

RESTORATION AND RE-CREATION Sunday School- April 15, 2012

Unifying Topic: CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

Lesson Text

I. Christ's Accusers (John 2:13-17)

II. King of Kings (John 2:18-22)

The Main Thought: And said unto them that sold doves. Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. (John 2:16, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Many people stray from their central purpose in life and need restoration. What can help people recognize their need for restoration and recreation? Jesus' action in cleansing the Temple was intended to restore God's central place on worship and in the lives of the people.

Lesson Aim: To help students understand the significance of Jesus cleansing the Temple.

Life aim: To teach Christians that the house of God should be a sacred place of worship and should be treated with respect.

2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2:14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

2:15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

2:17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

2:22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

HISTORY:

Chapter 2:1-12 Jesus and his disciples are invited to a wedding in Cana. The names of the bride and groom are not given but in all probability, Mary (Jesus' Mother) was a good friend (vv. 1-2). At the wedding a crisis situation occurs. Since Jewish weddings lasted a week it was necessary for the groom to have adequate provisions. All the wine was used up so Mary turned to Jesus in hopes that He could solve the problem (vv. 3-5). Jesus asks the servants to fill the six water pots which were used for Jewish purification rites (vv. 6-7), before and after meals (Matthew 15:1-2). When they were full, He told them to take some to the master of the banquet (v. 8). When he tasted it, he said it was the best wine they had yet (vv. 9-10). After the wedding at Cana, Jesus, His mother, His disciples and other members of His family go to Capernaum for a few days (v. 12).

LESSON:

John 2:13-17 Christ's Accusers

2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. The Law required every male Jew twelve years old and above to attend the Passover which took place yearly at the Temple in Jerusalem. The Passover was one day and the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted the rest of the week. The entire week commemorated the freeing of the Jews from slavery in Egypt (Exo.12:1-13). Solomon built the first Temple almost 1,000 years earlier (949 B.C.), but his Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians (2Kgs.25). The Temple was rebuilt in 515 B.C., and Herod the Great enlarged and remodeled it. Jesus goes up to Jerusalem during these Feast times as did many Jewish families from all over the world.

2:14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: The Temple area was always crowded during Passover with thousands of people. The religious leaders crowded it even further by allowing moneychangers and merchants to set up booths in the Court of the Gentiles. The Sanhedrin were permitting the selling of sacrificial animals at exorbitant prices and permitting the changing of foreign currency into Jewish money, which was required for the temple tax. The Temple tax had to be paid in local currency. Because of

the long journey, many could not bring their own animals. Some, who did bring their own animals, had them rejected for being imperfect. Thus, animal merchants did a flourishing business in the Temple courtyard. The price was much higher. They rationalized this practice as a convenience for the worshipers and as a way to make money for Temple upkeep. But the religious leaders didn't seem to care that the Court of the Gentiles was so full of merchants that foreigners found it difficult to worship. And worship was the main purpose for visiting the Temple. No wonder Jesus was angry!

2:15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; Jesus was obviously angry at the merchants who exploited those who had come to God's house to worship. Jesus begins to make a scourge; a whip of small cords and drove both the animals and the wicked merchants out of the temple. He overturns the tables and scatters the coins across the floor. The scourge was a symbol of His righteous anger, of His right to be obeyed, of His right to enforce obedience within the temple. The Scourge was a symbol of the power and cleansing judgment of God—the kind of power and cleansing judgment that causes men to tremble before God (Phil.2:9-11). There is a difference between uncontrolled rage and righteous indignation—yet both are called anger. It is right to be angry about injustice and sin. It is wrong to be angry over trivial personal offenses. Jesus had God's authority. We can be angry but never use it to sin. God's Temple had to be re-created for its proper use: worship!

2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. He went straight to the dove dealers. The Temple (church) can be abused by...

- forgetting what worship is all about.
- misusing the facilities and buildings of God's house.
- ignoring God's holiness and forgetting one's duty to reverence God.
- allowing questionable, non-worshipful activities.

Jesus had a unique relationship to God. He called God "*My Father*." And He called the Temple, "*My Father's house*." If it's God's house, it was to be a house of worship for all people; this included the Gentiles as well as the Jews. All people should be able to worship in quietness and peace within God's Temple. Note the Temple (the church) was to be a house of worship not a house of sacrifice, offerings, teaching, prophecy, or preaching. Everything done within the House of God is to lead to the worship of the Father and communion with the Father. The temple is not to be used as a commercial center. It is not to be a place for buying and selling, marketing and retailing, stealing and cheating. It is not to be profaned. It is a place of worship. A man either believes Jesus is the Son of God and He is over the Temple of God or else he believes neither.

2:17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. His zeal fulfilled Scripture (Ps.69:9) and demonstrated that He was the Messiah. Jesus took the evil acts in the Temple as an insult against God and thus He did not deal with them halfheartedly. He was consumed with righteous anger against sin and disrespect for God. His anger at such corruption within the Temple was predicted in Scripture. Therefore, Jesus had the right to show zeal and anger against such desecration of the Temple. He was the Messiah and His act stirred the memory of the disciples.

John 2:18-22 King of Kings

2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? The Jews who had been shocked at the action of Jesus demanded a sign to substantiate His authority and conduct. They questioned His authority. What right did He have to do what He was doing, they asked? He claimed that the Temple's was His Father's. They also knew that He was claiming to be the Messiah; therefore, they wanted proof that His claim was true. However, this was a ridiculous request since the cleansing in itself was a sign (Mal.3:1-3).

2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Jesus' puzzling answer was misunderstood. They could not understand how He could possibly build a Temple in three days. The present Temple had taken forty-six years to build. His puzzling answer was referring to the destruction of His body and to His Resurrection from the dead and this hard for them to understand. Jesus' Resurrection was to be the supreme

proof of His Messiahship—King of kings! They were to destroy (kill) Him, but He would be raised from the dead after three days. He says, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" This statement would be used to charge Jesus with being an insurrectionist at His trial (Matt.26:61; Mk.14:58). It would also be used to taunt Jesus as He hung upon the cross (Matt.27:40).

2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? Yes it took forty-six years to build their Jewish Temple. This building was a type of Christ's body, however, when the body of Christ was destroyed, the purpose of the Jewish Temple was also destroyed. Consequently, the destruction of Jesus' body also meant the destruction of the Temple. The Jews showing their spiritual blindness and attachment to a materialistic world understood Jesus to be saying that He would perform an architectural wonder.

2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body. However Jesus' death and resurrection was to provide a new temple, a new meeting place for God and man. He spoke of His body as being the Temple. It is in "*Him*" that men would thereafter meet God. The temple of His body was to become the temple of men. This would be a spiritual temple for all that believed in Jesus!

2:22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. The Jews took Jesus literally, and ignored the spiritual and true meaning of His statement. [*The author adds these words lest his readers miss the truth of Christ's statement-Parallel Bible Commentary*]. Even the disciples didn't fully understand until Jesus was risen from the dead. Then, "*they believed the scripture,*" or the Old Testament prophecies, "*and the word which Jesus had said.*"

SUMMARY:

Jesus had gone down to Capernaum after the wedding in Cana (v12), and now, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem where it was almost time for the Jews' Passover (v13). Every male Jew, from the age of twelve and up, was expected to attend the Passover at Jerusalem. And the condition of the Temple was not what Jesus was expecting. He began to put a whip together made from cords used to tie the animals, and drove out the animals, and those that were selling the animals—the crooked moneychangers and thereby turns over their tables (vv14-15). He tells those that sold the doves to "*Take these things out, don't make my Father's house a marketplace; a house of merchandise.*" The disciples then remember the scripture of what was written in the Old Testament (Ps69:9) (v17). He thus fulfills a prophecy that His zeal for His Father's house will bring about His death.

Because He had done all of this, the Jews couldn't resist to ask for a sign from Him. What gives him authority to do this? (v18). The thing is they evidentially had forgotten Mal.3:1-3. Jesus didn't even stop to comment, 'haven't you read...?' No, Jesus makes the statement: "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*" (v19). The Jews still don't understand because they thought He was referring to their physical Temple they worshiped in. The construction of it took forty-six years and can't be erected in three days (v20)! No, it just ain't happening! Jesus is speaking of Himself as the temple of God (21). He was getting them ready for a complete restoration and re-creation of worshiping God; a completely different place—not in a building. The temple will be replaced with Jesus Christ Himself living in us! But before it could happen, He gave the symbolism of God's Temple had to be cleansed. Their use of God's Temple had been abused and misused! The old way had to die and the new way had to be resurrected. One has to die to self in order to be restored; one has to be cleansed of all unrighteousness in order to be restored to right standing with God. After restoration there is a re-creation of new life; a New Life in Jesus. Our temple now will be cleansed for God to live in; it will be now ready for God's use. Well, when Jesus was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered and believed what He had spoken (v22). True revelation had then come to them!

APPLICATION:

As you house God within you, be careful of what goes or comes in!