

**Date:** April 14, 2019  
**Series:** Palm Sunday

## THE DAY THAT GOD CLEANED HOUSE

(Matthew 21:12-17)

**Matthew 21:12–17**-----<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. <sup>13</sup> 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.*’ ” <sup>14</sup> Then *the blind and the lame* came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. <sup>15</sup> But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant <sup>16</sup> and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants *You have perfected praise*?’ ” <sup>17</sup> Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

**Intro:** Story of when Mark was put in charge of Dallas garbageman’s estate (no kin could be found). What Mark found the first time he went to the man’s small home (magazine’s, papers, and junk stacked from floor to ceiling). The house had to be cleaned out, and any financial paperwork had to be located. (Mark found out that this garbageman saved almost all he ever made---1.2 million!!!--  
-Mark found two distant relatives in far away states that didn’t know the man, but ended up getting \$600,000 each.)

**Transition:** Our text occurred five days before Jesus died for our sins.

Post-triumphal entry ... temple ... found a mess ...

He found a den of thieves instead of a house of prayer. (Explain)

And He cleaned house---He turned their tables upside down and drove them out of the temple of God.

My question for you on this morning that we celebrate Christ’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is this: “If Jesus came to you today, what condition would He find the temple of the Holy Spirit in? (The Bible says that our bodies are the temple (or dwelling place) of the Holy Spirit.) What would Jesus find?”

That’s what I would like to speak to you about for a few minutes this morning.

**Title:** The Day That God Cleaned House

(Prayer)

You don’t have to watch or read the news for very long before you will hear a story about a church or a synagogue that has been profaned. (Swastikas, curse words, etc.) This is a horrible thing.

Jesus saw how moneychangers were profaning God's dwelling place by ripping poor people off when they came to buy animals to sacrifice to God. And the spiritual leaders of Israel didn't care. They encouraged it.

What we need to understand is that this still happens today. Dr. Adrian Rogers saw three "p's" here. He said that Christians **profane** the temple of God and don't even think about it.

Paul said:

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20**-----...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? <sup>20</sup> For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

You were created to glorify God with your body and spirit and when you allow garbage (evil!) to pile up on the inside, you steal from God the glory that is due to him and make your body a den of thieves.

In 2016, Ray Orlund wrote:

I try to drive carefully. But when I happen to borrow a friend's car, I drive **very** carefully. I don't want to damage the property of a friend and return it to him all banged up. Even so, our bodies are the personal property of someone else. The only way we could say, "*Who does he think he is, telling me what to do with my body?*" is by **not** belonging to him at all. Did he shed his blood to cover our sins? Has he given his Spirit to make us new? If so, then we should glorify him even in our physicality, especially our sexuality.

So the temple is profaned here in v. 12 by the people of God. Then something happens that is not expected. Jesus sees what is going on and it angers Him. People are being ripped off. The Court of The Gentiles where outsiders (non-Jews) are supposed to be able to draw near to God in prayer has been filled with evil. And something must be done. So Jesus cleans house. He drives the moneychangers out of the temple along with their evil deeds.

And the second lesson we see here in this passage is this.

**When believers refuse to clean house, Jesus will step in and do it for them.**

In the gospel of John, chapter 2, the Bible tells us this:

When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple...

First, we saw the **profaning** of the temple, and now we see the **purging** of the temple.

Whenever a believer will not deal with the sins that God has made him/her aware of, God will step in and do it for them. The writer of Hebrews told the people of God:

**Hebrews 12:5–6**-----...you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: *“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; <sup>6</sup> For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”*

Jesus used a literal whip to clean house, but in the lives of believers, He uses the spiritual whip of trouble and suffering.

Now, not all trouble is due to God cleaning house, but I will say this, if you are doing something over and over that you KNOW is wrong, and your life is collapsing around you, you probably ought to see that as God’s chastening (a word that means, “child training”).

Good parents train their children. They help them to see that when they obey, there is joy and mom and dad are happy. But when they disobey, it results in correction and maybe even a spanking to help them see that disobedience does not pay. This is to be done calmly (not in rage), and it is to be done correctly (not in any way abusive). Look at Hebrews 12 verse 9:

**Hebrews 12:9–11** (NET)-----...we have experienced discipline from our earthly fathers and we respected them; shall we not submit ourselves all the more to the Father of spirits and receive life?<sup>10</sup> For they disciplined us for a little while as seemed good to them, but he does so for our benefit, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup> Now all discipline seems painful at the time, not joyful. But later it produces the fruit of peace and righteousness for those trained by it.

Tony Evans told the following story:

**ONCE I** got suspended from school in the eighth grade for fighting. Some boy messed with my fried chicken. They served fried chicken for lunch, and this boy took a piece of chicken out of my plate.

They had to call my father from his job. Now, my father worked by the hour, which meant he had to punch out to come see why his son, the preacher’s kid, had gotten kicked out of school. He went to the school and came to the principal’s office, where I sat, waiting. I’ll never forget my father’s face as he listened to the story of how I came to get in trouble. I’ll also never forget my father’s response. He told the principal, “Sir, you will never, ever, ever have to worry about my son ever being suspended from school ever again.”

As we walked out he said, “Do you know how much this visit cost me? I am **going** to take the payment out on you.” Even though I was disciplined, he still fed me. Even though I was disciplined, he still clothed me. Even though I was disciplined, there was still a roof over my head. Even though I did something to irritate him, he was my daddy, and he was tenaciously committed to me.<sup>215</sup>

Q: Is there anything you need to **PURGE** from your life that is evil?

First, we saw the temple **profaned**. Second, we saw the temple **purged**. But there is one more thing I would like you to notice here this morning.

I want you to notice the **purpose** of the temple. One purpose is seen in verse 13:

**Matthew 21:13**-----<sup>13</sup> 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.'"

We are to be people of **prayer**.

Second, in v. 14:

**Matthew 21:14**-----Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

We are to be people of **healing**. (OR, we could say, proclamation)

And of course, by this, I am speaking, mainly, in a spiritual sense. We are to bring healing to people who are blind and lame, by sharing the message of life with them---the wonderful truth that Jesus will give eternal life to all who believe in Him absolutely FREE!!!! (Also, healing **believers** who are spiritually ill, lame... they're not walking well!!!!)

Third...

We are to be people of **praise**. Look at vv 15-16:

**Matthew 21:15–16** (NLT)-----The leading priests and the teachers of religious law saw these wonderful miracles and heard even the children in the Temple shouting, "**Praise God** for the Son of David." But the leaders were indignant. <sup>16</sup> They asked Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" "Yes," Jesus replied. "Haven't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'You have taught children and infants to give you **praise**.'"

Many years ago, on the front page of *The Houston Chronicle* was an unusual article. There was a color picture, and it showed a woman with her ear on a man's chest. She was not related to this man in any way, and yet she had her ear on his chest, and I'll tell you why: the man had received a heart transplant, and the heart transplant that he had received was the heart of this woman's son. She was listening to the heartbeat of her own son.

As we close, may I ask you a question? If God put His ear to your chest and listened to your heartbeat, would He hear the heartbeat of His own Son?

**Review:** profaning...

purgings...

purpose (people of prayer, proclamation, praise)

(Prayer)