

Luke 19:45-48: At Home With God?

- 1) Today we see “meek and mild” Jesus in an uproar
- 2) Jesus is usually so understanding and forgiving - what makes Him so angry here?
- 3) First, we must understand the setting – **where** were they, who was “**selling**”, who was “**buying**” and what was “**for sale**”
 - a) **Where** were they – They were in the Temple
 - i) In Hebrew, the word “temple” is usually rendered “house” – this represented God’s home
 - ii) This was Passover Week and people would be coming from all over the Roman Empire
 - b) Who was “**selling**” – The religious leaders oversaw financial dealings on the Temple grounds
 - i) There was a street along the Western Wall of the Temple Mount that housed money changers (to change Roman currency into local currency), sellers of small animals (for sacrifices), and souvenir merchants.
 - ii) The historian Josephus records that the ‘family’ of the High Priest were known to be hoarders of money
 - iii) Exchange rates were high and the cost of required sacrifices greatly inflated during festival times
 - c) Who was “**buying**” – “Worshippers” of God
 - i) Travel to Jerusalem for Passover every year was required (see Deuteronomy 16:16) and people from different areas would have different currencies that needed to be exchanged for local currency and to pay the Temple tax
 - ii) Sacrifices were required but could not be brought from long distances – and not everyone raised their own
 - iii) Souvenirs are always big money makers 😊
 - d) What was “**for sale**” – Peace of mind
 - i) The fulfilling of an obligation
 - ii) Forgiveness (and, in some minds, a license to sin again)
 - iii) A good feeling of having pleased God
- 4) Second, we must understand what God meant “His House” to be
 - a) Jesus says God meant the Temple to be ‘A house of **prayer** (communication) for all the peoples {nations}’ (Isaiah 56:7)
 - i) When Solomon dedicated God’s house, he referred to it not as a place for bringing sacrifices but as a place where one could actually talk to God Himself (2 Chronicles 6)
 - ii) What a blessing to think that now **the believer is a ‘temple’** (or ‘house’) where the Holy Spirit dwells, making God supremely accessible 24/7/365 (First Corinthians 6:19, Romans 8:26-28, Hebrews 4:16)
- 5) This access to God was ‘bought’, ‘sold’, and turned into trinkets
 - i) The religious leaders promoted this to get rich and maintain power and control
 - ii) The people loved it because it provided an easy – albeit expensive – way of placating a God they often considered distant, uncaring, and capricious
 - iii) Faith is reduced to outward regulations and God Himself dissolves into a series of ‘hoops’ one must jump through
- 6) So Jesus quotes Jeremiah, who constantly criticized the people of his day for paying ‘lip service’ to God while living as they pleased, trusting in their religion (represented by the existence of the ‘house of God’ being in their midst), to save them (6:13-15)
 - a) Jesus and Jeremiah condemn **both leaders and people** (Jeremiah 5:2-5, 31; 6:13)
 - b) Jeremiah 7:11 calls the ‘house of God’ a ‘Den (or lair) of thieves’ where criminals (see 7:9) gather together, feeling secure in their hypocrisy (see 7:10)
- 7) The Church has a history of doing the same
 - a) The Gospel offers a living, honest relationship with God from a heart Jesus cleanses from sin
 - b) Many churches instead put forth a totally artificial list of religious rules that offer a false sense of acceptance by an inapproachable (and uncaring) God
 - c) This ‘selling’ reached a low point with the sale of indulgences and led to the Protestant Reformation
 - d) Yet Protestants also replace a living faith with liturgies, special seasons, and rules from a distant God appeased by show
- 8) 19:47: The leaders understand that what Jesus is saying threatens their livelihood, prosperity, and power
- 9) 19:48: and though ‘the people’ hang on Jesus’ words, they soon will demonstrate that they also were not interested in drawing near to God but only with what they could get from Him (John 6:26, Luke 10:13, 23:18)
- 10) The Gospel offers freedom (Galatians 2:4; 5:1, 13; 1 Peter 2:19) and intimacy with God (Romans 8:26, 1 Corinthians 3:12, 8:3; Galatians 4:9) – what do we settle for?