

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday April 5, 2020 "The decision to live a life that matters."**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

We realize that we may be in this isolation life for a while. And we want to do all we can to still be the church for each of you, be a place of hope and assurance still acknowledging how tough this is and will be for some time.

### **II Sunday.**

Well, Sunday was our third remote time of worship practicing the physical distancing requested by our government officials. As you see, we've moved back to the auditorium, and we're still tweaking how we plan worship. We want to provide the most inspiring, hope filled, useful digital gathering time we can. This isn't for us just to keep some kind of tradition going. We want to give you a moment of connected presence of God that gives you something for the rest of the week. All of that to say, this is for you, so PLEASE let us know what and how we can serve you best through all of this.

**How are you doing? What do you miss?**

**Have you developed any good coping adapting strategies?**

Sunday was Palm Sunday, which means Easter is next Sunday. Oh wow...right? Obviously, this will be a really different Easter. But for this Palm Sunday, we told the story that fits into that passion week in scriptures in which Jesus cleared the temple. So, we'll read the scripture first, ask the usual questions, and then talk a little more specifically about it. So read **Matthew 21:12-17** and we'll talk.

**What jumped out at you about this passage?**

**Why was this so significant in that period of time?**

Jesus cleared the temple because it had become a place of abuse and people were taking advantage of those on the margins, the poor and under-resource. And this detracted from what the temple was supposed to be...a house of prayer. But this is where we struggled with what Jesus did when he cleared the temple. There are several accounts earlier in the ministry of Jesus, in which he talked about a time when true worshippers wouldn't worship at a particular place. But with a heart of truth. Jesus also forewarned that there would be a time in the future in which the temple would be utterly destroyed, and every stone thrown down. Which would eventually happen about 40 years later. So, what was Jesus actually doing when he cleared the temple and declared it to be the "*house of prayer*"? It doesn't appear to be he was preserving the idea of only worshipping in a specific place. But it seems he was protecting and preserving the idea and intent behind worship.

The bottomline question here is; **“Where is God?”**

If God once was only worshipped in the temple, and it was destroyed, then what do we do with this story of Jesus clearing the temple? What does this act by Jesus have to say to us in 2020?

### **1. We are now the temple where God resides.**

We kind of know this, and use this idea when we talk about how people should live. But in this time of isolation, we can spend some concentrated time on contemplating and developing some specific habits and practices in which we fully live into this idea that God resides within us. This isn't to create this harsh ascetic lifestyle, living like a monk, but it does push us to consider what our lives are about, and are we cultivating a life that honors, respects and builds a temple for God?

**So...what would it mean to understand that we are the temple of God?**

**How would that look like lived out?**

**What things could we incorporate into our lives that would build a place God could live?**

### **2. EVERYONE is a temple where God resides.**

This may feel redundant, but we all too easily forget that people who are not us, and are not like us, ALSO are the temple of God. We can understand that we are the temple of God, and even that people in our church or who are like us, can be the temple of God also. But can we wrap our minds around EVERYONE being a temple of God? Even if they don't live like the scriptures call us to. A full understanding of grace accepts that even though we claim to be followers of God we don't always live like we should. So, where is that line our actions are good enough to be a temple for God? And in the story of the prodigal son, even when the younger son fully rejected his father and wished he was dead, he never stopped being a child of that father. So, as much as we fall victim to the 'feeling' that people who are selfishly living just for themselves could never house God within them, we see all through scripture that we all contain the presence of God?

**What does this say about how we treat others?**

**Being FULLY honest, where do we struggle with accepting and recognizing who could be considered housing the presence of God?**

### **III Challenge.**

The challenge for us is to find how we will live for God, be the person he created and calls us to be, in these really...okay...challenging times. Jesus taught and showed us that we are to take our relationship with God seriously. There is this better way to live, that if we commit ourselves to habits and practices will grow us to be this person God created us to be. And that means remembering and living fully into the truth that we are the temple of God.

**What specific things can you do during this time to build a worthy place for God to reside?**