

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JOHN 2:13-25



God desires people who worship from their hearts.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God's house is for worship alone - The Passover was at hand, and many Israelites needed to purchase animals for sacrifices. Those with foreign currency needed to change their money. The moneychangers and merchants set up shop right in the temple. The temple was the center of Jewish life. It was the place where God's presence lived among the people. These shopkeepers were more interested in making money than worshipping God. When Jesus arrived at the temple, He became righteously angry and drove the shopkeepers out. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers. Though Jesus was clearing them out, He had respect for their property. The coins could be gathered and a whip of cords would not hurt the sheep and oxen. Jesus didn't smash or open the cages of the pigeons to let them out. He was trying to help them to see that God's house was not a marketplace.

The Jews demand a sign - The Jews demanded a sign from Jesus for clearing out the temple. Jesus answered them by saying that if they destroyed the temple, He would raise it up in three days. It had taken 46 years to build the temple, and it wasn't yet finished! It wasn't until after the Resurrection that the disciples realized Jesus was talking about the temple of His body.

Jesus could see motive of their hearts - When Jesus drove the merchants and moneychangers out of the temple, He called the temple "my Father's house." The Jews demanded a sign of His authority to do this. After cleansing the temple, Jesus remained in Jerusalem for the Passover. In Jerusalem He did perform signs, and many believed in His name, but Jesus did not entrust Himself to them because He knew their hearts. After seeing Jesus minister, they were satisfied and believed on His name- a way of saying they affirmed His character, but there is no evidence that their belief was in Jesus as their Savior.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

The disciples didn't know what Jesus was talking about when He told the Jews that He could rebuild the Temple in three days. Jesus was referring to His resurrection. But after Jesus rose from the dead, they remembered (see John 2:22). People hurled insults at Jesus during His crucifixion, mocking what He said about the Temple (see Matthew 27:39,40).

Jesus' resurrection validates His ministry claims. His resurrection ultimately proves He is Lord over all, including life and death. The Resurrection proves that His sacrificial death on the cross triumphs for us all. (See Romans 6:4 and Romans 8:11.)

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 69:7-13

Connecting the passage to Christ:

The disciples remembered this passage and attributed it to Christ, who cleared the temple of the money changers (John 2:17). This psalm describes a righteous servant who suffers insults on account of his love for God. Jesus was rejected and deserted by His closest friends. He was mocked and scorned, disgraced and shamed both before and upon the cross. Though written by David, likely during one of his own struggles, the psalm points to Christ and the suffering He would endure for us.

Questions for reflection:

- What does it mean to have zeal for God's house? (Zeal is intense passion for something. Jesus had an intense passion for God's house and didn't want it used as a place of trade.)
- Since we do not worship at the temple and don't have animal sacrifices, how does this verse about zeal for God's house apply to our lives? (God dwells in His people now. Believers makes up God's house, both as individuals and especially when gathered. We should have zeal for the church- the gathering of believers which are God's house today.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the *SWORD* Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

TRUE FAITH IS IN THE HEART

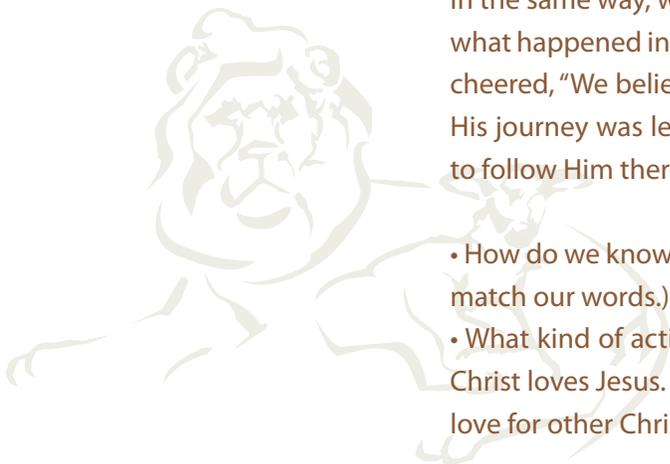
Tell the story of Blondin who repeatedly crossed Niagara Falls on a tightrope. (Look up Blondin on the internet for more information.)

Blondin would draw crowds to watch his amazing death defying feats in walking on a tightrope across the falls. He would carry various objects and do different tricks. One day he pointed to the crowd and asked them, "Who here believes I can go across the falls with a man on my back?" All the people cheered Blondin on saying, "Yes, we believe!"

Blondin turned to the crowd and then asked the more difficult question, "Who is willing to get on my back?" Of course the people who were so quick to believe refused to get on Blondin's back. You see, they said they believed but they didn't really believe enough to trust their lives to him.

In the same way, we can say we believe in Jesus but not really live for Christ. That's what happened in John 2:23. When the crowd saw the amazing feats Jesus did they cheered, "We believe." But Jesus did not entrust Himself to them. Jesus knew that His journey was leading to death on the cross and these folks would be unwilling to follow Him there.

- How do we know if we truly believe? (If we are true followers of Jesus our lives will match our words.)
- What kind of actions does a follower of Christ demonstrate? (A follower of Jesus Christ loves Jesus. This is demonstrated by a love for His Word, a love for worship, a love for other Christians, and a desire to obey His commands.)



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ALL CONFUSED ABOUT THE TEMPLE

This is an ad-lib skit between two teachers.

Teacher 1 begins to teach the class and explain to the class that we don't have the Temple any more. Now we have the church. He or she goes on to say that Jesus is building the church and that if anyone were to come and tear down our church Jesus would come and rebuild it, and that it would only take three days. Teacher 2 should object saying that is not in the Bible. Teacher 1 should then quote John 2:19 and then confidently go on with the lesson.

Teacher 2 objects again and tells Teacher 1 that you just can't yank a verse out of the Bible, you have to read the whole story to see what the whole story is about. Teacher 2 then asks Teacher 1 to read the whole story.

Teacher 1 complies and then feels foolish when he or she reads that Jesus was talking about His body, not the building.

Teacher 2 should then take over the lesson and talk about how everyone was fooled and didn't realize what Jesus was talking about.

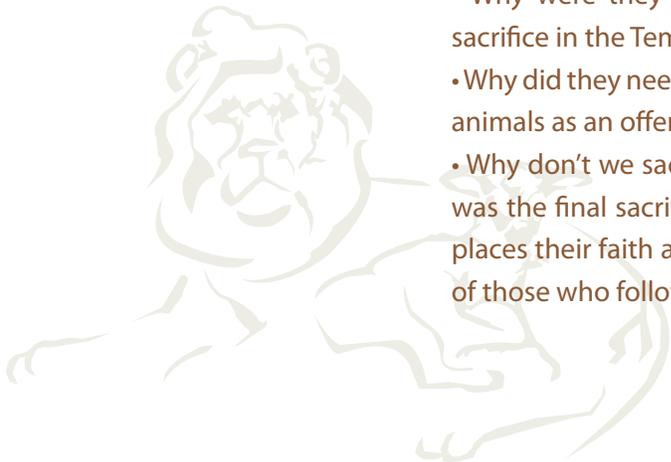
HAVE JESUS TELL THE STORY

Supplies:

any props or costumes
you would like to use

Dress up and tell the story from Jesus' perspective. Emphasize the disrespect of the merchants and money changers who were interested in making money but not interested in worship. Explain that the people needed to purchase lambs to sacrifice, but that the business should not have taken place in the Temple. Then ask the class to participate by asking the following questions:

- Why were they selling animals in the Temple? (They were selling animals to sacrifice in the Temple.)
- Why did they need to sacrifice animals? (God commanded the Israelites to sacrifice animals as an offering to cover their sins.)
- Why don't we sacrifice animals today to cover our sins? (Jesus, the perfect lamb, was the final sacrifice. His death on the cross paid the penalty for everyone who places their faith and trust in Him. Jesus died once to make atonement for all sins of those who follow Him so no more sacrifices are needed.)



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:

pencil and paper

Draw a picture of Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers.



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FOR THE OLDER GRADES

Supplies:

paper and pencil

Have the students look up Malachi 3:1-4 and each write out how this prophecy is fulfilled by Jesus' cleansing of the Temple and how it might also apply to the second coming of Jesus. Commentators see Jesus' cleansing of the Temple as a fulfillment of this prophecy which says the Lord will come to his Temple to purify it. "But who can endure the day of his coming" in Malachi 3:2 refers to His second coming and the final judgment.

You could do this exercise as a class. Discuss how these Scriptures apply: Joel 2:11, Matthew 25:31-34, 2 Peter 3:10-14.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Jesus' sudden appearance at the Temple was prophesied in Malachi 3:1-4. This also refers to the final judgment at His second coming. Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers. When He comes again only those who believe will be able to endure.

