

# *Mt. Lebanon Church*

Sermon

8.30.2020

Please look up and read all verses in their entirety. I have only written partial verses.

Make your own notes, write down other scriptures that you run across while studying, write down questions that you may have or comments as well. Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what he would have you to see through the study of Gods word.

Cleansing the Temple

Has the church become a Den of Thieves

## **Matthew 21: 12 – 13**

As Christians, because we are Gods children, we are a peculiar people, but nothing of our own makes us special, it comes only by God, through Christ, and the indwelling Holy Spirit, which separates us from the world.

**1 Peter 2: 9 – 10**,....ye are a chosen generation....a peculiar people....called out of darkness....which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy....

Clearly, we all fall short, and for this reason, this temple needs, daily cleansing, a continual maturing in the Lord.

**Romans 3: 21 – 24**,....for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God....

We must be careful not to allow the focus of our heart to become fixed upon the material things of the world. As believers this could lead to our manipulating other innocent, immature believers away from their true path of worship in the Lord.

We must be sure to keep our hearts on the Lord, so as to never find ourselves, trying to better ourselves, at the expense of others. We belong to God, we should take every precaution to make sure that our heart stays consistent, holy, and pure, in the sight of the Lord, and that of others.

**Matthew 12: 12 – 13,....** Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all of those who bought and sold in the temple....and he said to them, it is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves....

Through the passages of scripture, concerning the temple cleansing, Christ teaches us how to courageously confront worldliness and sinfulness that comes in the form of injustices in our lives. These injustices in our lives are an invitation to persecution, which many Christians try to avoid by not challenging these sinful practices that are going on within us, around us, and in the church today. Like the money changers, there are those in the church today, that do not see themselves as taking advantage of their brothers and sisters in Christ.

As Christ did, so must we view this as morally and spiritually impure, and we should not just simply seek to renew the holiness of the house of God, but to purify the body of Christ as well.

Christ, here in this passage of scripture quotes:

**Jerimiah 7: 8 – 11,....**you have made it a den of thieves....

When Jerimiah was explaining to the children of Israel, that although the temple was to welcome all people, judgement would come against those that would treat it as, a safe haven for sinfulness.

Meaning: All are welcome to find redemption and salvation in the house of God, but not all are welcome to participate in the body of Christ without first accepting redemption and his saving grace.

**John 10: 1, 7 – 10,....** I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber....I am the door, if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture....

Not everyone in the church, is a believer. Some have gained their position among Gods people through personal, political, and educational ambitions, as well as through manipulation and corruption. For this reason, Christ gives us the example and the command to cleanse the temple. Through the old testament, and in the first three gospels, the cleansing of the temple focused on the temple itself, which was before the death and resurrection of Christ. According to, and commanded by the law, the people went to the temple to offer sacrifice to God for forgiveness of sin. For this forgiveness to become effective, a redemption price would have to be paid. So, In the book of John, John portrays the transformation of the cleansing process, moving from an actual temple to the temple that is within.

Through Christ and the cross, came the process of redemption, and through this redemption, which is salvation, came the responsibility, that we now have, that is each one of us, and that is the cleansing of the temple that is in us, the place that, through Gods saving grace, the Holy Spirit dwells.

Now, we know that this temple needs daily cleansing, because the same corruption that Christ found in the temple, while he himself walked upon this earth, has carried over into our temple, through the sin nature that came by Adam, and it now has affected or infected the whole body of Christ.

What must we do, to cleanse the temple, and overcome the den of thieves.

**1 Corinthians 3: 16 – 23,....**you are the temple of God....if anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him....let no one deceive himself....let no one boast in man....

Do we, as Christians, understand, that separate and together, we make up the temple of God, the holy of holies. In Exodus, it is referred to as that most holy place to the Lord, the place that you will go into, before the Lord, and God said I will meet you there. That now is right here within our own heart and soul. Why would we allow a most sacred place of God to become a safe haven for sinfulness, a den of thieves. But yet, we do it everyday by allowing the sinfulness of the world to control our lives.

**Hebrews 9: 11 – 12,....**Christ came....with the greater and more perfect tabernacle....with his own blood he entered the most holy place once and for all, having obtained eternal redemption....

Gods spirit, the Holy Spirit, lives in every believer, individually. And just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are as one, so is each believer as they come together, become one in the body of Christ. We form and make up the completeness of the temple, and the body of Christ as a whole.

Christ not only shows us, that the temple had to be cleansed, but it had to be moved. In order for his promise of his plan of redemption and salvation to be put to any affect, he had to cleanse the temple one last time, and move it to its new location, which is the church, the body of Christ, beginning in himself, and then made up within each of those who will accept this great responsibility.

Under the law and the old covenant, the temple had limitations, which was set forth by the law. The new covenant, which comes through Christ and the cross, the shed blood of Christ on the cross, allowed within us a new temple, one not made by man, a spiritual, supernatural dwelling place for the Holy Spirit, without limitations. The only limitations that we will find concerning our temple, are the ones that we allow, by not cleansing the temple daily, which allows it to become a safe haven for sinfulness and wrong doing, a den of thieves that steals away the joy of our salvation.

**2 Corinthians 6: 16 – 7: 1,....**for you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them, and walk among them, I will be there God, and they shall be my people....therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all the fulness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God....

Christ himself gave us the example of cleansing the temple. It might not have been something that he wanted to do in the manner in which it was done, but it was something that he had to do in order to show us the importance of the place where God now lives. It is our responsibility now, to cleanse the temple and run off the den of thieves. God will give us the power and authority, the leadership and the guidance, the strength and endurance, we must supply the effort. It is not an easy decision to make, or a pleasurable task to undertake, but the rewards are great. For through cleansing comes salvation, and through salvation comes, eternal life.

Let Us Pray.

If anyone has any questions, comments or would just like to discuss any of the scriptures, feel free to call, text or email me. Keep praying for each other and all the God lays upon your heart. Hope to see everyone soon. God Bless.

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