Bethany...

...he was hungry; and seeing...a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. But when he came to it he found nothing but leaves for it was not the season for figs. And he said to it. "May no one ever eat fruit from you again."

Figs in Epictetus:

Remind yourself that what you love [i.e., the person you love] is mortal. What you love is not *yours*. It has been given to you *for now*, and can be taken back. It has been given to you not for ever, Figs and grain are given to us *at their appointed time*; if you miss them [long for them] *in winter*, you are an idiot.

Figs and grain are given to us *at their appointed time*; if you look for them *in winter*, you're a moron. Likewise if you miss your child, or your friend, when they have not been given to you, *you're looking for figs in winter. As winter is to the figs, just so is the state of the universe to the things that are taken from us. [Discourses 3.24]*

Death is nothing to be ashamed of. Nor is it contrary to the order of the universe. It is a fact of nature that these things should happen in this way, of necessity. The person who wants them not to happen is like someone who doesn't want figs to have juice. [Marcus Aurelius 4.6]

Marcus Aurelius

- Remember that just as it is silly for someone to be surprised if a fig tree produces figs, likewise it is silly to be surprised if the world brings forth the things that the world tends to bring forth.
- Only a mad man looks for figs in winter.

Mark's text: bare bones

Son-of-Man, hungry, goes to fig tree
looking for figs and does not find any
because it is not the season; and he
curses the tree.

[I.e., this may be the text that Mark had,
and edited.]

Corrected translation:

A man hungry goes to fig tree looking for figs when it is not the season and does not find any and curses the tree.

Corrected punctuation:

- Does a hungry man look for figs when it is not the season, and when he doesn't find any, curse the tree?
- Does a hungry man look for figs in winter, and then curse the tree for not having any figs? Of course not!!!

salt

You are the salt...

Salt is good...

But if salt has lost its taste [its saltiness],
how shall its saltiness be restored?

It's good for nothing; useless; you throw it
away, tread it under foot; throw it on the
dunghill.

Means....?

What good is salt that isn't salty? The whole point of salt is to be salty. That's what it's for. That's *all* it's for. If it isn't salty — can't do the thing it exists to do — then what the hell good is it?

If it doesn't express *its nature*, it's useless.

Means....

Human beings have a specific nature — our God-given nature. A *moral* nature; a *rational* nature.

If you don't exercise your human nature (your moral virtues, moral capacities, and rational capacities) then you aren't doing what God has put you on earth to do. You're useless. About as much use as ***salt that isn't salty***.

Epictetus:

If you were a utensil that was so rotten that you were no use for anything anymore, you'd be thrown on the dunghill; nobody would pick you up again even from there [*i.e., you would not even be good enough for the average dunghill*]. **And what if you are a human being who cannot fill any human role?....** You want to be tossed on the dunghill, ***like a useless old spoon*** — like a piece of dung?