

MARK CHAPTER 11– THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY; THE FIG TREE WITHERED; JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE; THE LESSON OF THE WITHERED FIG TREE; FORGIVENESS AND PRAYER; JESUS’ AUTHORITY QUESTIONED;

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221**; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY (VS. 1-11)

Mar 11:1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples;

Mar 11:2 and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it.

Mar 11:3 And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

Mar 11:4 So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it.

Mar 11:5 But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"

Mar 11:6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.

Mar 11:7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.

v. 1 Jerusalem’s population would have been three times its normal number due to the influx of people who had come to celebrate Passover. In addition, Josephus tells us there were ten times the normal amount of Roman soldiers in the city, guarding against any potential uprising from the zealots. Consequently, it was with soldiers watching, people bustling, and the city almost bursting at the seams that Jesus made His way toward Jerusalem. Bethphage” means “House of Figs.” “Bethany” means “House of Dates.” *Mount of Olives*... 2,600 feet in elevation, the Mount of Olives offered a commanding view of the city of Jerusalem below.

vs. 2-3 The Lord has need? Why would the Creator of all things have need of anything? The reason He borrowed a manger, a boat, a donkey, an upper room, and a tomb is because He who was rich for our sakes became poor (2 Cor. 8:9). Why? He chose to place Himself in a position where He would need to partner with us in order to see His will worked out through us. He’s chosen to place Himself in a position where He will not do what He desires to do in our families, communities, workplaces, marriages, or schools without our partnering with Him. Why? He’s getting us ready for the next billion years when we will be ruling and reigning with Him. I wonder if one of the mind-blowing moments in heaven might not be when we see what could have happened in the lives of our relatives, friends, and communities had we taken seriously the possibility of partnering with God instead of acting as if the Lord didn’t need us. *...and straightway he will send him hither.* “He will send him back.” That’s always the way of the Lord. Anything we give Him—be it our energy or money, our time or abilities—He returns it to us with interest.

vs 4-7 When victorious over an army of five thousand or more, a Roman general made a triumphal entry upon his return in which he rode a golden chariot pulled by white stallions. Behind him would be the conquered general or king of the nation, followed by the conquered soldiers in chains. At the end of the procession would be the Roman soldiers marching in pomp and pageantry. The Roman soldiers in Jerusalem must have chuckled to see Jesus enter the city riding on a donkey, followed by twelve ragtag disciples, the majority of whom smelled like fish. And yet even by Rome’s own standards, He warranted a triumphal entry indeed, for the number of those who would believe in Him after His resurrection would be five thousand (*Acts 4:4*)—conquered not by force or shame, but by love.

Chapter 11 Having seen Jesus as the Servant living His life in service in chapters 1–10, chapter 11 marks the beginning of the second section of Mark’s Gospel, wherein we see the Servant giving His life in sacrifice. In so doing, **Jesus will make a presentation of Himself as King in verses 1–11**, followed by **provocation as He drives the moneychangers** from the temple in verses **15–18**, and finally by **examination as the political and religious leaders question Him** in **verses 27 to 12:37**.

Notice the total disconnect between the prophesied coming of the Messiah and their religious system – between what they were doing and what God was doing! Rather than the religious leaders announcing the coming of the Messiah, they were plotting to kill Him. However, their religious system were humming right along, most profitably, to these leaders,!

My Faith Looks Up To Thee – Ray Palmer/Lowell Mason

1. My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine! Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away, O let me from this day be wholly thine!

2. May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire! As thou hast died for me, O may my love to thee, pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire!

3. While life's dark maze I tread, and griefs around me spread, be thou my guide; bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away, nor let me ever stray from thee aside.

4. When ends life's transient dream, when death's cold, sullen stream shall o'er me roll; blest Savior, then in love, fear and distrust remove; O bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!

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Mar 11:8 And many (Mt. 21:8 – a very great multitude) spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (cf. Luke 19:41-44 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept (sobbing convulsively) over it, [42] saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. [43] For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, [44] and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." - fulfilling one of the most remarkable prophecies of the Bible – ***Dan 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks - 173,880 days, from the command of Artaxerxes Longimanus – Neh. 2:1; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.)***

Mar 11:9 Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'

Mar 11:10 Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!'"

Mar 11:11 And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

THE FIG TREE WITHERED (VS. 12-14)

Mar 11:12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry.

Mar 11:13 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. Cf. Jud. 9:10; Hosea 9:10; Joel 1:7; Mic 4:4 Hab 3:17; Hag 2:19; Zec 3:10

INTERPRETATION

vs. 8-9 Quoting Ps. 118, the crowd cried, “Hosanna!” or, “Save Now” or “Save, I Beseech!” ***cf. John 12:12-16; Ps. 118:22-28***

v. 10 When the crowd cried, “Save Now!” they weren’t speaking of their personal salvation. They were looking for a Messiah who would free them politically, who would lead a revolution militarily to overthrow the rule of Rome. But Jesus was coming with an entirely different kingdom in mind.

v. 11 Jesus was not impressed by the crowd because, knowing the fickleness of humanity, He knew that the cry of the crowd would change from “Hosanna” to “Crucify Him” in a few short days. Why, then, did He who usually said, “Tell no man” (Matthew 16:20) orchestrate His entry into Jerusalem in a way that was sure to draw attention? In addition to fulfilling prophecy (***Zech. 9:9***), I believe it was because had He not done so, people could have said, “If we had known You had come into our city, we would never have turned against You. We would have responded to You.” So He came into the city in a way in which no one could have the excuse of not knowing He was there. Riding a donkey in accordance with prophecy, He was proclaiming to be the One sent from God, the Son of David, the Messiah. In the temple, Jesus would have observed moneychangers charging exorbitant rates to exchange the currency of those who had traveled great distances to pay their temple tax and to give offerings at Passover. But what does Jesus do? Does He drive out the moneychangers and chase out the livestock? No. He goes back to Bethany and reflects on what He had seen. Is something bothering you today? We need to follow the example of Jesus. Before spouting off, take some time and go back to Bethany—the place of quietness and communion—to get instruction from the Father.

vs. 12-13 Biblically, the fig tree is a symbol of Israel. Here, Jesus will be speaking of the fruitlessness of Israel—and of our fruitlessness as well. *any thing thereon...* Although it was early in the season, because the leaves of a fig tree appear simultaneously with the fruit, seeing leaves on this fig tree, Jesus assumed it would have figs as well. ***He found nothing but leaves;*** Is that what our lives look like to Jesus, as He desires fruitfulness? Outwardly, because of our abundance of leaves—our activities and words—we might look like we’ve got it together. But upon closer inspection, it is obvious to Him that we lack true fruit—the fruit of love (Galatians 5:22, 23), the fruit of the conversion of souls (John 4:36), the fruit of works of righteousness (Phil. 1:22), the fruit of financial giving (Romans 15:28), the fruit of praise (Hebrews 13:15).

APPLICATION

vs. 12-24 The fig tree represents the nation of Israel **nationally**; the cleansing of the temple speaks of the nation **spiritually**. **Nationally, Israel was fruitless. Spiritually, she was bankrupt. Everything really looked good on the outside – all leafy and verdant!! But on closer examination, there was absolutely no fruit! How fruitful are you? Am I?**

Israel had everything that was needed to be accepted by Israel when He came at His first coming. But when He came, He came into the religious system that had gone bad – not representing Him or His Father. Producing, maybe leaves, but no fruit! Such a system will be cursed by God and will die! How did they get to such a place – all leaves and no fruit? What were some of the reasons?

1 - Emphasis on the religious system and not on God! Why our church organization is the best, all important and the only way, pointing people to our organization and not to God!

2 - Development of manmade, controlling, traditions, which consume all of one’s time! All about the leaves-not the fruit!

3 - All of one’s time is spent and keeping traditions and excluding the teaching and learning the whole Word of God. ***Mark 7:6-9!*** That’s why the entire nation oblivious to the prophesied coming of their Messiah? “Have you not read”?

4 - Ultimately the keeping of manmade traditions become more important than keeping the Word of God! The elevation of the traditions over the Word of God! Testing original teaching by subsequent teaching.

5 - Whenever there is some part of the Word they don’t care for, they attempt to explain it away by their tradition. Example of “corban” re the caring for parents by the children.

6 - Demanding a loyalty to people that should only be given to God. The people are more concerned to serving the religious system than they are to God!

7 - Tend to use fear and intimidation to keep people in line!

8 - Nationally the whole religious system has been turned over to their leaders. – Like the Nicolaitans.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO? Jesus’ solution to fruitlessness

1 - Have faith in God! You, personally, through His Son;

2 - Express our faith by learning God’s Word & promises!

3 – Develop my relationship with Him by praying, myself, to the Father through the Son!

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Mar 11:14 In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE (VS. 15-19)

Mar 11:15 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.

Mar 11:16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

Mar 11:17 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.'"

Mar 11:18 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.

Mar 11:19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.

THE LESSON OF THE WITHERED FIG TREE (VS. 20-24) – Fruitlessness!!

Mar 11:20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

Mar 11:21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

Mar 11:22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. (1-Have faith in God, through His Son; 2-Express my faith by learning God's Word! 3- Give time to God to cast my mountain in the sea!; 4 – praying myself, to the Father through the Son!)

Mar 11:23 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

v. 14 All of His life, Jesus went about doing good. But here He performs a miracle that is seemingly destructive—the only time in all of Scripture we see Him doing so. Was this act out of sync with the rest of His life and teaching? Did Jesus curse this tree in a fit of hungry rage? No, Jesus’ seemingly destructive cursing of the fig tree was an act of great mercy—for in so doing, He speaks of the absolute necessity of redemptive faith. We know from Colossians 1 that all things were not only made by Him, but for Him. Therefore, providing fruit for Jesus would have been the fig tree’s highest calling. But because it was not able to do this, Jesus showed that in reality, **it would not be able to provide fruit for anyone else. The same holds true for us.** If we don’t satisfy Jesus, other people will not be nourished by us, enriched by us, or blessed by us. There is no shortage of those who say, “I want to serve people. I want to see our country changed, our community cleaned up, people helped.” But they will only be going through the motions if they’re not first pleasing Jesus.

vs. 15-16 Forbidding people from carrying any vessel through the temple meant, essentially, that **all sacrifices came to a halt.** How could Jesus have done this? Evidently there was something in His eyes, face or in His countenance that kept all men from challenging Him as He drove out the cattle, overturned the tables, rebuked the men, and kept the entire temple sacrificial system from taking place.

vs. 17-18 What is a **den of thieves?** It’s where the thieves feel **protected and safe.** The temple was to be a place of prayer, but instead it became a place where thieving priests preyed upon rather than prayed for God’s people.

vs. 19-20 Roots are the secret part of the tree that no one sees. When you feel dry, it’s most likely because there’s a problem with the root system. Morning devotions are skipped. Evening prayer is no longer a priority. Outwardly, the part of your life that people see might be going along just fine. But the root system, the secret part is dried up.

vs. 21-22 How do we satisfy the hunger of our Lord? How do we keep the hidden part of our life from becoming dry? The root of the answer is faith. In this passage, we see four aspects of the faith that will keep us from fruitlessness...

v. 23 “*this mountain*” a Hebrew idiom for something that seem immovable! **Cf. Zec 4:6-7** So he answered and said to me: “*This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. [7] 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" ' ' ' Through the Lord's power; through His work!*

v. 22 The Object of Faith

“**Have faith in God,**” Jesus said. Unlike an unfortunate amount of teaching today that seems to encourage believers to have faith in faith, **the object of our faith is God.** And because He is good (Psalm 73:1), I can bring my requests to Him, share my concerns with Him, and cast my care upon Him, realizing that He is God and I am not; that He is a Father and I am but a child; that He is a Shepherd and I a straying sheep. In this way, my faith **is not in my faith, but in my Father.**

v. 23 The Outworking of Faith

Did Jesus tell us to pray that the problem, obstacle, or mountain that looms menacingly before us might be removed? No. Did He tell us to study the Word that it might be removed? No. He said, “***Be removed and be cast into the sea,***” We often hear that prayer changes things. But that’s not entirely true. **Prayer changes us. Faith changes things.** Jesus didn’t say, “If you encounter a mountain, pray that it might be gone.” No, He said, “**Have faith in God and then verbally, audibly tell the mountain to be removed. Speak faith.**” Why is saying, speaking, verbalizing so important? Why did Jesus tell us to speak aloud to the mountain? Why does Paul tell **us to confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9, 10)?** Why does the writer of Hebrews tell us that when a promise is given to us **we are to boldly speak it out (Hebrews 13:5, 6)?** Because that’s when faith kicks in. It’s easy for me to think quietly or pray inwardly for the mountain to be moved because then if it doesn’t move, no one will know I prayed otherwise. There’s no step of faith, no risk involved if I don’t speak. What mountain intimidates you? Is it fear concerning an unsaved child, or depression over a business about to go under? Jesus tells you and me **to go on record in the ears of our kids, our parents, our peers, our co-workers and to say, “Be gone.”** After all, it was what Jesus did Himself in the ears of His disciples, which set the stage for them to believe Mark 11:14). Maybe you’re praying intensely and hoping passionately that a certain problem or a certain situation will somehow be solved. But the fact is, Jesus said **it’s not enough to simply hope or even to pray. Rather, you must say in faith verbally, “Be gone. Be removed. Be cast into the sea.” This is not a blank check for prayer to get whatever we want!**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Mar 11:24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask (desire) when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

FORGIVENESS AND PRAYER (VS. 25-26)

Mar 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

Mar 11:26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

JESUS’ AUTHORITY QUESTIONED (VS. 27-33)

Mar 11:27 Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.

Mar 11:28 And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

vs. 24-25 – see right column

vs. 27-28 As Jesus reenters Jerusalem, He will face a series of questions concerning His authority, integrity, theology, and priorities. Yet unbeknownst to His interrogators, even their questions perfectly fulfill Biblical prophecy and typology. You see, when the Passover was instituted, the lamb that was to be slain for the family was to be set apart and observed, scrutinized, examined for four days before it was slain lest any fault or spot or blemish be found upon it that would disqualify it from being the Passover lamb. So, too, the events before us taking place four days before Passover, it is only fitting that Jesus, the Passover Lamb, would be carefully scrutinized as well. *walking in the temple...* The outer courtyard of the temple was a place where teaching went on continually. The eastern courtyard, known as Solomon’s porch, contained sixty large columns that supported a roof, forming an arcade. The courtyard on the south side of the temple was known as the royal porch and, with one hundred sixty-two columns thirty-five feet high and six feet in diameter, was considerably larger than Solomon’s porch. It was in these covered courtyards that skeptics wanting to find fault with Him would find Jesus. *By what authority?* The first group to question Jesus was comprised of chief priests, scribes and elders, questioning His authority. “By what authority do You come in here turning over tables, driving out cattle, and interrupting the sacrificial system?” they asked Jesus. They said this to place Him upon the horns of a dilemma, for if Jesus answered, “By My own authority,” they would have labeled Him a lunatic. But if He said, “By God’s authority,” they would accuse Him of blasphemy.

v. 24 The Obtaining of Faith

Maybe you’re in a place where you lack the faith to tell the mountain to be removed. The solution? Ask the Father to give you the faith you need, and He’ll give it to you in order that you might speak to the mountain directly. This is where the “Positive Confession, Name It and Claim It” teachers miss the point. Jesus taught on faith not to obtain a mountain. Rather, **it was to curse a fruitless situation and to remove an obstacle.** Concerning faith, Jesus didn’t tell His disciples how to get a Cadillac, a bigger house, a boyfriend, or a higher-paying job. He didn’t tell His disciples how to get more of anything. Rather, He **told them how to get rid of the carnal tendencies, addictions, habits, or propensities that made them fruitless.** Contrary to what the “Name It and Claim It” mentality propagates, cross-current to what the Positive Confession school maintains, **Jesus was not talking about accumulating worldly goods, but about obliterating worldly goods.** He wasn’t telling His disciples to claim in faith that they would be given a vacation cabin on a mountain. **He was telling them to get rid of the mountain altogether.** It’s in the time of prayer when suddenly the things the Lord wants to do in and through my life are birthed within me. That’s why in the original text, the comma does not appear after the word “pray” As **we pray, our desires will change.** That which is not important will fade away. That which God does not desire to do in your life will dissipate. And you will be set free to be more like Jesus. To the mountain looming over you today, go on record and say, **“Be gone” so clearly that your voice can be heard in hell, in heaven, and in your own heart.**

Vs. 25-26 The Obstacle to Faith

Because Jesus clearly links faith to forgiveness, **if we’re not forgiving, the power of faith is short-circuited.** Why? Because **a person who does not love or will not forgive cannot be entrusted with that kind of power.** He’ll misappropriate it. She’ll hurt herself and others with it. That is why Paul makes it clear that faith works by love. – *Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Mar 11:29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things:

Mar 11:30 The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."

Mar 11:31 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'"

Mar 11:32 But if we say, 'From men' "—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed.

Mar 11:33 So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority (the same authority) I do these things."

vs. 29-33 Why did Jesus raise this particular question concerning the baptism of John? Because **this was the point** where the priests, scribes, and elders **first took a wrong turn**. They rejected the truth John shared about the One who would follow him. Thus, **their rejection of John set the stage for their final rejection of Jesus**. It has been rightly said that obedience is the conduit through which fresh understanding flows unhindered. That is, if I am obeying the Lord, I will get more understanding from the Lord. But at the point I stop obeying, oftentimes He will stop revealing. If you're wondering why you haven't heard anything from the Lord this week or this month, this year or this decade, it could very well be that there was a point where you knowingly, willingly, stubbornly disobeyed and refused to respond. I'm not talking about morbid introspection. I'm talking about an obvious point you know very readily where the Lord gave instruction to you, but you said, "No. I will not go there. I will not give that up. I will not do what You say." The cure is simply to repent, to say, **"Lord, forgive me**. As You did with Jonah, give me another opportunity." This was a route those who were questioning Jesus chose not to take. As a result, caught by the very trap they thought they had set for Him, they were rendered speechless.

Additional comments re vs. 25-26

What Jesus is saying is, **"The great hindrance to having faith in God is pride, the pride which refuses to forgive**. That is like a mountain which fills up your whole life. All you can see is that big mountain looming before you, and that is blocking the life of God in your life. You have the power to have that removed if, when you stand and pray, you will forgive those who have offended you." **Because the only thing that stops us from forgiving one another is pride**. We feel justified in wanting others to forgive us, but also in feeling that we have to exact a price for the hurt they have caused us. So, in many ways -- subtle, or direct and open -- we insist that we will not forgive, that they have to pay for what they have done to us. We are going to be avenged! We are going to have our revenge for what has happened. **Somehow, we are going to make them crawl, make them beg or plead for forgiveness**. "And that," Jesus says, **"is a great mountain which needs to be removed, for it is blocking the flow of the life of God to your faith."** So when you stand and pray, **life will flow from God when you are able to recognize that you, too, need forgiveness. God has forgiven you**. Like the very person you are holding a grudge against, you need forgiveness also. God has offered it freely to you; give it just as freely to them. The one thing above all else which seems to block the flow of the life of God to an individual, to a church, or to a nation, **is this unwillingness to forgive, this holding of grudges, this desire to put somebody down in order to feel good yourself, this unwillingness to set these things aside and let God heal all the hurts of life**.

That is why Jesus puts His finger on this one thing. Is this not amazing? **The nation Israel lost its life because it would not forgive the Gentiles, the Romans, who had offended and grieved it. Instead, it gathered its robes of self-righteousness** about it and looked with pride up to God and said, "I thank God I am not like these other people." God says that is what ends the life of a nation. That is what ends the life of a church. And that is what ends the spiritual life of an individual, cuts him off.

May God help us, then, to forgive one another. This is no option, nor is it a luxury; it is a necessity of life.