***EYES ON JESUS***

*Sept 13th, 2020*

**Jesus Curses a Fig Tree and Clears the Temple Courts**

**Mark 11:12-21**

**12**The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. **13**Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. **14**Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

**15**On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, **16**and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. **17**And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

**18**The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

**19**When evening came, Jesus and his discipleswent out of the city.

**20**In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. **21**Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

*[Story about the tree at “the view”]*

*Bought the townhouse in Fall, best feature was “the view” of Franklin, Brentwood and Cool Spgs, TN*

*By spring the tree had grown lots of leaves and had completely obstructed our “view”*

*I wanted to stop it from growing so I tried trimming, twisting and pruning the tree, to try to make it smaller, but it did not work. The tree came back fuller each time. I literally would have killed it if that were allowed, by the association, but I was not. If I knew how to curse the tree, I would have done it. I finally accepted that God must want the tree there, and we moved back to NJ soon after so I didn’t care : )*

Jesus had an easy time getting rid of this fig tree, but it makes you wonder why he would do it. (*I’m sure it didn’t obstruct his view*).

**Why did Jesus curse the fig tree in Jerusalem?**

There are many theories and commentaries on this. The order of the way the fig tree story is represented is very interesting. First Jesus curses the tree, then he moves on and cleanses the temple, then they go back to the tree and find it dead. It’s called a “Markan Sandwich” which is common in the gospel of Mark. It is also called “interpretative intercalation.”

So the cursing of the fig tree is directly related to the cleansing of the temple. When we see that, we start to see the prophetic significance of the fig tree.

The Jerusalem Fig Tree was symbolic of the temple. It was put there for God’s purposes, but because of the rejection of Jerusalem to the son of God, it would soon be destroyed. The tree represented what would soon happen, not only to the temple in a few days (when the veil of the temple was torn in half), but to the entire city including the temple, which was destroyed less than 40 years later.

Another question,

Why did Jesus all the sudden turn “mean” and chase the people out of the temple in such a violent manner?

*This is uncharacteristic of Jesus. Jesus was gentle in spirit. Kind and Loving to all, right?*

*John’s account of Jesus cleansing the temple was even more severe…*

***John 2:14-16*****“**In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. ***15****Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple.* He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers’ coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. **16**Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, “Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father’s house into a marketplace!”

Eyes *OF* Jesus…

As we continue our journey called “Eyes On Jesus”, let’s try to think about what it would be like to have the “eyes OF Jesus”

He could look into any situation and see clearly right through all the deception and identify exactly what was going on spiritually.

Because He was both fully God and fully man, and did not have the impediment of sin, He was never fooled or deceived by the façade of what was going on around him at any time.

[ I WISH we could have that ability in these days. I pray that God opens the eyes of our heart to see clearly all of the deception that is going on in our world in every area in this season; politically, socially, economically,spiritually etc. The Deceiver is definitely working overtime in our day, doing what he does best…*deceiving*. ]

Back to WHY Jesus was so angry about the temple…

Jesus was angry about what the temple system had become. There was only one way to honor and worship God in those days and it was through the temple system; sacrifices, offerings, feasts, etc.

These worship practices were all controlled by the Chief Priests. The Priesthood had become so corrupt that The High Priests were regularly extorting money from worshippers who had come from all over Israel to celebrate the required pilgrimage feasts, in this case Passover.

*(Incidentally, the whole reason that the Dead Sea scrolls were written is because the Essenes had had enough of the corruption of the temple that they moved to Qumran to live Holy sectarian lives and commit themselves to the study of The Bible. They hid it in caves to protect it for generations)*

The temple at that time however was functional, complete with the Holy place and the Holy of Holies. It was in effect The House Of God. Jesus, although showing anger to the money-changers, was showing honor and Lovefor *His father*, in spite of those who made his house a den of thieves.

Does Jesus still chase people out of the temple with a whip? Does He ask us to? It seems violent and very unchristian doesn’t it? Does he do that to us?

YES he does, …*in a way*.

Here’s how…

There are no more “Temple” buildings.

* The Veil Of the Temple was ripped in half, rendering it inoperative. God’s presence is poured out on all the earth.
* ***The***Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70AD and never rebuilt. There are “synagogues” but no real temples.
* God *does not* dwell in temples made with hands.

**Acts 17:24** "He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples”

**WE are the Temple of the Holy Spirit**

**1 Cor 3:16** “Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?”

The Holy Spirit cleanses *our temple*, just like Jesus cleansed the temple in Jerusalem:

**John 16:8** “And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.”

Unlike the fig tree that withered when he cursed it,

The temple became a place of amazing miracles when he cleansed it.

The same thing happens to us when the Holy Spirt has His way in us.

*GOOD THINGS HAPPENED* immediatley after Jesus cleansd the temple:

**Luke 19:45-48** **“**Then Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people selling animals for sacrifices. **46**He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”

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**47*After that,*** he taught daily in the Temple, but the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the other leaders of the people began planning how to kill him. **48**But they could think of nothing, because all the **people hung on every word he said.”**

***Matthew’s Version:***

**Matthew 21:12-15** **“**Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out all the people buying and selling animals for sacrifice. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves. **13**He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves!”

*(Then…)*

**14**The **blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them**. **15**The leading priests and the teachers of religious law saw these wonderful miracles and heard **even the *children* in the Temple shouting, “Praise God for the Son of David**.”

Jesus did not just cleanse the temple and *leave it empty*;

He filled it with his presence:

1. Teaching every day until the crowd hung on every word he said.(Luke 19)
2. The Blind and Lame came into the temple and he healed them…everyone saw the MIRACLES (Matt 21)
3. Even the children in the Temple shouting, “Praise God for the Son of David.”(Matt 21). *[Children’s ministry. : ) ]*

***“When the Holy Spirit removes the junk from our temples,***

***it gives JESUS room to move in and do great things!”***

That’s why we should always welcome the Holy Spirit to work in our life. We should never reject the Word as it comes to us.

**Heb 3:15** “Today, if you will hear His voice,

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

Our prayer should always be; ”Holy Spirit have your way in me”

“Clean out the junk within me and do good things once again.”

If we are willing to *ask*, then He is able to *do* it.

**1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

David, had sinned repeatedly before the Lord (big sins), even with that, he was still called “*a man after God’s own heart*”. Why?,

because he pursued God with all his heart. Not only when he was *doing well and celebrating victory*, but when he was *desperate and in need of mercy*.

In Psalm 139 David prays a prayer where he literally asks the Lord to cleanse his temple.

He didn’t just ask for it, he welcomed it.

**PSALM 139:23-24** **“**Search me, O God, and know my heart;
    test me and know my anxious thoughts.
**24**Point out anything in me that offends you,
    and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”

This prayer shows *trust* in God’s judgement

It also shows a *deep understanding* of His mercy and forgiveness.

**Let this also be *our* prayer,**

**as we ask the Lord to search our heart,**

**and welcome the Holy Spirit to “cleanse our temple”**

***to give JESUS room to move in and do great things!”***