

Our Fathers House

by Carl McMurray

Mark 11:15-18 is a familiar account to most Bible readers, where for the second time Jesus appears at the Temple during the Passover feast and clears out the money changers, the sellers of doves and cattle, and the handlers of other merchandise. Scripture says that he cast them all out and would not even allow anyone to carry goods through the temple.

Jesus' reasoning and his teaching at this time was that it was written, "*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.*" Jesus had such a high degree of respect for the Father's house, the temple, that he was angered that anyone would use it for any purpose other than that which it was intended for. And he faced these carnal attitudes and stood up to them on TWO occasions, not just here. They must not have gotten the lesson clear the first time.

But, why was this written? Is it just another example of Jewish failure in their respect for the Father, or perhaps to show us that Jesus was human and could get angry also, over the right things? Or, could there be a deeper lesson for us, in remembering that Jesus left us an example that we should follow in His footsteps, 1 Peter. 2:21.

Although the Father does not have a physical temple today, 1 Corinthians 3:16 is where Paul calls the church the temple of God. He names it as the dwelling place of the Spirit and in verse 17 calls it holy. Is God's house today, due any less reverence than His house there in 33 AD?

Instead of it being a spiritual institution, many today have turned it into a den of suppers, feasts, and meals with their church kitchens and fellowship halls. Others have turned it into a den of recreation with their church ball teams and church gymnasiums. Still others have made the church into a den of social reform with their free suppers, unwed mother's homes, retirement homes, day- schools, orphan homes, elementary schools, and even college donations. And all of the above and more are subsidized in part or wholly by funds taken up on the first day of the week in the name of doing the Lord's work! Please understand that I do not "hate" chicken dinners, ball teams, unwed mothers, private education, or orphans as we are commonly accused. But I do hate that my Father's house is being misused, misled, and misunderstood by those that need it the most because it is being re-purposed toward carnal things instead of the real spiritual mission that Christ died for, i.e., seeking and saving the lost, Luke 19:10. Jesus did not look the other way with such activities, and we should not either.