

Driving Out the Money Changers

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having the mind of Christ and being angry when others are exploited or hurt, and warns against the spirit of Babylon in the church.

Duration: 56:26

Scripture: Exodus 32:19-20, Isaiah 59:13-17, Zechariah 14:9, Matthew 23:37, Acts 7:52, Revelation 2:4-5

Topics: "Church Purity", "Righteous Anger"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having the mind of Christ and being transformed to think like Him. It highlights the need for zeal for God's house, purity in the church, and standing against exploitation and corruption within religious settings. The speaker draws parallels between Jesus cleansing the temple at the beginning and end of His ministry, showcasing the righteous anger against those who exploit others in the name of God. The message calls for a return to true worship, purity, and a prophetic voice in the church to combat spiritual famine and maintain God's standards.

Transcript

We want to turn to John's Gospel chapter 2. We know that the destination God has planned for his children is to become like Jesus Christ in every area of our life. That includes our service for him, our attitudes, our mind, everything. So, as we read through the Gospels, we need to understand the mind of Christ and allow the Holy Spirit to make our mind like his mind.

And the more that happens, the more we are getting closer to our destination. We cannot become like Christ without our mind being changed to think like he thinks. That is the mark of spiritual growth, that more and more our mind is beginning to think the way Jesus thought.

There is no other mark of spiritual growth and if our mind is becoming more and more like Christ's, it will become manifest in our character, in our behavior, and the way we look at people, the way we look at things, the way our outlook on life itself. And here is one area where we see something of the mind of Christ. This is the time when he went into the temple, right at the beginning of his ministry.

You see, John chapter 2 is the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The first 12 verses, 11 verses are about the first miracle that he ever did. So we know this is right at the beginning of his ministry.

Right at the beginning of his ministry, the first miracle he did, of course, was privately in a house. But one of the first public actions of Jesus in his ministry was cleansing the temple. You read that in verse 14, when Jesus went into the temple, and as far as we know, this is the very first time that he went into the temple.

Because if the miracle at Cana was the first miracle, then this is probably the first time he went into the temple after he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. And there we read, he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves and money changers. Now these people were doing a good work because there were many people who came all the way from Galilee and distant places who needed to offer sacrifices, and they couldn't bring sheep and oxen all the way from there, that would have been a job.

So these people said, you don't have to bring them from there, you can buy it from us here. But they had a monopoly, you know, they were all in gang with each other. And they charged high prices for the sheep and the oxen, knowing that these people have to buy it, because they have to make the sacrifices.

So they have to buy it no matter what price we put on it. And that's where they made their profits. Now in the marketplace in Jerusalem, also there were people who were making profits, selling many, many things.

But Jesus never went there in his whole life to say you fellows should get out of here, no. Because the marketplace is the place to do business, there's nothing wrong there. But when the spirit of the marketplace came into the temple of God, then Jesus did something about it.

It's important for us to understand this. The other day we were talking about Babylon. Babylon is a place of business, it's alright in the marketplace, but when that spirit comes into the church, then it becomes Babylon.

So this is the only place in Jesus' entire life where we see him using physical violence. He never did it any other time. I mean, he used strong words like you generation of vipers, and how will you escape the damnation of hell, you, your father is the devil.

Amazing words he read in Matthew 23, John chapter 8, etc. But never physical. He never used his hands, except here.

So that's very important for us to see why did he do that. We know that Jesus never sinned, but he was angry. And there we see that there is an anger that is not sin.

Do you know that there's a command in the Bible saying you must be angry? Now before you find some comfort in that, let me tell you, the full verses, you must be angry, but you shouldn't sin. That's in Ephesians 4, 26. So there is an anger that is sin, and there is an anger that is not sin.

And we need to get the mind of Christ here, because God is angry. So if Jesus was angry, and I want to follow Jesus, I must have something of that in me. Otherwise, I'm not like him.

We have spoken a lot against anger in the church as a sin. We need to see here, what is righteous anger? And that's very clear in the life of Jesus. There are few places in the Gospels where we see he was angry.

You know, one was in Mark chapter 3, where we read, the Pharisees did not want a man with a withered hand to be healed. And he says, Jesus looked at them with anger. I'd like to have seen his face when he

looked at them.

How do you look at a person with anger? Let's turn for a moment to that verse. It's a verse that we need to see. Mark chapter 3, verse 5. You know, there was a man, verse 1, with a hand that was withered.

And all the Pharisees were watching Jesus sitting in the synagogue to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day. And Jesus knew their thoughts. These fellas, they won't heal him themselves.

Because they don't have the power. And here I have the power to heal them. And all they're concerned about is today, the Sabbath day.

They don't have any compassion for this poor man who has been going around with a paralyzed hand for so many years. They don't have any compassion on them. They just want to preach to him.

And then he said in verse 4, should we do good or evil on the Sabbath day? Save life or kill it? And they kept silent. And that made him angry because they wouldn't answer his question. He looked around at them with anger.

But it was an anger coupled with grief. See the next word? Grieved at the hardness of heart. That's the right type of anger.

When you're angry with people who will not allow others to be delivered from sin. That's the equivalent of this paralyzed hand. Sin is the total paralysis of a man's personality.

Sin is like your soul being paralyzed. And there are a lot of preachers today who will not allow such people to hear the message of victory over sin where they can be healed from their paralysis. They won't heal them themselves.

And they won't let somebody else come and preach to them about being delivered. They'll say that's all false doctrine and warn against all that. And keep these people paralyzed.

How should we look at such people? With anger. Otherwise you're not like Jesus. Jesus was angry with these people because they would not allow someone to help a needy person.

And grieved that their hearts could be so hard. He's the same today. And he healed the person and he couldn't care less what the others thought about him.

So Jesus does look with anger. And the Bible says he's the same yesterday, today and forever. How do you think Jesus looks today at people who don't want other people to be healed and delivered? With anger.

I don't want to be ever in that group that Jesus looks at with anger. You think Jesus looks at some Christians with anger? I certainly think so. Those who don't care for those whose hearts are hard.

Without compassion towards the suffering of other people. And won't allow them to be healed and delivered. And the other place we saw here in John chapter 2 is where he got angry.

Because these people were not exploiting the poor people. When you exploit people because you know them as fellow believers in Christ. Lot of preachers are guilty of this.

They know that these poor people have to come to their church. They have to go somewhere. They are religious God fearing.

They have to come to the church. And they act like lords in their church. And make these poor people give their money.

Just like these people who sold churches, sold doves and sheep. The only thing today people are selling in the church is sermons. You think people are selling sermons today? Sure.

Making money off it. Selling their Christian songs. Making money off it.

And not just making money but becoming so rich. That they become millionaires. Making these poor people pay for listening to their sermons.

And listening to their songs. What is the difference between selling a sermon and selling doves and sheep in God's house? And especially if the preacher is making a profit out of it. How do you think Jesus would look at that today? I think He is exactly the same as He was then.

He has not changed. Now if a person is conducting a seminar for some corporate business house and some company. And conducting a management seminar and making a lot of money from those poor people.

That's okay. That's like the marketplace in Jerusalem. Jesus says, leave them alone.

They can do that. That's the marketplace. It's when you do that in the church and bring the principles of the marketplace into the church.

That Jesus is angry. You know, I'll come back here in a moment. In the book of Zechariah.

Zechariah is a great book. It's a book about the building of God's houses. Haggai and Zechariah were the two prophets.

It's very significant. They are like a New Testament ministry. Because in the entire Old Testament.

From the first prophet Enoch. To the last prophet John the Baptist. In the entire Old Testament.

There is not a single case of two prophets working together. They couldn't do it. They were all alone.

There were prophets living at the same time. Like Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Huldah the prophetess. All lived at the same time.

But they never worked together. I think they would have clashed. Because they hadn't come into the New Covenant.

The Holy Spirit was not within them. Like a lot of people clash today. And so God knew that.

These people are limited. Even a great man like Jeremiah doesn't have the Holy Spirit dwelling within. And so he can't manage it.

So he allowed Jeremiah to prophesy in one place. Habakkuk in another place. Zephaniah in another place.

Huldah in another place. And they got along fine. They stayed within their boundaries.

They didn't go into each other's territory. Or into each other's ministry. But Haggai and Zechariah were different.

They are the first example in the Old Testament of a New Covenant ministry. Two prophets working together. And the wonderful thing is... You know the size of Haggai's prophecy? Two chapters.

You know the size of Zechariah's prophecy? Fourteen chapters. And Haggai was a much older man. Zechariah was a young man.

Imagine a young man prophesying extensively. And the older brother just saying a few words. What a grace Haggai had to listen to this prophecy of this young brother and sit back and support him.

That is really New Covenant. You hardly ever see it today. I really admire that man.

I want to meet him when I go to heaven. Haggai and say, boy you were great. I know a lot of people who read the Bible never even thought of you as being great because they never studied carefully and didn't appreciate what you did.

But I want to appreciate you Haggai for the way you just stood back and let Zechariah, that young fellow get up and prophesy so much. And we need that spirit in the church. One of the things Zechariah prophesied is the last verse of the last chapter.

I want you to see that. Zechariah prophesied about a day, verse 9, when the Lord... Zechariah 14, 9. When the Lord will be king over all the earth and the Lord will be the only one and His name will be the only one. Today there are many names.

But in the day when Jesus returns there will only be one Lord and that king over all the earth in His name, name of Jesus will be the only one. And in that day, it says here in the last sentence, there will no longer be a businessman, Canaanite in the margin it says, merchant or businessman in the house of the Lord. Until that day, there will be so many businessmen in God's church.

But in that day, everyone will be driven out. So that day is coming. And today the Lord is seeking to build a church and here and there you find a little picture of that final house of the Lord where there'll be nobody with a business spirit, nobody making profit for themselves or gain for themselves.

No, not even one. God wants to see that in our church and in many churches. And I'm not talking only about money.

When I talk about gain, it can be any type of gain. It can be money, it can be honor, anything for oneself. Some benefit for myself, from others in the church.

That's the spirit of Babylon. And if you have heard me speak often about it, I'll tell you, I have not spoken often enough. Because in spite of all that I've spoken about it, people still do it in our churches.

That shows that I haven't done it often enough. Or I haven't spoken strongly enough. Here it says that Jesus made a scourge.

John 2, verse 15. Jesus made a scourge of cords. You know, He and His disciples had gone to the temple.

Now I want to picture this in my mind. I've never seen any... I've seen many, many movies of Jesus, but I've never seen one where they have shown this clearly. I'll tell you how it happened.

Here you see Jesus. Now picture this in your mind. Here's a movie.

Jesus and His disciples come into the temple, and He sees all this going on, and again His face is, you know, livid with anger. Before I go further, I want to tell you about this anger, in case I forget. Jesus was never angry when anybody did anything to Him, or did not do anything to Him, or said anything to Him.

No, never. You could spit on His face, He wouldn't get angry. You'd call Him prince of devils, He wouldn't get angry.

They say you are a demon, He wouldn't get angry. They'd call Him a Samaritan, you know, that's like calling Him a locust. He wouldn't get angry.

Or they whipped Him, beat Him, and said, oh, He's the son of Mary, we don't know who His father is. Calling Him a bastard, illegitimate child, wouldn't get angry. You could never say anything about Jesus, or to Jesus, to make Him angry.

Anything, or people said, did something to Him, or said something about Him, no, nothing, or people let Him down, He wouldn't get angry. Judas stabbed Him in the back, betrayed Him, when He came to betray Him, He said, friend, do you betray the son of man with a kiss? He didn't look at Judas with anger. He said, friend, are you going to betray me with a kiss? Never.

That is the anger where sin comes. Where you get angry, because somebody did something to you. Or did not do something you wanted Him to do for you.

Maybe your husband, maybe wife, neighbor, brother, anybody. Or you get angry because somebody said something to you. All such anger is sin.

Because you are inconvenienced. You are disturbed. You have been hurt.

All such anger is sin. Jesus was never angry. If He was angry in such situations, He would have sinned.

He could not have been a sacrifice for us. And when you are angry in such situations, you sin. Call it whatever you like, it is sin.

And anger is equal to murder. But where was Jesus angry? He was angry when other people were being exploited. He was angry when people were exploiting others.

When other people were not, when they were not concerned about the suffering of others. He was angry. Are you angry when poor people are exploited? When you watch Christian television, and you see those preachers asking for money, money, money, money from poor people, does it make you angry? Or do you sit and say, Oh, so many thousands are hearing the message.

You don't have a clue about what Jesus Christ is like. Jesus is angry when He sees poor people being exploited. Being told to give so much.

Here is a verse I quote to you. Some verse from the Psalms. I say, some promise from the Psalms.

And then what they do is, they take an example, I don't know which verse it is, they say Psalm 59 verse 9. Okay. If you give \$59.09, that will be true for you. Psalms is a good place because you go all the way to 150, you see.

Good book to go for. To claim promises and tell people, fool people. I've heard it myself.

Deception, deception. Do you get angry when you see these things? Jesus would be. I want to be.

I want to be angry till the end of my life. Against people who exploit others. And take their money with all these, all this type of deception.

Because that's how Jesus saw these people. It's exactly what He saw here. And these money changers, you know, people use the Roman coins out in the market.

And that's all they had in their pocket. When they moved around, that's what they used. But in the temple, they were not allowed to put these Roman coins into the offering box.

That was a law. They had to put the Hebrew shekel, Hebrew coin. We don't have Hebrew coins.

Well, money changer says, no problem. We'll give you exchange. Of course, you got to pay a small commission for this exchange.

It wasn't a very small commission. Those fellows sat there and made profit like anything. And I wonder, how did Annas and Caiaphas and the high priests and all allow this? Can you tell me how they allowed it? From today's politicians, tell me.

They got their commission. It went all the way up to the top. So they would do nothing.

It's the same old thing. I mean, if you have lived in India long enough, you know. So what is happening here? That's why they got so furious with Jesus.

I wanted to kill him. Nobody disturbed us so many years. This fellow comes along, young 30-year-old carpenter, and tries to disturb all our profit.

It's always been like that. People making profit in the name of religion. And some man of God comes along and they get furious with him.

I want to kill him. But it says here about Jesus. It says he made the scourge of cords.

And I picture this in your mind. The disciples coming into the temple, as I told you. And Jesus sits there and says, Hey, listen, Peter, James, John, Matthew, all of you.

Go and get some string from somewhere. Anywhere you can find. They go out, they take some time to get bits of string.

It's not thick enough. So you just sit down here. I'm going to twist it.

And I want to picture this. Jesus twisting it and twisting it. Matthew, hold that one end of this.

Come on. And tie it together and make it really strong. Because all the other strings they brought were thin.

Got to make it a very thick rope. Now he's got the thick rope. And people are wondering, What is he doing? I mean, this is a man who's come anointed with the Holy Spirit.

And we saw him do this wonderful miracle just a couple of days ago in Cana. Turning water into wine. Now what's he doing here? Twisting.

What miracle is this now? This is the greatest miracle of all. Just wait and see now. He's twisted it all into a rope.

And they see him beginning his ministry. Going out and whipping those. He didn't whip any human beings.

It doesn't say he whipped any of those human beings. No, you got to read carefully. He whipped the sheep and the oxen and chased them out.

And opened the cages of the birds. And the birds were delighted. They all flew away.

And then he saw these people with the money. All the money they collected. And he turned the tables.

And all the money went scattering all over. And said, get out of here, all of you. Stop, verse 16, making my father's house a place of business.

What a word to hear in our day. Stop making my church a place of business. Stop making my church a place for you to make profit.

For you to take advantage of people. For you to exploit people. Seek your own gain.

In the name of Christ. In the name of religion. In the name of brotherhood.

In the name of fellowship. In the name of whatever you like to call it. Anointing.

Support the ministry. And all that type of stuff. God will reward you.

God will bless you. And all you're interested in is your own profit. I believe if Jesus came into the church today, he'd do exactly the same.

And his disciples remembered. You know, these disciples knew the scriptures. Because they'd heard it for 30 years in the synagogue.

And suddenly the Holy Spirit brought to the mind of Peter, James, John, all... Do you remember Psalm 69? Zeal for your house will consume me. That's the verse I want you to think about. If you want to be like Jesus.

Zeal for God's house must consume you. Otherwise you're not like Jesus. You may not be called to turn the money changers tables.

You may not be called to preach like me. That's a particular calling. But zeal for God's house must consume every child of God.

Even if our ministries are different. You must burn with anger. When you see God's house being polluted, God's name being dishonored, the first prayer he taught us to pray was, Hallowed be thy name.

Our Father who art in heaven, in the church, hallowed be thy name. That the name of Jesus be, that the name of God be respected, hallowed, revered. You know, zeal for God's house consumes me.

I have many times thought about the businessmen on commercial street who work so hard morning till night to make money. Their whole thought is on money, money, money. Zeal to make money consumes them.

I'm sure they dream about how to, new ways of making money. And many times I've said, Lord, please help me to worship the true God more than they worship their God. Their God is money.

With what fantastic devotion they worship Him. Day and night they think about that God. They dream about their God.

They're thinking of ways to worship this God. Lord, what am I thinking about? Do I have a greater passion to serve the true God? Or do they have a greater passion to worship a false God? I've been ashamed. I'll tell you honestly, I don't know about you.

I have hung my head in shame before God and said, Lord, forgive me. I do not serve you with as much zeal as those people serve that false God. Please, help me, I repent.

You see, if you want to change, you got to repent. First of all, you got to be honest. You got to be honest before God because He came to save sinners.

He never came for self-righteous people who sit back and say, oh, well, I'm okay. I'll tell you, I'm not okay. I'm a long way from being okay right now.

And that's why I repent and weep and cry before God often. Not in the presence of others because I don't want any honor from people. But in secret before God.

You need to do that too. Zeal for God's house must consume us for the purity of God's house. This is my father's house.

How dare you do business here? That must be our desire. Even if you don't get up to preach like me and you don't have that gift, but that zeal must consume us. God, what can I do to keep your house pure? Let me begin with myself.

Let me begin with my heart and see that my heart, there are no money changers sitting inside. This is the first temple, by the way. The first temple we have to cleanse is not the church.

The first temple we have to cleanse is the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. But don't try and cleanse the church before you cleanse yourself. That would be hypocrisy.

See that there are no money changers in your heart. See that there are no sellers of doves and sheep in your heart in God's name. If you're selling sheep and doves in the marketplace, excellent.

I don't care if you make 50% profit on it or 100%. That's fine. But in the name of God, zero.

We must run at a loss when it comes to God's house, God's work. That our Christianity should have brought us loss and not gain. Not pleasure but pain.

Not how much we have gained but how much we have lost. How much we have sacrificed. Because we've decided to build God's house and be a part of God's house.

Those are the people with whom God is going to build His house. Those who say, Lord, I will never offer to you that which costs me nothing. We have a Christendom today that's offering to God polluted sacrifices.

What is a polluted sacrifice? In the Old Testament it was a terrible sin to offer a polluted sacrifice. Now I'll define what a polluted sacrifice is. When you offer to God that which costs you nothing.

You gain by serving God. You gain by coming to the church. I'm not talking about God blessing you because you're a wholehearted Christian.

That happens to all. I know it's happened to me. God's blessed the little business I've done for over 30 years way beyond my expectation.

I didn't make profit from you people. Or from any of the poor people in all of our churches. I mean if God blesses your business where you do it because you honor Him, that's wonderful.

But when you do it in the name of Christ and make a profit, that's serious. That's very serious. So, you know, you notice that, see how when you don't listen to God's word, what happens? This is right at the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

What does He call His house? Read carefully. Verse 16. This is my Father's house.

Okay. Now I want you to turn to Mark's gospel in chapter 11. Now Mark's gospel, chapter 11, was just a few days before He was going to be crucified.

We read here in Mark 11 You know this is the time when He got onto a donkey. We read Mark 11. He said, Go into the village opposite, verse 2, and as you enter you'll see a colt in which nobody sat and bring him here and then we read they brought the colt, verse 7, to Jesus and He sat on it.

And you know, in the churches they celebrate this as Palm Sunday with just a few days before they celebrate Good Friday. It was just within a few days, less than a week. Before He was crucified.

Just a few days. This was the end of His ministry. He was riding on the donkey and came to Jerusalem and we read here in verse 11 He entered Jerusalem.

What we saw in John chapter 2 was the beginning of His ministry. What we see in Mark chapter 11 is the end of His ministry. That was probably a week after He started His ministry.

This is a week before He ended His ministry. Notice what He does. He entered Jerusalem came into the temple again and He looked around at everything.

This is three and a half years after John chapter 2. And He went back to Bethany. He looked around He doesn't say what He saw but I'll tell you what He saw in a few moments. And He went back to Bethany.

The next day He left Bethany and we went past the fig tree we'll forget that. Verse 15 He came to Jerusalem the next day. And He entered the temple this time and the second time He began to drive out

those who were buying and selling in the temple overturned the tables of the money changers and seats of those who were selling doves and He wouldn't permit anybody to carry any merchandise through the temple.

And He began to teach them saying My house should be called a house of prayer. But you made it a robber's den. Do you remember what we read in John chapter 2? Don't make My Father's house a place of business.

Now what has it become? A robber's den. A place of business degenerates into a robber's den. He calls them robbers.

They were robbers. And I think He'll call a lot of Christian preachers today robbers. They start by doing business finally end up as robbers.

That means they take what they have no right to take. They ask people to give. Do you know what mugging is? I don't know if you know that word.

I'll teach you a new word in the English language called mugging. Mugging is if you walk down a dark road pray that it'll never happen to you. Some lonely road and somebody comes in I mean in America they'll put a gun to your back.

In India they put a knife and say give me your wallet and give me your purse and give me your cell phone and give me this and give me that. And if you're a wise person you'll just give it and go away. Because you want to save your life.

Now what do you think mugging is in the name of Jesus Christ? In the puppet. You stick a verse at somebody not a knife. You don't bring your tights into God's house a curse upon all of you.

That's worse than a knife. I'd rather take a knife than God's curse, right? Bring it in. Poor people sitting there who don't know the scriptures who don't know that this entire old covenant has been abolished Never heard these things.

They dish out their money. What do you want? Ornaments? Okay, here it is. Whatever it is.

Collect it. It's a racket. Taking advantage of others.

It's become a robber's den. What's the difference between that robber who mugs you on the street and this preacher who mugs you from the pulpit? No difference. Robbers.

This fellow does it in the name of Christ. That fellow does it for himself. I think he's more honest.

He's saying, I'm doing it for myself. I'm not doing it in any God's name. The crook is here in the pulpit.

You've made it a robber's den. So, how did this happen again? It always happens. The Lord comes and cleanses the temple for a little while.

Everything is quiet. You go one week after. Jesus cleanses the temple.

Nothing is happening. But you go a couple of weeks later and one fellow has come in. Set up his table.

Slowly seeing if anybody is coming to disturb him. Little bit. Somebody else sees that.

Hey, this fellow is making profit. I might as well join him too. Another fellow comes in.

That's how it's been in the church. One preacher gets up and preaches his gospel. Hey, this guy is making money and there's a preacher.

Another fellow comes and he joins him. And gradually the whole house of God is filled with all these preachers sitting in their tables making money. It happens.

Zeal for God's house. Who were the two greatest prophets in the Old Testament? Moses and Elijah. They stood with Jesus in the Mount of Transfiguration.

What do we see? Do you see a situation in Moses' life where he had suppressed zeal for God's people, consumed them? Yes. He had gone away from God's people just for one month. Forty days.

Six weeks. Less than six weeks. By the time these people have started worshipping a golden calf.

You read in Exodus 32. And here Moses is getting the Ten Commandments from God written by God's hand on rock. Two pieces of rock.

He's coming down this mountain with these two pieces of rock and all this. The whole crowd of them. And who's the leader? His co-worker Aaron.

Who didn't have the guts to stand against what the people wanted. And Moses came down and he was so angry. He threw those tablets down and broke them.

Saying you fellas, you don't deserve these holy commandments of God. Did God punish Moses for that? That was holy anger. Breaking the tablets which God has written.

God didn't punish Moses. Another time. Forty years later.

Once we read in Numbers 20. The people complained against Moses. What you wretched fellow.

Which wretched place you brought us here. There's no water to drink. Then he got angry at them and says you rebels.

I'll teach you a lesson. Then God punished him. Moses, that anger was not righteous anger.

And that time he didn't break any holy tablets or any such thing. And he got such a severe punishment that what he had looked forward for 40 years he was so disappointed. He pleads, please let me go into the land.

I've been looking forward to this Lord. I've been faithful 40 years. Okay, I just slipped up once.

Sorry Moses. You are a leader. One slip up is enough for me to punish you.

You cannot enter the land. See, anger is a pretty serious thing. And you get angry with people because they call you some names.

And that's what they call Moses there. But in Exodus 32 when he got angry, God didn't punish him at all. Because there is a zeal for God's house that consumed Moses.

And you know what? You must read there. I don't have time to show it to you. Exodus 32.

He ground that golden calf into powder. Powdered gold. And he threw it into the water.

Then you know what he did? He made the people drink it. This is your God drinking now. And then he called.

He said, who is on the Lord's side here? Moses and Joshua. Two of us are here. Who is going to come and stand with me? And all the people are standing there.

Nobody is moving. Nobody wants to be unpopular. That tribe of Levi came up and said, OK, we stand with you.

Moses said, OK, you tribe of Levi, go into this crowd and don't spare anybody. Don't spare your father or your son or your relatives or anybody. Kill them.

The leading idolaters. 3,000 people were killed. And God said to Moses, like I said the other day, the test is over.

That was a surprise test. Test is over. I was just trying to find out which of the 12 tribes I must select to be my priests to come and do my holy service.

I found out. Tribe of Levi. Now you know why God chose the tribe of Levi.

It wasn't just taking names out of a hat. God doesn't choose like that. He tests a person to see whether he's got a zeal for God's house.

And he chooses him. You read that. Levi, because he had a zeal for God's house.

Moses had a zeal for God's house. Elijah. It was like that on the Mount Carmel.

He says, all these 850 prophets and here I alone against all of them. Let's see whose side God is on. And he said, finish these fellows.

Killed 450 of them himself. These Old Testament prophets had the same zeal that Jesus had. It was not for themselves.

I mean, if you called Elijah a devil, that was OK. But if you went astray from God, worshipping idols, that would be terrible. But certainly with Jesus that was true.

Some of these Old Testament prophets like Moses didn't have victory over sin fully. God punished them. But when it came to God's house, the consistent mark of every prophet in the Old Testament was zeal for your people, for purity among your people consumes me.

They were passionate that God's people should be pure. And that's why most of the prophets were killed. That's why Stephen said in Acts chapter 7, which of the prophets did you not persecute? Can you name one prophet your fathers did not persecute? Every one of them they persecuted because they stood for God.

And the false prophets were there who said, no, no, no. God loves you. Everything's OK, fellas.

Doesn't matter. I mean, you sin naturally. Our nature is like that.

God understands it. And those are the false prophets and there are plenty of them today too. They never preach against sin.

Have you ever heard a message in all these Christian television programs against the love of money? Have you ever heard a message against anger? Lusting with your eyes? I've never heard one. Yeah, they don't preach against sins. The sins that Jesus preached against.

Seeking the honor of men. Have you ever heard a message against that? These are the things Jesus spoke about in the Sermon on the Mount? That's the condition of Christendom today. And I want to say, dear brothers and sisters, you need to be filled with the Spirit.

It says in Isaiah chapter 59. Isaiah 59. See the condition of God's people.

Verse 13 onwards. Middle. Reading from the Message Bible.

Spreading false rumors. Pregnant with lies. Justice is beaten back.

Righteousness is banished to the sidelines. Verse 14. Truth staggers down the street.

Honesty is to be found nowhere. Good is missing in action. Truth is lacking.

And anyone who renounces evil is beaten and robbed. And God looked and saw. And it was displeasing in His sight.

That there was no justice. He couldn't believe what He saw. That there was not a single person around to correct this awful situation.

So He did it Himself. He took on the work of righteousness. He put on, verse 17, righteousness like a breastplate.

And the last part of that verse, He wrapped Himself with zeal. As a mantle, I believe God needs many brothers and sisters in our day who have the mind of Christ. Who are concerned when they see all this evil.

And concerned when they see nobody standing up. Everybody seeking the honor of men. Everybody seeking to butter people and please people.

Everybody seeking their own gain. He wants people who will put righteousness as a breastplate and helmet of salvation on their head. And garments of vengeance for clothing and wrap themselves with zeal as a mantle.

And fight the devil. You don't fight with flesh and blood. Fight the devil who has brought that spirit into the temple.

Finally, they still didn't do anything about it. And Jesus says in Matthew 23, Matthew 23, just before He went to the cross, He says these words in verse 37, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, Matthew 23, 37, stones those who are sent to her. How many times I wanted to embrace your children, but you would not allow me.

Now, your house, whose house is it now? Your house. What was it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry? My father's house. My house.

But I tried more than once to warn you, fellas, it's no longer my house. It's your house. Go and do what you like with it.

That's what happens to a church. The Lord said, this is my house. Don't make it a place of business.

People don't listen. They listen for a short period. Finally, it becomes a robber's den.

Again, He comes and does something. They don't bother. What is He going to do? Okay, fellas, this is no longer my house.

This is your house. The Lord told the church in Ephesus. Ephesus was one of the finest churches in Paul's time.

Paul planted it. He spent three years there. Not a single wolf could come in when Paul was there because he made sure those wolves were turned out of the door.

Yeah, Paul was a strong man. He was the type of fellow who would smite somebody blind and say, you enemy of all righteousness, God's going to smite you blind. You won't see the sun for a season.

Things like that. Because he was concerned about God's house. Sometimes he slipped up and he even said that to a high priest as well.

And he apologized where he hurt people. But he was that type of man. And he said to the elders in Ephesus, he said, I know what will happen when I go.

You fellas will not keep the wolves at bay. They'll come right in. And sure enough, 30 years later, you read in Revelation chapter 2, the church in Ephesus has lost its first love.

And the Lord says, if you don't repent, I'll take away the lampstand from your midst. That means I will no longer call this my house. It will be your house.

Same thing in Revelation chapter 2. And that has happened in 2000 years to so many churches. That's why I've always said the most important gift in any church is the gift of prophecy. The prophetic word that keeps the church pure.

And what a great need there is for it. The Bible says in the last days, there'll be a famine of the word of the Lord all over. Men will travel here and there to get the word of the Lord and they won't find it.

That famine is coming now. We're living in those days. Famine of the word of the Lord.

Not a famine of the Bible. The Bible Society makes sure that it's always the best selling book in the whole world. But there's a lot of difference between having a Bible and the word of the Lord coming to us from God's heart.

There's going to be a famine of that. The prophetic word. And I'll tell you that.

I've heard a lot of preaching. I'm absolutely convinced, even if you're not. We're living in those days of famine.

And there are a few, thank God, there are a few hungry people among God's people who are wandering here, wandering there. Coming to hear a prophetic word. We need to be faithful.

And if the Lord tarries and if He comes in our lifetime, we must be faithful until He comes. And my burden is that if the Lord tarries and He doesn't come in our lifetime, then there must be another generation clothed with zeal. That a zeal of God's house is consumed in.

I pray that it will be so. Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before God.

Each of us has a different calling. You may not be called to preach, but you must have a zeal for God's house. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.

If you love the church, you'll give yourself for it. Heavenly Father, help us. Fill us with the Holy Spirit that we might have the mind of Christ as we look at your church today.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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