

Keeping God's Temple Clean

No. 239

Introduction.

I. Once, when the Passover of the Jews was at hand, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (Jn. 2:13-17). The apostle John records about Jesus.

14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated.

15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; 16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise." 17 His

disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume me." See Psa. 69:9

II. John informs us that Jesus was very angry over the fact that He found people in the temple courts selling oxen, sheep and doves, and others were sitting at tables exchanging money. **Jesus was so upset that He made a whip of cords and began driving the merchants and moneychangers out of the temple courts.** He exclaimed in His righteous anger. (Jn.2:16, 17).

III. To help us better understand this story, I want to try to answer two questions.

A First, **what were the moneychangers and merchants doing in the temple courts?** At the Passover, every year, many Jewish people traveled for days to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and to offer sacrifices. So instead of bringing their own animals on the journey to sacrifice, they would buy them from the merchants in the temple courts. Before they could purchase the animals they had to exchange their money for local currency from the moneychangers in order to pay for the animals and the temple tax. The merchants and moneychangers were at the temple providing goods and services to the people.

B Second, **why did Jesus get upset with the merchants?**

1. I believe that Jesus got upset with the moneychangers and the **merchants because they were buying and selling in God's house.** They had turned God's house of worship into a business. They had forgotten, or did not care, that God's house is a place of worship, not a place for making profit.
2. I believe that Jesus got upset with them because of their **greedy practices.** According to some scholars, the moneychangers and merchants were charging greatly inflated prices for goods and services. They were taking advantage of and cheating the people, so Jesus drove them out of the temple courts.

III. At this time there are three facts I would like to emphasize.

I. **The Physical Temple No Longer Exists** - The first fact is that the physical temple no longer exists.

A. The temple Jesus entered was the one constructed by Herod the Great. It was the 3rd temple. Both the temples built by Solomon and Zerubbabel had been destroyed.

- B. Herod's temple, which had been started some 46 years earlier according to John 2:20, would also be destroyed. (Matt. 24:1-3).
- C. In Matthew 24 Jesus gives the signs that would precede the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and of the end of the world. (Matt. 24:36).

1. **History records** that the Romans destroyed God's temple in 70 A.D.. Josephus tells us that the temple was completely destroyed. He tells us that literally not one stone was left on top of another. God's temple was no more.
2. **The church building today nor any other physical structure is the replacement of the physical temple** which had the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in it. Those who view the church building as God's temple do so without a proper knowledge of what the temple was and without scriptural authority.

II. **Keep The Church Clean From Sin And Corruption** - The second fact I would like to emphasize is that we must keep the church [God's temple] clean from sin and corruption.

A. According to the Bible, the church [God's people] are the temple of God. (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).

1 Cor. 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

EPH 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

1PE 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Briefly explain passages

B. **As the temple of God and priests in that temple, it is our duty and awesome responsibility to keep the church from doctrinal and moral corruption.**

1. We must insist that nothing but the pure, unadulterated gospel be preached and taught in this congregation. We must insist that the truth and nothing but the truth be taught. Our righteous anger should be stirred by those who pollute the church with doctrines that damn the soul.
2. We must insist that **members live morally upright lives** according to God's standard.
 - a. This does not mean the church is sinless body of people. All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God. When we sin we must turn from that sin and confess them.
 - b. We must not fellowship those who walk in darkness and refuse to repent and live moral lives. We must not fellowship those who boast of their sins rather than humbly confessing them.
 - c. Paul wrote. (1 Cor. 5:1-13).

1 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. 2 And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned

instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst. 3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? 7 Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 ¶ I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

e. **Paul emphatically teaches that we must not allow corruption to remain in God's temple - the church.** It is the duty of the elders and all the members to keep it clean. **We must purge out the leaven of sin or the whole church will become corrupt.**

f. God's mandate to all of us is this. (Rom. 12:1,2; 2 Cor. 6:17a; 1 Pet. 1:16).

III. **Keep Our Lives And Temples Clean From Sin And Corruption** - The third fact I would like to emphasize is that we must keep our lives and temples clean from sin and corruption.

A. According to the Bible, the members of the church collectively are the temple of God. According to the Bible the body of the Christian is also the temple of God. (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

B. **Brethren, the temple of God is no longer located in Jerusalem.** It is not any other physical structure. It is now located in each and every one of us. The temple is located within our bodies. Our bodies have been bought with a price and they are God's sacred temple.

1. This being true we must **keep God's holy temple clean.**

a. We must remove anger, bitterness and hatred from God's temple.

b. We must remove lust, sexual immorality and all the works of the flesh from our Holy of Holies.

c. We must keep our temples clean by living righteously and recognize the deceitfulness and destructiveness of sin..

2. **One day a man purchased a white mouse to use as food for his pet snake.** He dropped the mouse into the snake's glass cage, where the snake was sleeping in a bed of sawdust. What did the terrified creature do? He quickly set to work covering the snake with sawdust chips until it was completely buried. With that, the mouse apparently thought he had solved his problem. Eventually the snake woke up and shook off the sawdust and ate the mouse. No matter how hard we try to cover or deny our sins, it's fool's work. Sin will eventually awake from sleep and shake off its cover and eat us alive.

3. **It is therefore imperative that we cleanse our lives. It is imperative that we do not allow sin to corrupt our temple. It is imperative that we turn from our sins rather than attempt to conceal them from God.**

a. David wrote. (Psa. 139:1-6).

1 O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. 2 Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; Thou dost understand my thought from afar. 3 Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, Thou dost know it all. 5 Thou hast enclosed me behind and before, And laid Thy hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.

b. **David teaches that God knows everything that we do.** He knows our every word, thought and action We cannot hide our sins nor our lifestyles from God. He knows what is in our temple! And our God will not live in a dirty and polluted house.

c. **If we want God to live in us now** and if we want to live with Him in heaven, we must confess our sins and turn from them.

Conclusion.

I. **One time, a college freshman** went to the dorm laundry room with his dirty clothes bundled into an old sweatshirt. But he was so embarrassed by how dirty his clothes were that he never opened the bundle. He merely pushed it into a washing machine and when the machine stopped pushed the bundle into a dryer and finally took the still unopened bundle back to his room. He discovered, of course, that the clothes had gotten wet and then dry, but not clean.

A. God says, **“Don’t keep your sins in a safe little bundle.”** Instead, He wants us to unravel all of our dirty laundry or sins and present them to Him so that He can make them clean.

B. **Solomon** wrote. (Prov. 28:13).

C. The **apostle John** wrote. (1 Jn. 1:9).

II. **What if Jesus came today and looked at the temple of God in us?** Would He have the same reaction as He did in Jerusalem with the corrupt merchants? Would He get angry at what He saw or would He be proud of what He saw?

A. If you think that Jesus would be upset with the condition of your temple, then allow Him to clean it. Allow Him to drive out the sin that is polluting your life.

B. Through His blood He can make your life spotless and pure. Confess all your sins to Him. Make your life right with Him.

III. **This lesson has been directed to those in Christ**, but now we beseech those outside of Christ to submit to Him in faith and baptism. Turn from your sins and be baptized for the remission of your sins that you might be saved and might become the temple of God. Then live for Him. Come as we stand and sing.

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