

Life of Jesus

Session 12: Destroy This Temple...

Here in the West, Jesus is a familiar figure to Christians, but He remains somewhat mysterious. Why did He come? What did He teach? What was He really like? We will be exploring the Life of Jesus in 21 sessions; the first 14 will focus on Jesus' life and ministry in the 1st Century and will end around Easter. The last 7 will focus on Jesus' life and ministry in our own century and will take us through the month of May. Let's experience the Life of Jesus together!

Deep Hope: May we, together, (re-) fall in Love with the Messiah as we understand, imitate, and experience the Life of Jesus.

PART I: Review

1. 1st Century Jews lived under Roman Rule, awaiting a Messianic Kingdom.
2. Jesus announced (and proved with miracles!) that the Kingdom was at hand—not an after-death reality, but rather God's rule breaking into our reality.
3. Jesus' miracles show what God's kingdom looks like, and the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus' parables tell what it is like!
4. Jesus loved those at the margins of His society—spending time with the sick and the sinners—his disciples were sent out to do the same!
5. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus was revealed as the climax of God's story—three disciples caught a glimpse of kingdom past, present, and future.
6. Mary recognized Jesus' power of love, which was soon to be pitted against the powers of His day—political, religious, and spiritual.
7. Jesus gave Himself to His followers, creating a new union between God and man.

PART II: Destroy This Temple...

1. Herod the Great built a MASSIVE new _____ to win approval from the Jews.
2. Jesus exposed injustice in this temple by clearing the _____ - _____.
3. The temple was supposed to be a house of _____ for all nations, but foreigners had to:
 - a. _____ for a sacrificial animal
 - b. Pay high _____ rates
 - c. Put up with animals/markets in the only place they were allowed to _____.
4. Jesus wants God's presence available to _____. He destroys the system of religious _____.
5. Jesus predicts the _____ of the Temple.

6. His words were literally fulfilled in _____AD when _____besieged Jerusalem.
7. Jesus identifies _____with the _____. He provides access to God!
8. Now, God's Temple is _____! We are the access point to God.

Part III: Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. Jesus gets very upset when foreigner's access to the Temple is restricted. What was being done to make it tough for foreigners to worship at the temple?
2. Why do you think this upsets Jesus so? Why does He take such dramatic action?
3. We don't charge money to come to church, but we still do things that keep people from worshipping God freely. Can you think of anything that makes "foreigners" to the Christian faith keep their distance?
4. Jesus predicts the temple will be destroyed. Put yourself in the shoes of his young disciples. How do you think this news struck them?
5. Religious leaders wanted to control a system of power to get rich. Jewish zealots tried to match Rome's military power. Both systems ignored Jesus' teaching about love for God, neighbor, and enemies. Why do you think these systems were such an attractive option at the time, though they ended in disaster?
6. Jesus identifies Himself with the Temple—in what ways does Jesus provide access to God during His earthly ministry? How does He confront and destroy the powers of His day?
7. Paul says the church is the Temple, indwelt by the Spirit. How can believers today be a *better* temple than a stone structure? How can we provide access to God through Christ? How can we showcase the power of Love?

Part IV: Gospel Reading: Matthew 21 ; Matthew 26-27

The final week of Jesus' life begins with a celebratory entrance into Jerusalem, with adoring crowds welcoming Him as King. This action-packed week ends with crowds cursing His name and agitating for His public execution. What happened? There can be competing visions of Jesus, and He doesn't always meet our expectations. In fact, He seems bent on revising them. How does Jesus want us to see Him?

Prayer: *"Father, we have our systems of power. We have our ways of doing things that are comfortable for us, seem right, and seem to promise peace, security, and glory. Your Son Jesus came to destroy the powers of this world and usher in new access to You. Teach us to let go of our shortcuts and sign up for your painful Way of Love. Unconvince us of our stubborn clinging to things that will only result in our destruction. Amen."*