

# Cleansing the Temple

by Anton Bosch

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*This sermon delves into Luke chapters 19 and 20, focusing on Jesus cleansing the temple, highlighting the importance of maintaining the holiness of God's house. It emphasizes the need for self-examination in both the church community and individual lives to ensure that God's presence is honored and glorified. The sermon challenges believers to reflect on whether their actions defile the temple of God, whether in the church as a community or in their personal lives.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 56:7, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Luke 19:47, Luke 20:1

**Topics:** "Holiness of God's House", "Self-Examination"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Luke chapter 19, we're going to finish off on Luke 19 and move into Luke chapter 20 this morning. So Luke chapter 19 reading from 45 through chapter 20 verse 8. Luke chapter 19 reading from verse 45. Then he went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, it is written, my house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.

And he was teaching daily in the temple, but the chief priests, the scribes and the leaders of the people sought to destroy him and were unable to do anything for all the people were very attentive to hear him. Now it happened on one of those days as he taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel that the chief priests and the scribes together with the elders confronted him and spoke to him saying, tell us by what authority are you doing these things? Or who is he who gives you this authority? But he answered and said to them, I will also ask you one thing and answer me, the baptism of John was it from heaven or from men? And they reasoned among themselves saying, if we say from heaven, he will say, why then did you not believe him? But if we say from men, all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. So they answered that they did not know where it was from.

And Jesus said to them, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. And so Jesus has now come into Jerusalem for the last seven days to be examined in order to establish his purity as a sacrifice.

According to the law in the Old Testament, remember that the lambs had to be examined for a week in order to establish that there was no latent defect, that the animal wasn't sick or in any way unsuitable as a sacrifice.

Jesus has now become very, very public. He comes into Jerusalem as we saw, I think it was last week, riding on a donkey, making a public declaration that he is coming in as the king. And he is now in the temple.

And we'll see in the passage that he spends every day in the temple. And not only does he now come into Jerusalem as the king, but he now takes possession of the temple as his territory. Remember that when he was 12 years old, he was left behind amongst the learned men.

And his answer to his parents was that I have to be about my father's business. And he refers to his father's house. So Jesus recognizes the temple as God's house, as his house.

And he now actively takes control, as it were, of certainly the outer court or the court of the Gentiles where he is ministering. Now Luke just devotes two verses to the cleansing of the temple. And remember that we said that there are two cleansings of the temple.

There is one at the beginning of his ministry, and there is one at the end. So they are bookends to his ministry. And obviously that has significance.

It tells us the importance of the cleansing of the temple, that the temple is to be a purified, set-aside, holy place. And so Luke doesn't go into all the details that the others do, but he makes reference to it. And we need to have a look and see what Luke has to say.

So he went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it. That's all he tells us. He goes into the temple, drives out those who bought and sold.

Now we did introduce this last week by saying that in order for the Jews to celebrate Passover, they had to do two things. The one is they had to bring a lamb, preferably, or some other sacrifice. If they could not bring a lamb, then they could go smaller until eventually you ended up with turtle doves.

As I said a moment ago, these animals had to be without blemish, prophetically portraying the Lord Jesus, that he is without spot and he is without blemish, a perfect sacrifice. Obviously the point is that God, we cannot offer to God that which is our off-cast, that which is our reject. Remember that's the issue that God has with Israel in the book of Malachi, that they offer to God the sick and the lame and the crippled, the animals that they have no use for.

And God says that's an insult. You wouldn't do that to your governor. How come you're doing it to God? And so the animal has to be perfect.

And as I said, it has to be examined to make sure that there is no latent, no hidden defect, some sickness which is only going to manifest after a couple of days. In effect, it's a kind of quarantine. And so the problem was that many of the people at the feast would be coming from all over the world.

If you look at Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost, it names some of the languages that are represented. People from right across the world would come to the feast of the Passover. And so how do you bring a sheep if you're traveling across land or by a sailboat from the other end of the world? And so

you had to buy one locally.

And so the people had set up a system whereby you could buy a certified animal, an animal that had been certified to be without defect and to be an acceptable animal. And so they set these up in the outer quarter, and I'll speak about that in a moment. But they also had money changes.

The other thing you needed to do when you came was you needed to pay your half a shekel of temple tax, which was an atonement money, it's called in the Old Testament. The principle was that every Jew's man belonged to God. In effect, every Jew should then serve God full-time.

The problem with that obviously is then who drives the economy? Who's going to work the fields? Who's going to do the various trades? How's the nation going to function? So God says, here's the plan. You need to recognize that you belong to God, and therefore you need to buy yourself back from God. So every year you pay the half a shekel, and effectively, symbolically, you're saying, here's the money.

I'm going to pay the priests to serve in my place so that I can go back and apply my trade or work my fields. Now, obviously, that was the Old Testament principle. It's not a principle that applies in the New Testament.

Unfortunately, most modern Christians like to apply it in the sense that they pay the tithe, and the pastor must do the work. The pastor can serve God. He can pray.

He can read the Bible. He can tell us what God has to say. We're going to get on with our lives.

We paid our tithe. That's not the way it works in the New Testament. In the New Testament, God's plan is that everyone would be a priest, that we'd be a nation of kings and of priests.

And the priesthood of every believer is at the core of the New Testament. So every believer has to, not just can, does not just have the privilege, but has the responsibility to seek God for themselves, to read the scriptures for themselves, to pray for themselves, to act as priests within the context of their families. But obviously, the atonement money reflected or pointed to Jesus, who would be the one who would die in our place.

And so the principle was that someone would serve in their place, Jesus would die in our place. Now, again, it had to be paid in a half-shekel. It had to be paid in Israel currency of the time.

And so if you came from another part of the world, obviously you had different currency wherever you came from, just as we have today. And so today, when you travel, when you fly, if you're stupid, you stop at the airport at the exchange control or the exchange office, and you change your money into whatever money you want. If you're more clever, you figure out that they cheat you at the airport, and you buy the money before the time from a more reputable source.

So you needed to change your US dollars, if you will, into shekels. And so there was a nice opportunity, again, to have a money exchange. And so they would exchange money for the shekel that was necessary in order to pay the temple tax.

Now, the problem was two things. The first was that they obviously used the opportunity to cheat the people. Because you'll see in the next verse, Jesus says, you've made it a den of thieves.

In other words, you're stealing. So not only were they, they were not just giving a fair trade, because remember that these people who came from all over the world, they were at the mercy of these traders. They didn't have a choice.

They couldn't go say, well, I don't want that sheep, I'm going to bring my own. If they wanted to be part of the feast, which they had obviously spent a lot of money and time to get there from all over the world, under very difficult circumstances, then they had to just buy what was available. And obviously, the opportunity was there for selling things at a higher price than they should have been, and for exchanging at an unfair or at a disadvantage.

Now, the second problem was that they were not doing this outside. Originally, they were doing it near the temple. As you came to the temple, you would find the booths of the people who were selling, and the little enclosures where they would keep the sheep and keep the animals, and tables for the money changers.

But they gradually moved into the temple precincts. Now, remember that the temple consisted of several parts. On the outside was to be the outer court in God's original design of the tabernacle, and in Solomon's court, at Solomon's temple, there was the outer court.

Now, what they had done is that they had extended that area to include an area called the court of the Gentiles. And there was a, and so you had effectively an extended outer court. Remember that the Gentiles could not enter into the outer court of the original temple, or of the tabernacle.

Here, the Gentiles could enter, but there was a barrier, there were poles planted where you could not cross. And so if you were a Jew, you could cross into the other, the area closer to the holy place and the holiest of all. If you were not a Jew, you could come into the court of the Gentiles, as it was called, but you could not cross over the line into the area which becomes effectively the outer court.

And so they were in this area. This was the area where Jesus was teaching. This was the area where later on, you remember the apostles in the New, in the book of Acts, taught from Solomon's porch.

And so surrounding the plaza, the flat area of earth where the people would gather, were also porches, porticos around, arched ones. This was built by Herod, and that is where they would, they would teach. Other rabbis would also teach in that, in that area.

So this was a, a general gathering place, but within the precincts of the temple. And so they now bring the animals and the tables and the stuff into this court of the Gentiles. And we say, well, what's the problem? Because it's not really part of the, of the outer court.

It's not, strictly speaking, part of the temple. And yet it is part of the temple. Well, the problem is what the purpose of the temple was.

And we're going to see that in a moment. So he goes into the temple and he begins, and as you see, Luke doesn't give us all of the details I've just given you. We have to get that from the other Gospels.

And he begins to drive out those who bought and sold in it. Obviously taking tremendous authority. Now remember, as we're going to see in chapter 20, Jesus has no formal authority as far as the Jews are concerned.

And that's their question in chapter 20. Where are your papers? Who ordained you? Where is your commission from us? Because remember that the Sanhedrin were the only ones who could commission or authorize teachers, rabbis, and other ministries. Jesus was never trained by them.

He is clearly trained by the Holy Spirit. He is not authorized by them. He is authorized by God himself.

And so for Jesus to come in and understand it from a Jewish perspective, this is really out of the... Because Jesus, as far as they're concerned, he's just an ordinary man. Even though he has this massive following and he is certainly a teacher and he is certainly the Son of God, at the same time, officially, he has no power. It's just like an ordinary Jew coming in and suddenly beginning to drive these people out.

But it speaks to us of the authority that Jesus has over his temple. It's his temple. And there's something strange going on because clearly he's one man.

Knowing his disciples, I don't think they helped him. When trouble came, they were always far away. So he's one man and he's driving all these people out.

So he clearly has an authority which the scribes and the Pharisees recognized. They said, where do you get this authority from? Remember later on, they asked the disciples the same thing. They said to Peter and the others, they said, where do you get the authority to teach? But they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

So they recognized that the apostles had an authority which was not human, which was divine. And obviously Jesus exhibits this divine authority. So he begins to drive them out.

And he now quotes two scriptures, one from Isaiah, one from Jeremiah. And he says, it is written, my house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. So the last part, the den of thieves, comes from Jeremiah.

And I'm not going to elaborate on that other than what we've already said. But I want to focus on the first quote from the Old Testament. And I'm going to show it to you from the Old Testament.

Now, before we do that, it's important for us to remember again, we've said this many times, but if you're new, then maybe you haven't heard this, that when Jesus or the apostles quote an Old Testament verse, they generally only quote it in part, simply because the people they were speaking to were so well-versed in the scriptures that you didn't have to quote the whole verse. And so today, if I say, for God so loved the world, then hopefully you know the rest of the verse. I don't have to quote the rest of the verse, because hopefully you know, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him, and so on.

So it was common for Jesus, and you see it in his quotes all the time, just to say one part of the verse. And he's not just taking that verse out of context, he's assuming that they're able to put one and one together and figure out the context and the rest of the verse that he is quoting. Remember, they didn't have verses, the rest of the section that he is quoting.

Now, this is happening in the court of the Gentiles. And in Isaiah chapter 56, and I'm going to read the two verses, because both verses are pertinent, he quotes from verse 7, but verse 6 establishes the context. Also the sons of the foreigner, who's the foreigner? The Gentile, the non-Jew.

The sons of the foreigner who joined themselves to the Lord to serve him. Now this is important, because there are many who say, well you know, Jesus's turning to the Gentiles was an afterthought. When the Jews didn't accept Jesus as Messiah, then his plan B came into operation, and he turned to the Gentiles.

No, this was always God's plan. Here's one of the verses that tells us that God always wanted the Gentiles to be part of his people. And so, if the foreigner who joins themselves to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast my covenant.

Now I'm not going to analyze that, but you see that it gives all the key issues that are required for someone to serve the Lord. You need to join yourself to the Lord, you need to love him and his name, you need to be his servant, you need to keep his law and his covenant. Obviously this is Old Testament.

Verse 7, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, the temple, and make them joyful in the house of prayer. There's the reference to my house shall be a house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

There's the whole quote. My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations. So Israel had a duty in the Old Testament, and their duty was to preach the gospel.

Obviously not the New Testament gospel, because they didn't understand that yet, but the gospel of having a relationship with the God of Israel, Yahweh, Jehovah, with the God of the Old Testament, with God, that you entered into that relationship with God by loving him, being his servant, keeping the law. Israel was never, it was never God's intention for Israel to be exclusive, in the sense that no one else was to be included. And we see in the history of Israel how many Gentiles are included in important areas of Israel's history.

There is Rahab, the prostitute, who becomes a descendant of David and ultimately of Jesus. There is Ruth, the same thing, a Gentile, a Moabiteess, one of the most cursed nations, and she becomes an antecedent of David and ultimately of Jesus. There's Caleb, the only two that went into the land, those who have been with us in the book of Hebrews, Joshua and Caleb, only two go into the land.

Caleb is not a natural Jew. He is a Gentile who had been adopted into the nation of Israel. So you can go through the history of Israel, and you see that God had always included Gentiles in the house of Israel, and brought them under his blessing.

So Israel had a function. In fact, Jesus quotes this to the Pharisees, because he says, you make disciples of other nations, but you yourself don't keep the word, don't keep the law. So they had an evangelistic ministry or function, the same way as the church has an evangelistic function.

Go into all the world and preach the gospel. Salvation today is not found in Israel, but is found in the church. And obviously not in the sense that the church saves, it's Christ who saves.

But it is inclusion in the community of faith. In the Old Testament, the community of faith was made up of Israel. In the New Testament, the community of faith is made up of the church.

So we had the same job that they had, and that is to reach out to all nations. Obviously, this is hard for them to do, because they despised everyone else. Everyone else was filthy dogs.

Everyone else was an enemy of God. And yet, if those people were to do the things that he speaks in verse 6 in Isaiah, then they were to be included. And their sacrifice was to be accepted, because his house, the temple, would be a house of prayer, not just for Israel, but for all nations.

So the Gentiles could come into the court of the Gentiles. The Romans could go in there. And that is where they should have heard the gospel.

And yet, what are they seeing? Commerce, buying and selling, cheating, all sorts of stuff going on. And obviously, together with the animals, there's all sorts of a mess going on at the same time. And so instead of the outer court, the court of Gentiles, being a place of evangelism, it becomes a den of thieves.

No wonder Jesus is angry. No wonder Jesus feels the need to cleanse the place of those things. And yet, the problem is that we look at that and we say, yeah, of course that was the right thing to do.

Jesus had to do that. He could not allow that to continue. But now remember that we no longer have a temple.

But we do have a temple. And we have the temple in two forms. And Paul refers to this in two scriptures in Corinthians.

And remember that I'm going to show you two different scriptures that speak of two different things. If we read the scriptures in a shallow way, you're going to connect these two things to be one. But in fact, there are two things.

First of all, in 1 Corinthians 3, 16, do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. Now, who is the temple he's speaking about here? The church. This is the church.

This is not the human body. This is the body of Christ. This is the context of 1 Corinthians chapter 3. So he is saying the church, not the building.

Obviously, we all understand we're not talking about a building. We're talking about the people. That the church is the temple of God.

God no longer dwells in a temple made with hands. Remember in the Old Testament, God dwelt in the temple. He no longer dwells in a temple made with hands, but he dwells amongst his people.

And so we are the temple of God. And that the Spirit of God dwells in you, the same way as the Shekinah, the glory of God dwelt in the tabernacle and later on in the temple. God's Spirit dwells amongst us.

And then of course, if anyone defiles the temple of God, did they defile the temple in Jesus' day? Yes, by bringing in stuff that should not have been there. Can we defile the temple of God in the form of the church? Exactly the same way, by bringing stuff in that ought not to be part or in the body of Christ. Now here's the serious thing.

If anyone defiles, makes dirty the temple of God, God will destroy him. What a statement. Jesus cleansed the temple, drove out the money changers and the sellers.

But in the New Testament, the temple is far more holy. The temple in the Old Testament, the temple that Jesus cleansed was rebuilt by Herod, a Gentile. It was just a building, magnificent building, but it was a

building.

The temple today is made up of those who've been blood washed by the blood of Jesus shed at the cross of Calvary. This temple that we are part of is far more glorious, far more precious than the temple in the Old Testament. And therefore the judgment against us is far greater than it was against them.

So that if we defile this temple, the church of God, not the building, God will destroy us. Now, that's not what I'm saying. That's what Paul says.

For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. We have a problem in the English translation because we just had this word you. If you had a southern translation, not that there's such a thing, then it would say, which temple you all are.

That would be, or y'all are. The word you here is plural. It's not singular.

It's not my temple, my body, but it is we all are that temple. Now, what are these things that we bring in? Well, in the immediate context, Paul speaks about envy, division, and strife. Envy, division, and strife.

When we bring these things into the body of Christ, we are defiling the church. But we've become far more blatant today. We bring in human wisdom.

We bring in psychology. We bring in marketing. We bring in worldly forms of entertainment.

We bring in worldly worship. We bring in sin so that it's fine for Christians to sin, for pastors to be in adultery or some other form of sin. We bring in all sorts of stuff which has become acceptable in churches today.

And we say, well, times have changed. No, times haven't changed. It's still the temple of God.

The word of God still stands. When we bring in anything that is defiling, that dirties, or makes unholy the church, God will destroy us. And folk, we need to be very, very careful what we bring into the church.

On one level, we can look at the macro things. And I know that after my departure, things will change. But you need to be careful.

What are you going to change? What are you going to allow to come in? What are you going to make acceptable? Is it going to be that which glorifies God? Is it that which aids the preaching of the gospel? Or is it that which will defile? But at a micro level, we also need to be concerned about when we come together, what attitudes we bring in with us. Because our very attitude can defile the temple. There are times that I find it hard to preach because there are folk in the congregation who are glaring at me.

It's part of the territory. I accept it's part of the job. But you bring defilement into the church.

If I come and stand in this pulpit and I preach out of anger, I bring defilement into the church. And I have to check my heart every Sunday before I come because there are things I'm angry about. And I have to get God to help me to clear my heart that I don't speak out of frustration or out of disappointment or out of anger, but that I speak out of love and out of the truth of God's word.

Otherwise, I'm defiling the church. And so we need to be careful what we bring in. The problem is that these things just slowly but surely.

And we don't have any scripture for this, but I can well understand how this would have happened in Jesus's day. So the guys set up their booths outside. And obviously, whoever can get closer to the temple is going to have an advantage because you don't have to drag the poor unwilling sheep from 500 yards away.

You can just take it right into the temple. There are prime spots, and everybody's trying to jockey for the best spot. And then somebody says, well, why don't we just go inside? And the first guy just goes just inside the gate.

Maybe he's even keeping his sheep outside, but his table is inside. And the next guy says, oh, that's a good plan. And he comes in.

It's just, you say, well, where'd you get that from? That's just how it works. And I'm sure that's the way it worked. In fact, that's why we need to be very careful what we allow into the body of Christ.

We say, well, just one thing. It's not serious. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

It's not long before everything is inside. Everything is acceptable. I know having this hard line and saying there are certain things that we will not allow in the church.

There are certain behaviors. There are certain lifestyles that we will not accept. People say, well, that's out of fashion.

That's not the right thing anymore. I don't care if it's not the right thing. It's the right thing with God.

And I know people ask and say, well, who gives you that authority? We'll answer that question in a moment. The next one, verse 19. Sorry, I need to speed up.

1 Corinthians 6. So this is three chapters later. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Now, I didn't give you the context. The previous verse speaks about adultery.

So here he's not speaking about the church. He's speaking about my physical body. So you can see that there are two temples in the New Testament.

The temple of the church. Who dwells in the temple of the church? The Holy Spirit. The temple of my body.

Who dwells in the temple of my body? The Holy Spirit. So they are the same thing, just at a different level. 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? And so the same thing I've said, and I'm not going to preach the whole thing over again, but the same thing I said about the church applies to my body.

There are things that we allow into our bodies, into our hearts, and into our minds that ought not to be there. And it happens in the same way. Just a little bit dabbling in this.

Just maybe just one time over there, and then the next time and the next time. Those who have addictions know the problem of gateway things. Even cigarettes, which we'd say, well, it's not that serious, but it can be a gateway to the next level, and to the next level, and to the next thing.

And so it comes in in the same way. And folk, I'm horrified by the things that Christians allow into the—and I'm not just speaking about physically, I'm speaking about mentally and emotionally—the things that we tolerate in our lives. Hatred, strife, unforgiveness, lust, greed.

The list goes on and on. Addictions. Paul is saying, don't you understand that God dwells in you? My house shall be a house of prayer.

These people, this congregation needs to be a house of prayer. Your body needs to be a house of prayer. A house devoted to a relationship with God, because that's what prayer is all about.

It's about a relationship with God. But instead, what we make of it is something very different. Now, sorry, I did verse 20.

For you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Now verse 47. So we're in the third verse in the section in chapter 19 of Luke.

And he was teaching daily in the temple. So every day he would go into the temple. I said last week, he's commuting from Bethany, we think, staying with Lazarus and Mary and Martha.

And during the day he would come in, and every day he was teaching in the temple. He's teaching publicly. Everyone can see him.

The Pharisees are there listening to him, examining him. The chief priests and the scribes and the leaders of the people sought to destroy him. So the chief priests, the scribes and the leaders of the people, or the elders, these made up the Sanhedrin.

Sanhedrin was made up of 70 leaders, 71 leaders. Again, the same principle we have in our Supreme Court in a jury system, an unequal, an even number, so that there can be no tie. There's a tiebreaker.

The 71st one would be the high priest, who would break the tie if there was an equal 35-35 vote. And so these 71 were made up of the priests, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of Israel. These are the people who would in that same week condemn Jesus and hand him over to the Romans.

And so they sought to destroy him, but they were unable to do anything, for all the people were very attentive to hear them. So obviously the problem here is that if they were self-governing, they would have taken Jesus out and stoned him. It would have been just like that.

Obviously that wouldn't have worked, because it wouldn't fulfill the Old Testament scriptures that said that he would be on a tree, that he would be crucified. But they are not self-determining, they're under Roman law, and so they can't do anything unless he defiles the temple, which clearly he is not doing. And of course they're afraid of the people.

They're not afraid of the people, they're afraid of the Romans, because if they did something to Jesus, the people would rebel, would riot, and the Romans... And remember, part of the background here is that when Herod rebuilt the temple, he built Fort Antonio right next door, part of the same complex. And you see this in the book of Acts, that when the Jews are rioting because of Paul in the temple, the soldiers come straight down. So there's a flight of stairs that come down from the fort straight into the outer court, into the court of the Gentiles.

And they're watching all the time because this is the hot spot. If anything is going to go wrong in Israel, it's going to go wrong here in the temple as far as they're keeping law and order and peace. And so they've got their guys sitting up in the fort, and they're watching all the time.

If there was any commotion, the soldiers were ready to come straight in, literally a minute or two, and they would be on the ground, and they would sort out the problem. And the Jews understood this. They knew that if they touched Jesus, there would be a riot, and the Romans would come down.

And it was in their lifetime, remember, that 3,000 Jews were killed in the same area because of the same kind of problem. So they're really not so much afraid of the people, they're afraid of the Romans. But the people are attentive to hear him.

Now let's go to chapter 20. I've run out of time. All right, let's draw a line there because we're not going to be able to finish the next section.

So I think that we get the point. The point is that the temple is to be a holy place set aside for God. The temple in the Old Testament was a place where God dwelt.

God's glory came and descended on the original tabernacle, and then when Solomon built the temple, the first temple, God's glory came down on the temple in a physical manifestation of a cloud of shining glory of God. But because Israel had defiled the temple in Eli's time, Samuel's time, when Samuel was a young boy, just at the time when Samuel was being born, Eli's daughter has a child, grandson of Eli. Eli was a high priest.

And she names him Ichabod. And Ichabod means the glory has departed. There was no more glory in the temple.

There's a long story attached to much that we can learn from that. But from a place where God's presence was visible in the temple to a place where God was no longer. And obviously we need to ask a question about the church today.

The temple of God, the community of faith, is God still in the church? And we obviously speak about the church in a general sense, but we also speak about the church as the true church. And obviously he is always amongst these true people. But we must also ask the question about our church.

Is God amongst us? Or have we defiled the temple to such a degree that the glory has gone? The glory is gone. I don't know the answer, I'm asking the question. We must also ask the question concerning the temple of myself.

Is God's glory visible? When the Gentiles, the unbelievers come to see me, do they see the gospel? Do they see the glory of God? Or do they see the money changes and the busyness and the stuff going on? And folks, the reality is that those days, if a Gentile came into the temple precincts, he would not see God. He would not hear the gospel. He would see people looking for an opportunity to take advantage of him.

And when the unbelievers come into the churches today, what are they seeing? Are they seeing God? Are they hearing the gospel? Or are they seeing a money-making business, looking for an opportunity to take advantage of them? May God help us that we may be a true temple, this church, Sun Valley Community Church, a temple where God's presence is manifest, a place where God is honored and glorified, a place that the unbelievers, when they come in, are able to say, yes, God is amongst you, and not a place which

has been defiled by human stuff and human agendas. Father, we pray that you'd help us to understand. Lord, it's easy to judge Israel.

It's easy for us to say, how could they? Lord, it's easy for us to look at the money churches and say, how can they? Literally making the church, building a house of merchandise, selling merch, souvenirs, books, even selling cloths that they can put on their sick bodies to be healed. Just making money. Lord, it's easy to judge them, but Lord, we're not here to judge them.

We're here to judge ourselves. We're here to judge our church. We're here to judge our own lives.

And Lord, if Jesus came to our assembly today, what would he do? Lord, it's a question we must ask, and it's a question we must answer for ourselves. If Jesus came here this morning, would he be happy or would he be sad? And as he comes to each one of us individually this morning, Lord, does he feel the need to take out the whip and purge and to cleanse? Or does he rejoice in our commitment, in our zeal, in our love, in our holiness? Father, these are hard things. Lord, we pray that you'd help us to understand the context again, that Jesus did not pull out that whip, which Luke doesn't speak of, the other gospel writers speak of, but that he doesn't pull out that whip before he wept.

And Lord, probably the day before, he wept over Jerusalem. Lord, help us to be those who don't pull out the whip on one another and on the church in general without weeping for it. Lord, there are many who go around criticizing and judging, finding fault, but don't weep, because their judgment is out of arrogance and pride, and Lord, we pray that we maybe have the heart of Jesus who wept over Jerusalem before he cleansed it.

Lord, I pray that we would not be people that you weep over, that we would not be people that you feel the need to whip. But Lord, that we may be the people that you love and who love you and whose presence you are honored and glorified. The gospel is going out and being preached, and as Gentiles, unbelievers come amongst us, they may say of a truth, God is amongst these people.

Lord, we pray that these things may be real, Lord, that we may not take it or leave it attitude, but Lord, that we may desperately desire your blessing in our hearts and lives and in our families and in our church. Help us, Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. Pray as we go, Lord, that we may not be those who forget what we've heard, but Lord, that your spirit would continue to teach these things to us until we achieve that which you want us to achieve in our hearts and lives and in our assembly.

And so, Lord, we commit these things to you. We pray for your help in Jesus' name. I pray, Lord, that you'd go with us now, keep us and protect us, bring us together again safely on Thursday.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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