

March 31, 2019
THE ROAD TO HOPE - Part 2
"Monday"

Monday - Matthew 21:12-22, Mark 11:12-19, Luke 19:45-48, John 12:20-50

Mark 11:12-14 (ESV): "12On the following day, when [Jesus and his disciples] came from Bethany, he was hungry. 13And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14And he said to it, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And his disciples heard it."

Mark 11:15 (ESV): "And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons."

On the surface it would appear that Jesus was opposed to the commercialization of the Temple, yet that's probably too simplistic.

Being able to buy an acceptable animal for sacrifice was a wonderful service, and the doves and pigeons were there particularly for the poor.

Those selling animals were charging exorbitant prices for the animals, and the money-changers were using very unfair exchange rates.

The sale of animals and exchange of money turned the holy Temple grounds into a noisy, crowded market.

All these merchants were set up in the area set aside in the Temple complex for Gentiles, squeezing down their already limited access to the Temple itself.

God had always intended that the Jews, when they lived as a holy people, would be an instrument He would eventually use to bring faith to all people.

Isaiah 60:3 (ESV): "And nations shall come to your light...."

Mark 11:16 (ESV): "And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple."

Mark 11:17 (ESV): "And he was teaching them and saying 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 den of robbers.'"

Jesus understood it had always been God's plan that the Temple would be a place of worship for *Gentiles* in all the ways it was for Jews.

Isaiah 56:6-7 (NIV): “⁶And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant —⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

Jeremiah 7:11 (ESV): “Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD.”

The Temple had come to symbolize not God's welcome to the nations but His exclusion of them.

Jesus wasn't simply protesting the commercialization of the Temple but rather the whole self-centered mindset that ignored the spiritual needs of both Jew and Gentile alike.

William Temple: “The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members.”

Mark 11:18 (ESV): “And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.”

Mark 11:19 (ESV): “And when evening came they went out of the city.”

Mark 11:20-21 (ESV): “²⁰As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹And Peter remembered and said to him, ‘Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.’”

Most scholars believe what we have in these three events told together is a “dramatic acted parable” by Jesus, showing that the Jewish people outwardly appeared to have a rich and vibrant faith, but it bore no fruit.

Jesus: “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”
(Matthew 7:19 ESV)

With Jesus' death on the cross the sacrificial purpose of the Temple ended, and at his death the tearing of the curtain inside the Temple indicated the way to God had been opened to all - the priests and Temple were no longer necessary.

The Temple had never been the point – it had always been a *symbol* pointing beyond itself to God.

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV): “²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control....”

John 15:1-8 (ESV): “¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

Brochure: “Prayer, Fasting and More”

We’re seeking to abide in Jesus Christ in the days leading up to Easter so that we can know him better, become more like him, and bear much fruit.

Next Week: Tuesday

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