

The Cleansing Of The Temple

John 2:13-22

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 2:17

“Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A large piece of butcher paper, a marker, magazine pictures, a cut-out heart shape with the name "Jesus" printed on it.

A stuffed animal or paper cut-out that represents a dove, and a cut-out piece of paper that represents a \$20 bill.

A tray or box filled with things that are rusted, ruined, or moth eaten.

A chair covered to look like a throne, assorted items like a game boy, a CD, a TV guide, a Twinkie, a nice piece of clothing, a piece of jewelry, something that represents money, and a piece of paper that represents a ticket.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

The Throne of My Heart

Take a large piece of butcher paper. Have one of the children volunteer to be a model and lie down on the paper. With a marker, draw an outline of the child on the butcher paper.

After the child is up from the paper, draw a heart shape in the middle of the chest area on the outline of the child from a pre-made heart shape (the shape should have the name "Jesus" printed on it, but do not let the children see the printing yet). Take some magazines, and have the children cut out pictures of things that are of particular interest to them.

Have the class paste the magazine pictures around the outside of the outline. Explain to them that there are many things in this world that are available to us, but they need to be put in the proper place in our lives. Try placing some of the cut out magazine pictures in the heart space and illustrate that none of those things fit perfectly.

Explain that our hearts were made with a hole that can only be filled by one thing, Jesus Christ. Glue the heart shaped paper with the name "Jesus" printed on it over the heart traced on the butcher paper outline.

LESSON TIME!

When you see the name "Lord Jesus Christ," what do you think of? Do you think of "Lord" as His first name, "Jesus" as his middle name, and "Christ" as his last name? To properly define these terms, let's see what they mean.

The word "Lord" is one of Jesus' titles, much like a position; He is the Lord of lords! He is the supreme authority. "Lord" would be like saying "Master." In order for there to be a Lord, there must be one who is greater (the Lord) and one who is lesser (a servant). We can gladly take the title "servant," letting our Lord, Jesus Christ, be in authority over our life.

"Jesus" is His precious name; it means "God is Salvation." He is our Savior; therefore, we have a personal relationship with Him. "Christ" describes His mission. Christ means "Messiah," the anointed one who fulfilled all prophecy and has come to provide salvation for all who would believe.

Today we are going to learn that Jesus should be at the center of our life. **Jesus is worthy to be the Lord of our life.** He should be our Lord, the King who sits on the throne of our hearts, in the temple of our bodies, and is over our mind and soul. We need Him

as our personal Savior. He came to be the Lord of our life, the one who enables us and fills us to do His will.

Now, when you read "Lord Jesus Christ," remember His title, His name, and His mission. How does this apply to us today? Well, we are going to learn about how Jesus entered the temple in Israel and cast out all the things God hates. This represents the way Jesus comes into our heart and casts out all of the bad things that do not belong there. **Jesus is worthy to be the Lord of our life.**

JOHN 2:13-14

Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business.

The Passover was a time of celebration for the Jewish people. It was a time to remember how God delivered them from the land of Egypt by sending the tenth and final plague. All the firstborn of Egypt were struck dead, but the Angel of Death "passed over" the homes of the children of Israel that had the blood from the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts. To celebrate the Passover, the Israelites would sacrifice a lamb and eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, like they did on the last night of their captivity.

Passover was a time when Jewish people from all over would come to Jerusalem to offer up sacrifices of praise and worship to God. It was a special time to remember God's grace in delivering them from the bondage of slavery in Egypt, and it was custom for the Jewish people to attend this great festival. So Jesus, being Jewish, went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

In the temple courts, merchants would sell animals to people who had traveled a long distance. These travelers had no choice but to purchase these animals at a high price. Money corrupted these merchants, and the temple courts became a place where money was worshipped more than God. The people were not only forced to buy sacrificial animals at ridiculous prices; they were also forced to pay certain, very high, temple dues or taxes. The merchants were taking advantage of all the people who truly wanted to worship God. This was wrong; it was evil. They had turned God's house into a profane or common marketplace.

The temple also had its own special money or currency. And in order for the people to purchase the animal sacrifices, they had to “exchange” their money for temple money. The moneychangers were not fair when they exchanged money for the people. They kept back some of the money for themselves. This was leaving a very bad impression on those who just wanted to worship the Lord. These things displeased the Lord greatly.

Skit: The Merchant of Menace

Choose your aide or a child to play the part of a worshipper going to the Temple (you will want to pre-stage the skit so the "worshipper" can have a chance to prepare). Play the part of the merchant yourself.

Use a couple of pre-prepared props, like a stuffed animal or paper cut-out bird, to represent a dove and a piece of green paper cut-out to look like a twenty dollar bill (you can use a real bill if it is available).

Present the skit like this:

Worshipper (to Merchant): “Hi. I want to worship the Lord in the Temple today. I brought this little dove as my sacrifice to God. May I come in and worship?”

Merchant: “Well...that dove doesn't look very good. You need to buy one from me.” (Takes the dove from the worshipper, turns around and pretends to put it somewhere else, turns back around and presents the same dove to the worshipper; let the children see that it is the same dove by snickering at them or winking to let them in on the "skam.") “Here, this one is better. That will be \$20.”

Worshipper: “\$20? But that’s all I have, and I need it to buy food for my family while we're here in Jerusalem.”

Merchant: “Well, you'll have to pay it if you want a worthy sacrifice.”

Worshipper: “Well...OK, if it's the only way...”(goes away sad)

JOHN 2:15-17

When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.

And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

In Exodus 34:6, God describes Himself for Moses as "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth." When He says that He is longsuffering, it literally means, "slow to anger." The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in love. These temple merchants must have been doing evil things for a long time for God to be so displeased with them.

They probably had many warnings from the Lord to repent from their sin but they did not listen or take the Lord seriously until He showed up.

Jesus made a whip with some rope and drove out the people, the sheep, the oxen, and the moneychangers. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be angry and do not sin." Jesus was righteous in his anger towards the moneychangers and merchants. They were misrepresenting God by using His house to cheat and steal from people. We see that Jesus specifically poured out the money and overturned the money tables. Why do you think Jesus would do this? The Bible says many things about money:

1 TIMOTHY 6:10

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

"Moth and Rust Destroy"

Bring to class a tray or box containing some items that are old, rusted, ruined, moth eaten (you can make fabric items look moth eaten by cutting small holes all over them).

Allow the class to look at the items, pick them up, and handle them. Explain that at one time, these items were brand new but, like all "things", they have worn out, rusted over, or have been ruined. The Bible teaches that the only things that last forever are the Words of the Lord and souls of men.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

"but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus does not want us to be so concerned about money that it takes our minds off Him. He does not want anything to stand in the way of our relationship with Him. It could be money or something else that gives us great pleasure, but anything that interferes with our relationship with God or takes our minds off Him is an idol.

Jesus demonstrated "righteous anger" in the way he dealt with the wicked moneychangers. Jesus was displeased with their sin against people who were seeking to honor God by sacrificing according to the law. Those who came to worship were probably confused why the people in the temple would be unfair with them. Jesus' anger was righteous because the moneychangers were misrepresenting God, giving Him a bad name.

Do you know of anyone who does not know Jesus? They may do things that are not pleasing to the Lord, but He still loves them. We are all saved by grace. Salvation is a gift from God to us. We cannot be good enough to get to heaven. Jesus gave his life for us. He is the only reason any of us will inherit eternal life. Any good thing we do is born out of our response to what Jesus has done for us. We read His Word daily. We pray to Him. We listen to Him. We obey Him, and we trust Him, because **Jesus is worthy to be the Lord of our life.**

JOHN 2:18-22

So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

Jesus is always one step ahead of us. Jesus had just cleared the entire temple courts, a miracle by itself, and earlier, He had changed water into wine. Now these Jews were demanding that He show them another sign. Some people refuse to believe. When Jesus rose from the dead, Thomas said he would not believe unless he could put his fingers into the hands and side of Jesus. Jesus told Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe."

Believe everything Jesus says because it is the truth. He told them that if they destroy this temple, he would raise it up in three days. He was talking about the temple of His body, not the actual temple. Jesus rose from the dead three days after he was put into the tomb. Today the tomb is empty and Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven as we speak. Jesus wants to sit on the throne of your heart today and forevermore because **Jesus is worthy to be the Lord of our life.**

We can have such wonderful peace when Jesus is sitting the throne of our heart, leading, guiding, and strengthening us for His good purpose. It was not until Jesus rose from the grave that His disciples realized that He had fulfilled scripture. It is okay that we do not know everything about God. It is okay just to believe His Word and live by faith in the hope of His return. It is okay to trust the Lord for everything.

There are many things we learn each day about the Lord. If we claim to know everything there is to know about Him, we are trying to put the God of the universe into a little box. It will not work. God is greater than our minds. Believe God, and glorify Him with your life because **Jesus is worthy to be the Lord of our life.**

The "Throne of My Life" Game

Cover a chair in the classroom to look like a throne (have the class use their imaginations).

Bring several items to class that represent things in our lives that could replace the Lordship of Jesus Christ. For example, a game boy, a CD, a TV guide, food, a nice garment, a piece of jewelry, money, etc.

Take a pre-made ticket, and hand it to one of the children in the class. Have him select one of the items and place it on the throne. Tell the class how it could be a problem for someone. When he is finished, have him give the ticket to another child. Have the next child repeat the process and so on, until all the items are used.

When all the items are used up, replace the last item with a Bible. Explain to the class that our hearts will try to fill the empty place in our lives with all kinds of things, but nothing will ever work except the Lord.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.