

“The Cleansing of the Temple”
 Mark 11:15-18
 (Preached at Trinity, September 18, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen, **Chapter 11** begins the week of Passion which was followed by the resurrection.
 The chronology goes something like this:
 Friday evening - Jesus arrived in Bethany before sunset prior to the beginning of the Sabbath. Bethany was the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. He probably spent the Sabbath rest with these friends.
 Sunday – the triumphal entry; Jesus enters into the Temple and makes an observation of the circumstances in the Temple, returns to Bethany for the night
 Monday – He curses the fig tree and then enters into Jerusalem for the cleansing of the Temple
 Tuesday – the second part of the fig tree story.
2. **Verses 15-18** record the remarkable account of Jesus entering the Temple and driving out the money changers.
 - A. This is actually the second time Jesus had entered into the Temple to drive away those who were making merchandise of religious worship.
John 2:13-22 records Jesus entering the Temple during Passover at the beginning of His ministry. Our passage tonight, of course, is at the end of our Lord's ministry.
 - B. This takes place in the outer court that was open to both Jews and Gentiles. The scene resembles a market place. With the Passover so close at hand pilgrims were crowding into the court. There were many buyers. The noise level and the stench produced by the animals were probably great.
 - C. High prices were being paid for these sacrificial animals. A man could bring his own sacrifice but risked the chance that it would not be approved. The merchants had paid well for their concession, which had been bought from the high priests – a definite conflict of interest.
 - D. Also present were booths set up by the money changers. Foreign currency was not accepted in the Temple and so exchange was made – of course for a profit.
 - E. Could this possibly be called a house of worship?
3. Jesus had observed this scene the night before. Surely He'd seen it at every Passover that He attended during his 33 years of life. Now with design and purpose He enters to curse their hypocrisy.
 You can imagine the fury in the eyes of Jesus as He drove out all of the buyers and sellers and overturned the tables of the money changers.
4. There are several points I need bring to your attention

I. The Authority of Jesus over the Temple

A. In **verse 27** inquiry was asked of Jesus by what authority. . .

Mark 11:27-28 NAU - "And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him, ²⁸ and *began* saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"

1. Jesus had already declared His authority in **Verse 3**
Mark 11:3 NAU - "If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here."
2. The Gospels declared over and over the absolute authority of Jesus
Mark 1:21-22 NAS - " And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and *began* to teach. ²² And they were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes."
Mark 2:10-11 NAS - "But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins "-- He said to the paralytic-- ¹¹ "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home."
Matthew 28:18-19 NAS - "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"
3. Earlier He declared that He was Lord of the Temple
Matthew 12:6 NAU - "But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here."

B. Some have insisted that this story could not have happened because the Temple police would have immediately arrested Jesus

1. Again we find the majesty and authority of Jesus
2. This was also demonstrated at His arrest
John 18:4-6 NAS - "Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" ⁵ They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am *He*." And Judas also who was betraying Him, was standing with them. ⁶ When therefore He said to them, "I am *He*," they drew back, and fell to the ground."
3. The people of Nazareth had seen this majesty, power, and dominion
Luke 4:28-30 NAS - "And all in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; ²⁹ and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. ³⁰ But passing through their midst, He went His way."

- II. The second thing we see is the abhorrence of Jesus at mere external religion
- A. The Temple was intended to be a place where people could go to meet God
1. Jesus quotes from Isaiah 56:7
Isaiah 56:7 – “Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”
Mark 11:17 NAS - "And He *began* to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations '? But you have made it a robbers' den."
 2. Meeting with God was to be a time of praise and thanksgiving
Psalm 100:4 – “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.”
Psalm 27:4 – “One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.”
- B. As often was the case with Israel, worship had become just a formality
1. The temple had become so common place that no one felt the sense of God’s presence.
 2. This is no less a danger for the church
 - a. Jesus condemned the Church of Laodicea
Revelation 3:15-16 NAS - "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.'"
 - b. If we have lost the sense of awe in worship we must fall quickly upon our knees in repentance.
- III. The third thing we see is the anger of Jesus
- A. Isn’t anger sinful?
1. Jesus says that in terms of the spirit of the 6th commandment it is equal with murder –
Matthew 5:21-22 NAS - "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' ²² "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell."
 2. Anger destroys the unity of the body of Christ
 3. Anger is inconsistent with the new man. **Gal.5:19-21**
Galatians 5:19-21 NAS - "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

- B. We know that Jesus was sinless – was this true anger - YES
1. There is a holy anger and a sinful anger
 2. Paul tells us (commands us) "Be angry"
Ephesians 4:26 NAS - "Be angry, and *yet* do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger"
 3. In other words, there is a time for anger, a time when anger is the appropriate response. Sometimes anger is not only permitted but necessary. But, it must be the right kind of anger.
- C. Not all anger is bad
1. This was not the first time Jesus manifested anger
Mark 3:5 NAS - "And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored."
 2. Jesus had little patience with religious hypocrisy - **Luke 11:43-47**
Luke 11:43-47 NAS - "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the front seats in the synagogues, and the respectful greetings in the market places. ⁴⁴ "Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over *them* are unaware of *it*." ⁴⁵ And one of the lawyers said to Him in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too." ⁴⁶ But He said, "Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ⁴⁷ "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and *it was* your fathers *who* killed them."
 3. He overturned the tables of the money changers in anger
- D. Anger is one of God's attributes - His wrath
Romans 1:18 NAS - " For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"
1. God hates sin. He detests it. His anger rises up against it.
 2. Paul tells us to exhibit this kind of anger - a Godly anger. Be ye angry
AND SIN NOT - We must hate sin as God hates sin.
- E. The problem of anger for most people is that it is personal anger
Anger motivated by self love
1. It is not motivated out of a hatred for sin or the glory of God.
 2. The lost man frequently becomes angry, but only when he himself is offended - based upon pride, self-centeredness
 3. The Christian should not be easily provoked to personal anger
 - a. We must not be bad tempered - easily brought to anger, irritable
The Christian should be characterized by patience, longsuffering, meekness
 - b. The first fruit of the Spirit is love –
1 Corinthians 13:4-5 NAS - "Love is patient, love is kind, *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*"
 - c. We must not be easily provoked - this is sinful

- F. The only permissible anger is that directed at the dishonor of God
1. Godly anger is very measured and controlled - never in a rage - this is sinful anger
 2. It must not lead to hatred –
Ephesians 4:26 NAS - "Be angry, and *yet* do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger"
 - This second word translated "anger" refers to an extreme anger or exasperation - it means anger that has been nursed into bitterness
 - a. We must not dwell on our anger, it must not become personal
 - b. We must lay it aside - "let not the sun go down..."
- G. Paul adds another injunction - "and do not give the devil an opportunity."
1. Anger gives Satan great opportunity to tempt us to sin and harm our brother.
 2. **Ephesians 6:12** - "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
 3. When you lose your temper you give Satan advantage - you lose all ability to reason, you say things you otherwise might not, you think things you ought not
 4. It becomes personal - Satan keeps bringing it up, we begin to ponder it, it begins to fester. We begin to entertain thoughts of revenge
 The Christian model is that of forgiveness
 "Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors"
- H. The great example of Godly anger is Christ
1. He was absolutely under control
 2. In Matthew's Gospel he records that immediately after Jesus cleansed the Temple He healed the lame
Matthew 21:14 NAS - "And *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them."
 - a. In one moment He angrily cast the religious hypocrites out and in the next moment He gently and patiently healed the blind and lame
 - b. He did not say, "Come back some other time, I can't think about healing right now."
 No, in the midst of the overturned tables, He was fully able to return to complete calm and compassion with those in need.
 3. He was able to manifest both anger and love