

## luk 143 19v45-48 Purging the House of God

Sermon #143

Luke Sermons

Title:        **PURGING THE HOUSE OF GOD**

Text:        Luke 19:45-48

Subject:    *Christ Purging the Temple*

Date:        Sunday Evening — January 2, 2005

Tape #       Y-56a

Readings: *Bob Duff and Rex Bartley*

Introduction:

What if the Son of God came to church tonight? — Have you ever tried to imagine what would happen if the Lord Jesus were to visit one of our modern churches, if he were to attend one of those things people call “worship services” held in his name here in Danville, KY, or most anywhere else? What would our Savior do, if he were to walk into one of our modern church buildings? If you will turn with me to Luke 19:45-48, I will show you what would happen. If the Son of God were to come into most any church in this day, he would do exactly what he did here.

(Luke 19:45-48) And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; (46) Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. (47) And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, (48) And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

Mark tells us that, after he had driven out those who sold doves and dumped the money-changers' money in the floor, turning their tables upside-down, he would not allow them to even carry their vessels through the temple. We would be shocked to see the things Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us our Savior did in the house of God that evening. **We need to be shocked that it is not done!** This was not some gentle thing that our Savior did after he had persuaded the people it really ought to be done. It was something our Master did in utter fury. John gives a vivid account a similar event that had taken place three years earlier (John 2:13-17).

(John 2:13-17) And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, (14) And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: (15) And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; (16) And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. (17) And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

When our Savior first began his public ministry, the first time he went with his disciples to keep the passover, he saw in the house of God an unbearable display of irreverence and utter contempt among people who convinced themselves that they were serving the Lord.

Now, three years later, he came to Jerusalem again. Again, it was the time of the Jews' passover. And things were exactly as they had been before.

### **THE OFFENSE**

What was the great offense here? What were these people doing that was so bad? The business carried on in the forecourt was connected to the sacrificial offerings and the atonement money required by the law. The Jews came to Jerusalem at the time of passover from many different countries (John 12:20; Acts. 2:5). The money-changers were there for what appears to be a very good reason. If they were not there, the people would have to go to a little, needless trouble to get their currency exchanged somewhere else, so that they could pay their required half-shekel.

The same thing could be said for the other businessmen who were there "serving the Lord and his people." If the people were to keep the passover, they needed sacrifices: animals, wine, oil, salt, and so forth. The poor, who could not afford larger sacrifices, were permitted by the law, to bring a pair of doves. Those who sold doves simply made things easy and convenient. — **Of course, they had to make a profit.**

What could be wrong with these things? We read of nothing, in any of the narratives, that these people did except that which appeared useful. — Their crime was this. —

- The priests and the people sought to enrich themselves in the name of serving God.
- They had turned the house of God into a den of thieves, taking that which was to be “*the house of prayer*” and making it a house of pleasure. Oh, they read the law and kept the feasts with great pomp and impressive ceremonies; but they made the Word of God of no effect by their practices.

### **FOUR LESSONS**

Is there a message in all this for us? The temple was destroyed 2000 years ago. We do not observe those holy days the Jew’s profaned. And, though I’ve seen a good many strange things in churches, I have never yet seen people selling animals and conducting a currency exchange in a church house. Such things would not surprise me; but I haven’t yet seen them. So I ask again, “Is there a message in all this for us?” Indeed there is. In fact, there are many, very important lessons to be learned from this passage.

1. The purging of the temple by our Lord Jesus stands out as **one of the Master’s greatest displays of his absolute divinity**. The fact that the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Priests stood by and silently watched all that our Lord did here, strikes me as being as marvelous as our Savior ordering the Roman soldiers in Gethsemane, and the legion demons who begged his permission to go into a herd of hogs. — Those

who observed these things must have been completely awestruck.

2. Learn this, too. **The house of God is his house.** Christ is the Head, the only head, of his church. He is the King in this kingdom. There is no voice of authority but his voice, and no rule of faith and practice but his Word.
3. **Sometimes faithful men, men who seek the glory and honor of God, must get angry and show their anger.** Those who would honor God cannot give approval to that which dishonors him. — To be silent is to give approval!
4. **The church of God is a house of prayer.** When I speak of God's church and God's house, I'm not talking about a building. The church and temple and house of God is the assembly of his saints in the name of Christ for worship (Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 3:16-17). There is no room in the house of God for anything but prayer — Worship. Now, let me camp right here.

**Proposition:** There is no room in the house of God, for anything except the worship of God, and worship according to the Word and Spirit of God.

As it was in the days of Nehemiah, so it is today. The strength of those who are supposed to bear the burden has decayed; and there is a lot of garbage (much rubbish) in the house of God. If we would worship and serve our God, we must clear his house of all the rubbish men bring into it by their vain philosophies, religious traditions, and foolish sentiments (Neh. 4:10).

(Nehemiah 4:10) And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and *there is* much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

I say to you as Peter said to those who stood before him on the Day of Pentecost, “*Save yourselves from this untoward (warped, winding, crooked, and perverse) generation*” (Acts 2:40).

There is so much rubbish in the churches of this day that a true gospel message cannot be preached in most places of worship, without utter warfare breaking out among those who profess to be worshipping God and serving him. Everybody has “*a form of godliness*” (religion) to which they tenaciously adhere, all the while denying the power of true godliness (the gospel of the grace of God). The religious generation in which we find ourselves today was well described by the apostle Paul as a people, “*ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (2 Tim. 3:7).

There is so much rubbish in religion that the first thing a preacher has to do is get a big shovel and dump truck, clear out the rubbish and haul it to the garbage dump. Until that is done, nothing else can be done. We cannot build the walls of Zion upon a pile of garbage. We cannot build a wall of hope and security on religious rubbish. The foundation cannot be laid until the rubbish is recognized, dealt with, and hauled away. And cleaning

up a pile of garbage is never easy or pleasant. But it must be done. Faithful men in every generation have found the work both necessary and costly.

- Moses — Korah and His Crowd
- Elijah — Ahab and Jezebel
- Hezekiah — The Brazen Serpent
- Paul — Judaizers
- Luther — Indulgences
- Calvin — Romanism
- Whitefield — The Church of England
- Edwards — A Regenerate Membership
- Spurgeon — The Downgrade Controversy

I have preached in a good many churches in the last 35 years; and I think I know where the problem is. I think I know what the rubbish is. Let me point out three things that must be dealt with, if we are going to build a wall of hope and refuge for eternity bound sinners in our day.

### **THE LAW OF GOD**

- I. In religious circles today, I am talking about churches of every brand, the holy, pure, immaculate, unchanging law of God has been whittled down to a set of rules for men to obey by mere outward religious exercise and outward conformity. — **Righteousness has been reduced to a work of man** (Matt. 23:25-27).

(Matthew 23:25-27) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the

outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. (26) *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. (27) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

A. This was the condition Saul of Tarsus was in before God saved him.

He was a devoutly religious man. His religious zeal and devotion would put you and me to shame. But he didn't know God at all.

- He had gone to church all his life.
- He graduated from the Gamaliel School of Theology with honors. — Magna Cum Laude!
- He taught the Scriptures.
- He was a man of indisputable morality.
- This is how he describes himself (Phil. 3:5-6).

(Philippians 3:5-6) Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; (6) Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.



Here is a man who was deeply religious, who lived by the law, and boasted of his righteousness before the law. But he did not know God or his law. He was as lost as any sinner on the top side of God's earth. Then something happened (**Acts 9**; Rom. 7:9).

(Romans 7:9) For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

**B. God the Holy Spirit came to this lost religionist, revealed Christ in him, and in doing so revealed the true character of God's holy law to him.**

When he saw Christ and was convinced by God the Holy Spirit that righteousness was accomplished and brought in by Christ (John 16:8-11), for the first time in his life, he was made to see that God requires truth in the inward parts and he had nothing in him but deceit. For the first time in his life, he saw that there was no comeliness in him, but only sin. God stripped him buck naked and brought him to shame.

(Romans 7:9-11) For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (10) And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. (11) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.

The law he once boasted of keeping now made him tremble, for it exposed his sin.

If you should ask the average person, in the pew or in the pulpit, to tell you why he hopes to go to heaven when he dies, he would say something about God, and grace, and Christ, and atonement. Then, he would tell you the real basis of his hope. — “I...”

**C. Has the Lord Jesus Christ ever come to you by the saving operations of his Spirit and revealed his holy law to you?**

(Matthew 5:20) For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

- That righteousness that God requires, you cannot perform.
- It is a righteousness performed for us by Christ and given to us by grace.
- And godliness, true godliness, is not outward, but inward. — “*The Lord looketh on the heart.*”
- Christianity is not a creed, but a Person. It is not outward, but inward. — “*Christ in you, the hope of glory!*”

That’s the first piece of garbage that must be hauled away, we are to have a house of prayer and praise to God. We must be made to see that no man can, by

anything he does or experiences, make himself righteous before God. The bondwoman and her son (works religion and all who promote it) must be cast out!

## **DEGENERATE WORSHIP**

II. The *second* problem is this. **Worship, or what people call worship, has degenerated into nothing but religious entertainment and ceremony performed under the disguise of worship.**

Most churches are nothing but religious social clubs, with rules, regulations, and ceremonies, and a good place for businessmen to network. If God the Holy Spirit did not exist, it would not change a thing in most churches. Their program would move along without a glitch.

- You don't need the Spirit of God to make a decision for Jesus. But you must have him to be born again.
- You don't need God the Holy Spirit to reform your life. But you must have him to be regenerated.
- You don't need the Holy Spirit to make a profession of faith. But you must have him to get faith.
- You don't need the Holy Spirit to learn a creed and learn to fight for it. But you must have him to learn the gospel.
- You don't need the Spirit to stand up and testify. But you must have him to bow down and worship!
- You don't need the Spirit of God to be devoted to religious activity and service. But you must have him to sit at the Master's feet and hear his word!

- You don't need the Spirit of God to be immersed in water. But you must have him to be baptized into Christ.
- You don't need the Holy Spirit to observe the Lord's Supper. But you must have him to communion with Christ and remember him.
- You don't need God the Holy Spirit to recite a prayer. But you must have him to pray.
- You don't need the Spirit to give out a lesson. But you must have him to preach a message.
- You don't need the Holy Spirit to give a tithe. But you must have him to offer two mites in the name of the Lord.
- You don't need God the Holy Spirit to love religion. But you must have him to love one another.
- You don't need the Spirit of God to meet together. But you must have him to be "*the temple of the living God!*"

If God the Holy Spirit did not exist, if there were no God, no Christ, no salvation, no eternal life, with most religious people, nothing would change. In most churches, nothing would change.

- You don't need God to have a business meeting. But you must have him to have a prayer (worship) meeting.
- You don't need God to be in the church. But you must have him to be in Christ.

- You don't need God to have a church house. But you must have him to be a "*habitation of God through the Spirit.*"

As I read about our Savior driving the money-changers and sacrifice peddlers out of the temple, I cannot help thinking to myself, how furious he must be with men's intrusions into his house today. **There is no place in the house of God, the house of prayer, except that which involves the worship of God.**

- Gospel Preaching
- Gospel Ordinances
- Prayer
- Praise

That's the second problem. The churches of our day have said good-bye to God. And worship has degenerated into nothing but man-centered religious activity. Cast out your programs and ceremonies, or you will never worship God!

### **A CORRUPT MESSAGE**

III. Here's the *third* problem in churches around the world today. — **The church of this perverse age has substituted the message of the gospel, the message of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ, for a corrupt and perverse message of works.**

Everywhere today people are told to stand up and be counted. The gospel of God demands that you bow down and worship. There's a difference! The message of substitution, the message of our Lord's blessed obedience and sin-atonement sacrifice, and salvation by him, in him, from him, and for him, has been replaced with...

- “Will you let God save you?”
- “Won't you give your heart to Jesus?”
- “The decision is yours.”
- “You must do your part.”
- “What's your decision?”
- “The Lord wants to save you.”
- “You need to start serving the Lord.”
- “Open your heart to the Lord, and he will come in.”

(Galatians 1:6-9) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

When we have cleared away the rubbish, the Foundation can be laid and the walls of Zion can be built. The

Foundation is Jesus Christ crucified. In his day, the only place where John the Baptist could preach the gospel was in the wilderness. There he lifted up his solitary voice in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, crying out to eternity-bound sinners, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” Let us, like John the Baptist, cry out to immortal souls in this wilderness, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”

- Jesus Christ is not just a good example after whom you must pattern your life. He is “*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!*”
- He was not a religious reformer. He was and is God our Savior!
- He did not die as a martyr in a noble cause. He died as the Lamb of God, a blood sacrifice for sin.
- He is not God who wants to save. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him.
- T.U.L.I.P.

If the Lord God will give us grace today to clean out the rubbish, drive the merchandisers and their merchandise out of his house, and make his house a house of prayer for needy sinners, maybe, just maybe, we will see the same thing happen that happened when he did it (Matt. 21:14). We might just see sinners healed by his almighty grace.

(Matthew 21:14) And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

Amen.