

Leaders Guide 5: The Temple Cleansed Again

1. **Suggested Ice breaker:** Who is one of your Christian heroes of faith that you admire?

2. **Prayer time:**

A Prelude to Prayer Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16

Sharing from the week

3. **Read Matthew 21: 12-16, 23-46 and be familiar with the background.**

4. **Questions for Discussion:**

- a. Why did Jesus call the money changers in the temple, thieves? See Matt. 21 13; DA 589 _____
- b. Knowing Jesus as the "Prince of Peace," can you think of reasons why he reacted so forcefully in the temple? _____
- c. Do you think it is good today to use forceful ways of counteracting practices we believe are wrong? _____
- d. Why do you think the chief priests and scribes reacted so strongly to the children crying out in the temple? Matt. 21:15 _____
- e. In Matthew 21: 23-27 Jesus would not tell the religious leaders by what authority He did His teachings and miracles. Why would Jesus not give them the answer they were looking for? _____
- f. In Matthew 21: 28-32 Jesus taught the parable of the two sons. Which response would you prefer from your own child? How was this appealing to Jewish leaders? _____
- g. In the parable of the vinedressers Matthew 21: 33-46, what is being represented by the vineyard? Who are the vinedressers? What point is Jesus making in this parable? _____
- h. After reading Matthew 21: 42-44; why do think Jesus is called "the Cornerstone.?" _____
- i. Discuss the relevance of this statement: By many illustrations and repeated warnings, Jesus showed what would be the result to the Jews of rejecting the Son of God. In these words He was addressing all in every age who refuse to receive Him as their Redeemer. Every warning is for them. The desecrated temple, the disobedient son, the false husbandmen, the contemptuous builders, have their counterpart in the experience of every sinner. Unless he repent, the doom which they foreshadowed will be his. DA 600.3

Background

Monday—The Second Cleansing of the temple and ministry in the temple (Jesus day again begins and ends in Bethany)

On Sunday, after His weeping over Jerusalem, Jesus descended the Mount of Olives and without much fanfare entered Jerusalem and spent a brief time in the temple. On Monday His mission, as the now declared Messiah, is to make the temple the blessing God intended. At the beginning of His ministry He dramatically cleansed the temple of practices and business contrary to the spirit of true worship of God. Now in the climactic days of His ministry He does it again. Although the cleansing was not a permanently adhered to, the leaders had been shown with unmistakable clarity God's ideal. Jesus again declared His messiahship by saying " My House is to be a house of prayer but you have made it a den of thieves." A worship center for God is to be a Spiritual place. It is never to be a place for the exploitation of people for personal gain.

When the temple courtyard cleared of all the business commotion related to the sale for sacrifices, people who desperately needed Jesus crowded in. All those who needed Christ's healing power— sick, blind, lame-- gathered around Jesus. People were praising God and singing as they witnessed Christ's compassion and power. What a contrast to what was happening there just a short time before. It never ceases to amaze me how the marginalized in the world find help and healing in Jesus. I can picture people coming today during Covid 19 and His healing them. The dedication of the front line health workers give me a picture of Jesus.

Then the children, as if inspired, broke into singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David." The chief priests and scribes appealed to Jesus, please stop all this commotion. Please stop all the children from shouting. Jesus however quoted psalms 8 prophesying the affirmation of the messiah by children. Jesus took His position as guardian of the temple on this day.

With our churches closed complying with government health regulations, perhaps it is a good time to reflect how we can more meaningfully make our worship center a place of spirituality and blessing. It is encouraging to witness how people show their care for one another even over social media. Can we anticipate that when we get back together there will be a renewal of care, greater expressions of gratitude, and depth of spirituality in worship as a result of our long time for reflection?

Tuesday—Teaching in the Temple-- Christ's final day of public ministry (Jesus begins the day in Bethany and retires to the Mount of Olives)

Monday was a day to cleanse the temple and perform healing ministry there. Jesus knew there were still many questions about him by religious leaders and people that needed clarification. So He decided to use Tuesday as a day for teaching in the temple.

After the events of Monday the Sanhedrin met early Tuesday morning to determine how to deal with Jesus. They decided they would try to find some basis by which they could condemn him and bring Him to trial.

As Jesus taught the people in one of the courts of the temple Tuesday morning the religious leaders appeared. Several chapters in the gospels contain the teaching and dialogue which followed which must have lasted for hours. Jesus used parables, teaching, appeals and, when necessary, rebukes to help people, including His critics, understand the message of His Kingdom. In the end his critics became silent as Jesus continued to teach. It was His final day of public ministry and He tried every way He could to appeal to the hearts of His hearers. His final words to the Pharisees recorded in Matthew 23 may have seemed harsh but all through the Bible people who are supposed to be representing God but are coercive, harsh and uncaring receive some of God's strongest rebukes. If we are to represent Him, He longs to have us minister with hearts warm with God's love and not harsh and critical as is manifested so often in our world.

One encouraging event that day in the temple happened when the Greeks came to the disciples saying, “we want to see Jesus.” With the Greeks in the crowd, Jesus told the people what was soon to happen to Him. These powerful words were a part of this message; “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth will draw all peoples to Myself.” The Greeks were an illustration of people from many nations who would be drawn to Jesus. As we today view the power of the gospel in the countries of the world we can witness the truthfulness of Jesus comments. How wonderful to be the part of lifting up of Jesus—the hope of this world.

After a heavy day of teaching, Jesus retired to the Mount of Olives with some of His disciples and as the sun was setting He gave them the message about His second return in Matthew 24 and 25. Thank You Jesus for your teaching on this Tuesday which has given lasting help for over 2000 years.