

Matthew: Jesus, The King of Kings

A House of Prayer

Matthew 21:12-27

Previously:

- **The talk about what's coming** - death AND resurrection (always missing it)
- **The kingdom coming:** earthly vs heavenly Messiah
- **Triumphal Entry** - political praise, freedom from herod & rome...all would change in a week. Now through ch 26

What's your house like? What does it say about you? Directly & indirectly?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit [who is] in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

[Pray]

21:12-17

According to Matthew's Gospel, (Jesus the King of Kings)

The first thing Jesus does is cleanse the temple OF GOD

Two things:

1. Who's temple is it? God's

Despite what man has built, has put his hand forth to do, paid for, uses it for...it is God's house.

Your house, your kids, your guests, who's rules? Used or misused?

2. It needs cleansing

Who made it dirty? It wasn't God who dirtied it. But it is God who demands it be cleaned up. Why? The purpose of the temple was not usury, highway robbery, taking advantage of people for a buck

They say fines mean the law is only for the poor

The purpose of God's house was prayer

Talking to God. With God. Asking Him for things. Praising Him for things.

Communication and fellowship with God.

But they had wrecked that.

Back to the Garden...Adam and God in the cool of the day...sin entered, that time of fellowship, communion, wrecked, ruined.

1 Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I [Solomon] have built!

Acts 17:24-25 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

God doesn't need the temple for himself

He instructed Solomon to build it so we'd have a place to meet him.

Colossians 2:17 ...a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

The people were afraid to meet on the mountain so Moses went up

Most people are afraid to meet with God

They prefer the distance afforded by religion. Doing. Performing. Working.

Not knowing God or His Word for themselves.

Theives and wolves take advantage of this.

Be a berean

Acts 17:11 - These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily [to find out] whether these things were so.

Search for yourself. Know God for yourself. And you won't be quickly or easily fooled away

from a relationship with God into a relationship with works or false doctrine

Galatians 3:1, 3 - O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? ... Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

House of prayer vs den of thieves

The house of God, the gathering of believers, is to look and behave a certain way (Acts, Corinthians, Timothy, Titus - the NT)

When you come to church (or a place called church):

- Do you walk away robbed or blessed?
- Do you feel condemned or convicted?
- Are you pushed away or drawn near?
- Are you left in sickness or healed?
- Corrected or ears tickled?
- Are you prayed for? Invited in?
- Who was worshiped? Who was praised? Who was lifted up?

The list goes on...so is your church a den of thieves or a house of prayer?

Jesus says “it is written” - God has set aside a prescription and it's prayer

Prayer itself is important, but it's also the attitude and our position coming in

Ecclesiastes 5:2 - Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God [is] in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.

- Are we ready to hear from God?
- Are we ready to talk to Him?
- Praise Him?
- Fellowship with Him and His people?
- Learn from his word and hide it in our hearts?
- Or are we there to hear how to get what we want, when we want it?
- Are we out the door before the final AMEN? Come late leave early

God's house should be reverent, and holy...but also healthy, And happy, and warm. And inviting. And friendly. But when we pray. When we worship. When we study. We're about Jesus. That's the point of coming. He's the point.

It's about Jesus.

What's the result of Jesus cleansing the temple?

- Overturned tables
- A mess made of man's plans
- People who couldn't afford the price of entry of religion can now come in freely
- Sick people come in - God heals

That's what God wants in his house - to touch his people. To reach the lost and hurting. To make God accessible.

*Laws about handicap accessibility, ramps, doors, entry
Websites, vision, etc.*

Heaven is not for the able bodied

Mark 2:17 - When Jesus heard [it], He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call [the] righteous, **but sinners, to repentance.**"

Jesus invites all to come, but all who come must be willing to change.

Buying an old car. Seeing the potential. Like Jesus, seeing what we could be, if we but had a master, someone to lead us, guide us, heal us. Make us into what we could never be on our own.

What's the result of Jesus being able to be Jesus in the temple?

Praise. Worship. Seeing God for who he really is.

Who hates it? The religious. Those with their hands in the jar.

Basically God, don't you hear them worshipping you? How can you allow this?

Again, "have you never read?"

**Scripture is clear. We're made to worship God.
How could we not?**

If the church isn't signing. Isn't praising. Isn't being taught, convicted, healed, fellowshiping, worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Something is very wrong.

If you're not singing. If you're not praising. If you're not learning. If you're not fellowshiping. There's something wrong.

What's in the way? Because God is ready. He's willing. He's made a place and time and way for us - if He's not there, it's not because of Him...it's because of us! Our hard hearts. Our desire to do something not prescribed.

What is the "church" even doing in our day and age? If it's entertainment you want, turn on the tv! Church should be alive with praise! Entertainment is a cheap substitute for life!

*Watching TV in front of the big window
Would I rather be doing it or watching someone else do it?*

Bethany - house of misery, house of dates
Not to read much into it...but does God leave our gathering miserable? Or is he blessed by our time together?

Who's church really about...is it us? Or him?

:18-22

Ever get hungry? Jesus did too.

*i. "He was perfectly human and therefore physically hungry, for hunger is a sign of health."
(Morgan)*

Are you spiritually hungry? It's a sign of your spiritual health.

This tree's purpose was to grow figs for people to eat.

Chicken with a dream

God shows up one day and the tree is not ready.

The Bible often connects a fig tree with the nation of Israel

Commentary mentions two destructive miracles of Jesus

- Herd of pigs (demoniac)
- Fig tree

Israel was not ready for their messiah. They did not recognize him, receive him or reward him.

Or what's worse, is that they did recognize him, and refuted him, rejected him, and rewarded him with death

"The story is clear and simple, and its point obvious, that what counts is not promise but performance." (France)

Does God curse us when we reject him?

In a way, no. Our rejection of him is a sign that we are still under the curse of sin.

Disciples marvelled - that was quick!

Jesus ties it back to prayer.

These mighty miracles and prayer - simple through prayer.

Word of faith movements like to put the emphasis on you, the power of your faith, but they seem to cut God out of the loop.

The point is - when we're communing with God, close with Him, our prayers align with his will and wild results will happen! Not because of our faith, but because of His reality!

But, when we do ask, we need to believe

James 1:5-8 - If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [he is] a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Hebrews 11:6 - But without faith [it is] impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

:23-27

**Jesus goes back to the temple He just cleansed
The religious leaders are still there with a bone to pick**

They knew he had the authority - if anyone else did that they'd be strung up already

His authority questioned leading into the parables and the cross - which will prove it all

A question with a question - he knew they weren't really seeking. He would beat them at their own game (in a sense)

Psalm 18:26 - With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.

This is 4D Chess.

They tried to flip it on him to make him prove it - but the onus was on them to prove him wrong.

Burden of guilt is on the accuser

The option - fear people or fear God

They didn't want to lose respect among the people because the people also respected John

They couldn't say it was God because then they'd prove Jesus' authority because John pointed to Jesus.

What a great response - if you're going to play the word game, then I won't answer you God won't play your games. If you come to him honestly, he'll answer you honestly, if you come trying to justify yourself, he'll leave you to your own devices.

House of prayer or den of thieves.

It all comes down to where and how we meet God.

On his terms. Or on ours. And in his house, it's on his terms. And that's the cross.