

Mark 11:15-19

The Cleansing of the Temple

Last week we saw the beginning of the final week in the life of Christ – Prior to the Cross!

- A) We have noted this was the greatest week in human history!
- B) Because it was during this week that – Jesus would go to cross to provide **THE WAY for – Mankind** – to be **SAVED** from eternal damnation!
- C) The week begins with his triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem. – {Last week
- D) **This week would end with his death on the cross to pay the price for man's sin**
 - 1) And his resurrection three days later to ensure – that **ABUNDANT LIFE – WAS AVAILABLE.**

In between those events was a power packed week full of many encounters

- A) Jesus heart was on display – His love for people for the lost - would ring out loud and clear.
- B) We see a great example of that in our text today.
- C) Read - Mark 11:15-19

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 moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves. 16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 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.'" 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. 19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.

Now Jason noted last week that this was Passover week.

- A) One of the three yearly feasts that the Jews were required to attend.
- B) **Population of Jerusalem would swell to three times its normal size.**
 - 1) The Jewish historian Josephus estimates that close to 3 million people would be in attendance.
- C) Rome would increase their Presence by 10x the amount of soldiers.

During this week the Blood flowed:

- A) Josephus estimated that during Passover – 250,000 lambs were slain.
 - B) Only appropriate that it was during this week that Jesus – **THE LAMB OF GOD – SHOW UP**
 - 1) Give His life a Ransom for many
- So we read here that the first thing Jesus does when he arrives in the city is He goes to the temple.**
- A) This was Herod the Great's temple! #Diagram 1
 - B) **The original temple was constructed by Solomon in 960 BC**
 - C) That temple took **seven years to build**, & it was built from stone to withstand the effects of the passage of time.

Solomon's temple was a Beautiful sight to behold and people traveled from all over to see it.

- A) **But the beauty of Solomon's temple was not in its size, but in its magnificent details.**
- B) Many Pools / engravings and its gold!
- C) That temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in 586BC

Zerubbabel sought to rebuild the temple in 520 BC and completed the work in 515 BC.

A) Although the reconstruction was a **much simpler** form of what Solomon had built.

B) That temple was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC

Along comes Herod the Great.

A) He went even beyond the grandeur of Solomon.

It took 46 years to complete the project

B) Bigger – more ornate –

C) But when Jesus shows up – He is not impressed at all.

1) In fact He is saddened and angered by what was happening in the temple of God!

D) The Religious leaders had turned the temple into a Religious Swap meet of sorts

Now the temple itself was surrounded by 4 courtyards! {
Diagram #2

A) The Biggest was the **court of the Gentiles** – 1,420 yards or approx 14 football fields in size.

B) Then there was the **court of women** – Jewish women could go to pray.

C) Followed by the **Court of the Israelites** – reserved for Jewish men to pray.

1) Followed by the **court of the priest** – Obvious – only the Priest.
Diagram #3

It is Interesting that The Court of Gentiles was the biggest –

A) Always God intent that Jew and Gentile could meet with him at the temple.

Aa) God's intent was that His people the Jews would be his Ambassadors – help lead gentiles into a Relationship with Jehovah.

B) There in lied the Problem: what Jesus finds when He enters the temple – is that the court of the Gentiles – looked like a Swap meet

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1) Booths everywhere – people selling animals– moneychangers –

C) **Picture the stock exchange with Livestock** –

1) It is a combo of **Wall Street meets the country fair.**

The whole thing was a racket!

A) The production was called the Bazaar of Annas. Annas and Caiaphas shared the High Priestly duties in that day.

B) They were running this whole enterprise – Historians estimate they were pocketing about \$3million dollars annually by what was going on.

C) Here is how it worked: Merchants – just like a swap meet would buy the **rights to a concession** stand for selling – animals to be sacrificed.

1) As well as wine, oil and salt.

D) **Money changers would also have to pay** to set up their money-changing booth.

1) The merchants would at the end of the day – pay a **percentage of their profits** to Annas & Caiaphas.

So picture the worshipper –coming into this scene.

A) Those who traveled from real far – would not bring their own – sacrifice they would just buy a lamb – **or doves for the poor.**
{Leviticus

B) Arrives – Buy a lamb and is told - \$150.00 for a lamb- what?

1) I get buy one for \$10.00 back home – SORRY NOT HERE!

C) He wants to offer the sacrifice – so he forks over the doe!

1) As he is pulling out his money-He is told – **sorry we only take the shekel –no Roman coinage here.**

D) See that sign: **Money exchange** – you need to go over there and exchange your Roman money for Shekels.

So he goes over to the Money changer and the money Changer would tell him it is going to cost you \$2 bucks for every \$1 buck I change. {SERIOUSLY?

A) You go back to buy your lamb- but now it is \$200.00 – it went up \$50.00 in the 20minutes you were gone.

B) If you brought your own lamb – it had to be inspected by the Priest and declared to be without spot or blemish.

1) Which means **you ran the risk of it being rejected.**

C) Which meant – they would take yours as a trade in and you would still have to buy a lamb at an inflated price.

1) Often times they would take your lamb and put it in their pen and sell it anyway.

D) They whole thing was a Scam!

This whole scene: sickened and Angered Jesus!

A) We see a side of Jesus that not used to seeing – Flipping tables – he is forcibly driving out the Merchants & money Changers

B) He is visibly angry and forceful - UFC **fan you are excited** – I like this guy – RAMBO JESUS!

Now before we get the idea that Jesus just loses it here and flies off the handle. –

A) Some of used this very passage to justify their own fits of rage and outburst of anger. – **If Jesus can do it – so can I!**

B) So they lash out at their spouse – they write that email, they send that text, and they make that Facebook post.

1) **“I am just going to give them a little piece of my mind.”**

C) NOT THE CASE AT ALL! – Jesus didn’t react in Haste.

So before you try to use Jesus to justify your sin, - notice again v. 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.

A) V.12 tells us – next day – So this cleansing of the temple happens a day later!

B) So Jesus sees what is going on – He goes back to Bethany – He goes to Bethany and sleeps on it –

C) He has had some time to ponder this – no doubt – pray about it

1) **Always a good idea -**

Here is what I have discovered – when I am in that kind of mood – when I am upset in that way

A) I think – I am going to give them a piece of my mind - **That is a piece of my mind –that no one needs to see!**

B) And when I give into my emotions and I open my mouth – I do damage – and **99% of the time I end of regretting what I said.**

C) This is what we need to note here: **The response of Jesus is strong – but it is also meek!**

Jesus said: Matthew 5:5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

A) People hear the term –Meekness and they immediately think WEAKNESS – MEEK MEANS WEAK.

B) Meek person is a Pansy.

C) Nothing could be further from the truth!

Meekness = Power under control! – Controlled – Power

A) Think about this: **Jesus could have called down fire from heaven on them** – He could have unleashed an army of Angels – massacre

B) He had the power to do that – He could have done that!

C) The fact that He ONLY overturned some tables and drove everyone out/ displayed HIS MEEKNESS!

1) Power under control. –

D) This action was mild –compared to what He could have RIGHTFULLY DONE!

Meekness in our case is shown when you have the power the power and authority to lash out.

A) Instead you use your words – not to tear down but to build up!

Here is what was really interesting – the Romans gave the Jews the authority for enforcement in one area of the city.

A) The Temple courts – So the Jews had their own armed temple guards -

B) Those temple guards had the authority to execute on the spot anyone who tried to desecrate the temple

1) Or anyone who tried to enter an area of the temple they were not permitted to enter.

C) So there are armed guards present – but they choose to do nothing at this scene – why? –

1) Because Jesus was in Control. {They couldn't react!

So Jesus gets upset because the temple was supposed to be a place of Prayer and they had turned it into a DEN OF THIEVES!

A) Interesting language: Think of an animals Den- Lions Den – Foxes den – it is the place they go for Refuge.

B) Jesus is saying: This place that is supposed to be designated as a Holy Place – a for Prayer you have turned it into a REFUGE FOR THIEVES – FOR CROOKS.

C) Jesus comes into this scene: He is angered at how His father is being misrepresented!

Still Angers him today: TV preachers – buy this prayer cloth – healed

A) We are going under – unless you give – God is about to file chapter 11 and it is going to be your fault.

B) God is grieved today – by how much goes on in his name that misrepresents him.

1) From Abuse to Crazy stuff

C) Group of Christians – “God told us to get out of Texas and go to Florida

1) Got in a Van – Driving – along the way {God wants us to rid ourselves of our clothes – unholy - Driving Naked

D) They get pulled over in Mississippi – God told us to! {I don't even know them!!!!

E) God is grieved and angered by that misrepresentation

Jesus was angered and grieved that Prayer was being hindered in the temple

A) But the reason that Jesus was upset – had more to do with the fact that prayer was being hindered.

B) People have used this passage to suggest that the primary purpose of the church is to be a place of prayer!

Don't misunderstand my heart here- PRAYER IS IMPORTANT!

A) We can do a lot more than pray – but we can't do anything until we have prayed.

B) Prayer is the mark of an individual as well as a church – dependency upon God.

1) It is seen in how fervent we pray – how often we pray – the priority that prayer has in our lives.

C) But I suggest to you that the primary thing that bothered Jesus wasn't that prayer was not occurring.

1) In fact I suggest to you that daily prayer was still happening – in the court of the Women and in the court of the Israelites. / The Priest

Any Jewish person who was determined enough to pass through the court of the gentiles and go further –into the other courts – Could pray.

A) They could go to offer sacrifices – and 100,000's did.

B) So the main issue here was not that No one was praying in the temple.

C) So what was the main issue? What was the thing that upset Jesus the most?

1) **Most of all, the thing that upset him was this desecration of the temple was keeping Gentiles from meeting with God.**

Look at verse 17 again: "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.'"

A) Jesus quotes from Isaiah 56:7 and Mark unlike Matthew quotes the whole verse – which I think gives us a key insight.

D) The key phrase here is – FOR ALL NATIONS!

Isaiah 56:7 stated that a main purpose for the temple was this: It was to be a place where even Gentiles could come for prayer, meditation and seeking God!

A) And this religious Market place set up in the court of the Gentiles, **was the place where the Jews should have been doing missionary work.**

B) It was always in God's heart that the temple would be a place for Jew and Gentiles to meet with Him!

1) **The temple pointed to Jesus** – Who became the meeting place between God and man.

C) John 2:21 **"Destroy this temple and 3 days later I will raise it up!"** – Crazy

1) John tells us – He was speaking of his body- **THE CROSS** – the meeting place between God and man.

D) The Tabernacle and the Temple were always meant to be pictures of God's heart for all men –that would be satisfied in Jesus!

Interesting: In 1 Kings 8 when – Solomon was dedicating the temple he build for God.

A) He prays that it would be a place for the Israelite to come and pray and seek the Lord –

B) V.30 when they pray here that you would turn your face toward this place and hear them.

C) When there is famine – and when they have been defeated in battle – they can meet with you here.

1) When they have sinned – repent here – You will forgive them.

But then He adds this Phrase: 1 Kings 8:41-43

41 "Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake 42 (for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, 43 hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name."

A) Solomon understood the heart of God – the temple was to be a meeting place for all peoples

B) So the main problem here was this: With their desecration of the court of the Gentiles the – 1) Religious leaders – were prohibiting – the gentiles from meeting with God.

C) **That more than anything else is what angered Jesus with a Righteous anger.**

E) God's heart for the world.
John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

The thing that upset Jesus the most was that Gentiles were being kept from meeting with God!

A) This desecration of the Court of the Gentiles was a massive national sin against God and the lost people of the world!

B) I think the text supports this: note v.18

And the scribes and chief priests heard it {His statement in v.17 and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, {He was going to ruin their whole enterprise because all the people were astonished at His teaching. {V.17

C) **Why were they astonished at this?** The popular teaching of the Rabbi's said that when the messiah showed up

1) He was going to purge the temple of all foreigners –

D) Here we see that Jesus was showing himself to be the advocate of the Gentiles.

Think about how frustrating this experience would be for a foreigner.

A) You live in a far away land – you have heard of the God of Israel and his temple.

B) You believe and you want to go visit Jerusalem: - You save up your money for years.

1) Finally have enough – you embark on a journey – by land – maybe Sea that is going to take weeks.

C) You get there: **It is nothing like you imagined – Circus – You are ripped off!**

D) You are so disappointed, so upset, so turned off – the last thing you want to do is Pray- **YOU ARE READY TO HIT SOMEONE!**

1) Go back home – People ask: How was it? – Joke – don't bother don't waste your time.

E) As far as Jehovah God being the real deal – Keep looking!

1) This is the thing that Angered Jesus the most

So what can we learn from this story? Take away for us? 3 things

A)#1 Leaders: #2 As a Church. #3 As Individual believers.

B)#1 **As Leaders:** It is a huge responsibility to represent God! Huge deal to be in a place – point people to Jesus!

James 3:1

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”

Mark 9:42

42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

#2 As a Church: Consider two things

A) 1st are we keeping the main thing the main thing?

B) **We can get so caught up in the busyness of Christian activities that we miss the main thing!**

1) They got sidetracked from the Purpose of the temple for Carnal reasons but we too can get sidetracked – even for the right reasons

C) We exist to **point** people to Jesus – help people **connect** with Jesus – grow in their relationship with Jesus.

D) Everything else that happens in our lives is supposed to be an extension of that relationship.

So for us as a Church – what happens here on Sunday is the most important thing that we do why?

A) It is when the most people are here: Time for us to connect with Jesus as a family.

B) It is also the time when the most visitors and seekers are going to Show up!

C) Our Sunday morning times need to be FOCUSED ON JESUS!

Worship of Jesus: Give a place to worship – Passionate – Jesus is worthy of our Praise:

A) **Celebration service!** – Never heard people hear sing so loud! Why was that?

Those who came – came to meet with Jesus!

B) True heart felt worship is happening – that can be the most effective evangelism.

1) I AM MISSING SOMETHING –

C) But the opposite is also true: When we are passive – nonchalant – Oh this becomes just another religious experience.

We give a huge place to teaching the word – Why? Points us to Jesus In the Volume of the book..

A) We believe Jesus through His Word can transform lives – so we take it seriously –

B) Try to eliminate distractions – Create Appealing environment to hear the word of God!

C) So we have to ask ourselves – **Are we keeping the main thing the main thing?**

I think we ALSO have to ask ourselves – Are we a welcoming place for Gentiles?

A) Using that term loosely – In Jesus world – a Gentile was a non – Jewish person.

B) In our world it could be an unbeliever – a seeker – A visitor

Everything that happens here **pre-service** – Cars parked – People greeted w/ a smile – Kids checked into classrooms – where parents feel safe -

A) **All of it is designed to help facilitate** – People feeling welcome –

B) And creating an environment for The WORSHIP OF God – Study of His word!

Bb) If any of those **Pre-service things are lacking** –

So people feel frustrated – couldn't find a parking spot

1) Or didn't feel welcome when walked in

C) Or felt uneasy with their kids because – no teacher was there - when checked in or didn't feel safe.

D) We have lost our effectiveness in accomplishing **the main thing –we exist for.**

1) Helping people connect with Jesus – through worship and the study of the word.

We could even think of a Gentile as someone different from ourselves!

A) Like for instance a Younger person!

B) My daughter is going to Bible college – Guest speaker at – Friday lectures.

1) 700 people between the ages of 18-29 leave the Church every single day!

C) Heavy: Why are they leaving? Not sure

Don't feel welcome – doesn't feel relevant – Churches are not accommodating for them?

A) **Churches lose sight of the next Generation.**

B) Number one complaint older – Loud Music

1) Number one younger – not loud enough.

C) We Aim for a Happy medium –

Our congregation is getting older – Look around the room. {3yrs ago – twice as many funerals - weddings

A) Many of you came to this church – 20's – now you are 50's

1) 30 – now 60

2) 40 – now 70's

B) Great – **Awesome to Good Grow old together!**

1) Lord carries – I look forward to growing old and dying together with some of you!

C) Good years left in us – But I wonder – what are we going to leave behind?

D) Europe is riddled with deserted Church buildings – placing where the preaching of the gospel once thrived

E) Now empty shells or being turned into Mosques why?

Those churches lost sight of three things:

A) Jesus – the teaching of his word and – reaching the next generation.

B) Careful CCV – we don't make the same mistake –

C) Maybe those of us who are Older – supposed to be more mature – Wear ear plugs –

1) If it would help younger people feel like they could connect with the Lord here.

D) Just something to think about – Pray about

Israel not only lost sight of God they lost sight of their mission {Reach Gentiles

A) Listen –excited you are excited about the Bathroom – Facebook record

B) Not about Bathrooms – floors – roofs –

C) About helping people connect with Jesus!

Keep the main thing – main thing – All sinners – Young and old - saved by Jesus!

A)#3 What about us as individuals?

B) Interesting – that Paul used this analogy of believers in writing to the Corinthians

1) **You are the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

C) **Two miracles at Salvation: ONE** – you are placed in Christ – covered in his RIGHTEOUSNESS

1) Forgiven – cleansed

D) **TWO Christ comes to live in your heart – by His Spirit**

1) Your life – becomes His temple.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Most of us even at our worst as unbelievers would not think of having sex in a church.

A) That is just wrong – that is gross – that is dangerous! God might strike us dead!

B) But Paul's exhortation goes beyond sexual immorality! {One issue in Church at Corinth

C) It is anything – any sin – any attitude – any compromise – that affects our walk with God.

Paul says: You are not your own! – You don't belong to you any more! – Bought with a Price – BLOOD

A) This purpose – Glorify God in your body! Spirit

B) In our lives personally – **We must ask – Is there anything in our lives – hindering our walks.**

C) Jesus comes into the temple of your heart today what does He see?

Zeal for your house has eaten me up!

A) Loves you so much – He is zealous for you.

B) His heart is toward you –

C) **Came twice** – His heart for the people – Didn't give up on them

–

1) He was trying to get their attention.

Listen: He will convict – nudge –

A) Don't listen – **because he loves us** – He will turn your life upside down to get your attention

B) **But that can be PAINFUL** – who He loves disciplines

There is a better way - What is Jesus nudging you about today – Repent

A) Turn from that sin and surrender to Him

B) He loves – you – Wants your heart to be His home