

Slide Children's Moment

Theme: Show your love by your actions

Object: A Mother's Day Card

Scripture: ⁹“By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:9-11 NASB)

I am sure that all of you know that it is Mother's Day. Did you give your mother a card or a present for Mother's Day? This Mother's Day card says, "Mom, I love you!" Do you think your mother likes to hear you tell her that you love her? Of course she does! But do you know what your mother would like even more? She would like for you to show her that you love her.

What are some ways you can show your mother that you love her? Well, you might help out around the house. You could clean your room or empty the trash. You could show her that you love her by obeying her when she tells you to do something. You can show her you love her by getting along with your brothers and sisters. It is easy to tell your mom that you love her, but if you really love her, your actions will show it!

Do you think that God likes to hear us tell Him that we love Him? I know He does. But He likes it even better when our actions show Him that we love Him. How do we do that? The Bible tells us that, God showed His love for us by sending His one and only Son so that we might live through Jesus. It goes on to say that, since God

loved us so much, we ought to love one another. One of the best ways to show our love for God is to love one another. Yes, God likes to hear us say, "I love you," but He would rather see by the way we worship Him we are saying, "I love you."

As we celebrate Mother's Day, let's tell Mom that we love her, but more importantly, let's remember to show her that we love her. And as we worship today, let's tell God we love Him, but more importantly, let's remember to show Him we love Him by loving one another.

Dear Lord, we have come to your house today to say, "I love you." Help us to go out of here today and show You that we love You by the way we live. May we obey our parents, showing our love and honor of them and of You, God. Amen.

Slide **Cleansing the Temple**

Open in Prayer

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A few weeks prior to arriving in Jerusalem Jesus and His disciples enjoyed a wonderful time in Cana at the wedding and the celebration that followed. The fellowship journeyed to Capernaum on the northwestern coast of the Sea of Galilee. From there they traveled south to Jerusalem a distance of about 120 miles taking them 5 to 8 days. Jerusalem was definitely the place to be during the Passover. Verse 13 reads, “The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” One thing that came to light in my study is usually most societies speak of traveling “up” when going north and traveling “down” when going south. But here in verses 12 and 13 we find just the opposite. We find a clue as to what this might imply in the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus speaks of judgment on several cities. **Slide**²⁰ “Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent.” Jesus refers to several cities and then says, **Slide**²³ “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.” (Matthew 11:20 & 23_{NASB}) Capernaum then represents not only unbelieving people who witnessed Jesus’ miracles, but all who are blind to the creation and miracles of God that surrounds them. The unbelieving will go “down” to Hades. The only reason the Jewish nation was not consumed, as their lack of faith deserved, was because God sustained them, likewise, the only reason you enjoy salvation is by the gift of the

grace of God. When traveling to Jerusalem one must travel up for it sits on a plateau, but in addition to this John writes the words of Jesus in Revelation chapter 3, “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and **Slide** the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.” (Revelation 3:12 NASB)

Jerusalem was where God was to dwell among His chosen people and Jerusalem was the City of God. There will be a new Jerusalem, but God no longer dwells in a man-made temple, but in the temple of His creation, the souls of all believers.

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Verse 13 says. “The Passover of the Jews ...” The Passover commemorated Israel’s deliverance from bondage in Egypt. As we have learned from Exodus the angel of death “passed over” the houses of the Israelites marked with the blood of a lamb and struck down the first-born of all living creatures, both man and animal in Egypt. Passover was observed on the 14th day of Nisan or by our calendar in mid-March to mid-April. On the Day of Passover lambs were slaughtered and the Passover meal eaten. The Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately followed the Passover. This is the first of three Passovers found in the Gospel of John. The Passover was to be a time of focusing on their deliverance by God and how their lives were to be centered on worshipping God. As we see in verse 13 John labels it as the “The Passover of the Jews ...” No longer was it the Passover of God’s deliverance, but it had become a human ritual, which lacked meaning and a heart for God.

In the previous chapter I pointed out how that in the opening portion of John’s Gospel two things are noticed repeatedly—the setting aside of Judaism, and the

turning away from Christ. This was emphasized at some length in our last chapter, where we observed that the miracle of making water into wine at the Cana marriage-feast brought attention to the presence of the six waterpots of stone being empty and this symbolized the spiritual condition of Israel at that time - they had lost the joy of their being the chosen people of God and were devoid of spiritual life.

Because of this lack of worship and the domination of Israel by Rome a group of Jews known as Zealots sprang up. The name Zealot comes from the Greek word “*zelos*” meaning zeal. Some people claim that Jesus’ cleansing of the Temple marks Him as a revolutionary or Zealot. The Zealots were fanatical about the keeping of Jewish law and their expectation of the imminent dawning of the kingdom of God. Jesus appearance certainly was the imminent dawning of the kingdom of God for He was God incarnate – the Messiah. However, the Zealots did not see or understand this, just as people today are blind to who Jesus is. How many religions; Mormons, Catholics, Jehovah Witnesses, Islam, Messianic Christians, Christian denominations, etc. are zealous in keeping the law or rules or salvation by works instead of enjoying a relationship with God through Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is a gift of God?

Zealots incorporated violence into the efforts to affect change. Because they frequently used political killings to further their cause they were given the name “*Sicarii*” which is a Latin term meaning “*dagger men or assassins*”. The effort of the Zealot movement produced a politico-religious revolt in 66 AD. As a result of this revolt the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD. A group of Zealots held out until 74 AD on the plateau stronghold of Masada. Jesus certainly did not belong to this group and never promoted revolution from outside efforts,

but Jesus began a revolution that came from the inside.

Now that we have laid the foundation to understand the Jewish religion and atmosphere in Jerusalem at the time of Christ we will move on to what Jesus encountered upon His arrival. Verse 14 says, “**And He (Jesus) found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.**” Passover was a busy time for Jewish families and for the Temple. One requirement of Passover was that families search their home and remove all leaven. If there was any leaven left their house was defiled. The lesson God wanted the Jewish people to learn was that they were to stay pure in their lives and worship. Mixing the acceptable standards of the world with God’s standards then defiles everything. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians, **Slide** “Your boasting is not good. **Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?** Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. **For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.** Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Corinthians 5:6-8 NASB) **Blank** This makes clear the need for spiritual purity in our lives and to not compromise with worldly values and to keep our focus and desire upon God. But, does not this same principle apply to the church? Yes, it does, as the church of our Lord Jesus Christ we are to preach, teach, study, meditate on and apply the Word of God to every aspect of our lives individually, as a family and as a community. This was also true of the Temple. Jesus finds that the Temple is no longer a “House of Prayer” as Isaiah 56 says, **Slide** “**Even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar;**

for **My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.**" (Isaiah 56:10 NASB) In the second temple cleansing near the end of Jesus' ministry here on earth Matthew, Mark and Luke record Jesus quoting Isaiah. **Blank** The Temple of the Most Holy God was to be a place for people to worship, pray and communicate with God and it was to be a beacon to the unsaved world of who God is and their need for God. Instead it had become a place of business and not only business, but also corrupt business. **Slide** Around the Temple proper there was an outer court area of approximately 14 acres. It was filled with stalls, animals and people selling. **Blank** What may have started out in an effort to serve people who had traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover to enable them to provide a sacrifice at the Temple for their family had grown into businesses that were not housed outside the Temple grounds, but inside and not for reasonable prices but for inflated prices, prices meant to make the business owners wealthy, the temple guards and priests wealthy with their cut or commission and the leadership of the Jewish religion wealthy. This wealth was acquired from the sweat and labor of the poor. The Jewish religion and Temple of God had become crass and materialistic and as the Apostle Matthew recorded, Jesus called it a **"robber's den"**. (Matthew 21:13) The Temple tax had to be paid with Jewish coins - foreigners and those with Roman or any other coins had to exchange them. The Temple could not be defiled by coins honoring foreign Gods or leaders. Foreigners and those with Roman or any other coins had to exchange them for Jewish coins. The exchange rate was terribly high. **Slide** The Temple must have looked much like the Eastern Bazaars you see on the travel shows; crowded throngs of people and animals. **Blank** Jews may have been diligent in cleaning their houses of leaven for the Passover, but the Jewish religion and the Temple were completely filled with the corrupt leaven of the world, materialism and greed. Colossians and 1 Corinthians say the leaven

that corrupts contains covetousness, extortion, and idolatry – we find all three of these active in the corruption of the worship in Jerusalem and Temple. As we said earlier John chapter one and the story of the Cana wedding show a glaring picture of what Judaism had become: **Slide** first, a *blinded priesthood* (John 1:19-26); **Slide** second, a *joyless nation* (no "wine," John 2:3); **Slide** third, a *desecrated temple*. (John 2:16).

The result was that Jesus acted quickly and decisively for the purity of the temple grounds and temple worship was a matter of God's honor. We read in verses 15 and 16 of our study passage what Jesus did. "And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, 'Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business.'" There are several things to take notice of here in these verses and actions. Jesus had **not** yet declared Himself to be the Messiah, but we see here in verse 16 He calls the Temple His Father's house. This now plainly declares that He is the Son of the Most High God, the Messiah. No one else, not Moses nor Solomon called the Tabernacle or the Temple "My Father's house." There were cords or ropes lying all around that had been used to tie up or lead the animals being sold for sacrifice. It would not have taken long to make a whip. Jesus' act brings to light what is often missed by Christians and churches and is certainly thought of as wrong by the world. We see a side of Jesus' character many deny. Jesus is spoken of as gentle and compassionate and He is. But this is not all He is. God is the Light that exposes the darkness as well as Love. God is a God of holy righteousness as well being filled with infinite grace. God is first and foremost holy and then He is merciful. The scriptures declare,

Slide “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:31 NASB) To whom is Paul referring to? Let’s back up and begin in verse 26, please turn to Hebrews chapter 10, verse 26. “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy *on the testimony of two or three witnesses*. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has **Slide** **trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?** For we know Him who said, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.’ And again, ‘THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.’ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:26-31 NASB) Paul is quoting the words of God from Deuteronomy chapter 32. **Blank** Just before this passage Paul says believers are to hold firm to their in hope in Christ and to not forsake coming together as an assembly or church. God’s judgment will be swift and decisive for anyone who knows the sacrifice of Christ by His blood and has trampled it underfoot treating the sanctified as unclean. This grieves God the Spirit. In the Old Testament God judges HIS PEOPLE. In the new covenant of Christ all who do not belong to Christ will come before God at the Judgment Seat found in the Book of Revelation. No one will have an excuse. There was no excuse for those who were in charge of the Temple and responsible for the teaching of the people. The spiritual leaders of Israel changed what God commanded and in the process destroyed anything spiritual in their way. If we now look back through history and the scriptures and see the evil idolatrous behavior at the Temple what does it tell us of our behavior today? There are people who call themselves Christians and there are groups who call themselves

the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ that are just as idolatrous and corrupt today. We must then ask ourselves are we the true remnant Church of Jesus or are we of the many false and idolatrous who want to look, sound and appear Christian, but who the Lord will judge? **Slide 2** It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. However, it is only terrifying for those who do not believe and even more terrifying for those who fain belief. **Blank** Looking again at verses 15 and 16 Jesus' behavior was corrective not destructive. A. W. Pink who was born in England became an evangelist, pastor and eventually a theologian from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. In the second half of his life he came to America and pastored several churches here. A. W. Pink said this of Jesus' actions at the Temple, **Slide** "The oxen and sheep He *drove out*, and these were in no danger of being lost by this treatment. The money of the changers He *threw on the ground*, and this could be easily picked up again and carried away. The doves He simply ordered to be *taken away*: had He done more with them, they might have flown away, and been lost to their owners. Thus, the perfect One combined wisdom with zeal." **Blank** It is amazing that Jesus' action did not create a riot; it did not bring the Roman garrison stationed in For Antonia, which overlooked the temple grounds. Jesus' behavior was swift and was unmistakable in the meaning of both His actions and words. Jesus was loyal to His Father and He would purge His Father's house of impure worship. Jesus' action gave only temporary results and He purged the Temple again at the end of His earthly ministry – these were but foreshadows of the future. When Jesus returns this next time He will purge impure worship and dishonor of the Most Holy God, His Father for all eternity. Jesus during His earthy ministry called people to the most radical revolution possible – to give up their control of their lives and let Jesus be their Master and thus their Savior and Lord while on earth and for eternity in heaven.

We know that even the disciples must have been dumbstruck at Jesus' swift and sure action. Verse 17 of John chapter 2 says, "His disciples remembered that it was written, 'ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.'" The Holy Spirit brought the meaning and purpose back to the disciple's minds at a later date, possibly when the Holy Spirit instructed them in writing the Gospel of Jesus the Christ with each book given the author's name.

We finish our study with verse 18, "The Jews then said to Him, 'What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?'" The Jews now begin to react after Jesus is done. They do not attack Him though their corrupt businesses are exposed for what they truly are. They approach Him and want to know by whose authority is He acting on. The blind and spiritually dead are – dead. In several places in the scriptures we see both the Jewish leaders and the people demanding signs. Even though Jesus showed many signs and wonders they never believed. Their blind and harden hearts were corrupt and failed to see Jesus as He really was, as we saw in Matthew's recording of Jesus' pronouncement of judgment on Capernaum. This questioning of Christ also exposes the corruption of the Temple authorities. They hoped that no sign could be given and that they then would not have to give an account of their corruption of the Temple. It is not the same today? People demanding to see Jesus and touch Him to believe. Demanding miracles to show power. TV evangelists and some pastors work to produce miracles not to glorify Christ but to elevate themselves. Jesus was not trying to eliminate Temple worship, but reform it. Jesus worked to transform what was - into what God intended it to be. This is what Jesus continues to do this very day. He transforms those who believe into what God has always intended them to be – not just for eternity in heaven, but right now, right here.

Jesus demanded His followers to give total surrender of self and complete acceptance of Him as the Messiah. This called for their self-sacrifice and obedience and in return they received a life of hardship and service, but also a life He promised and He fulfills as recorded in John 14:27, hear the word of our Lord Jesus, **Slide** “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (John 14:27 NASB) Jesus demands your all and He freely gives His all. What say you my brothers and sisters, my beloved, “Have you the courage?” Jesus is not asking you to overthrow this corrupt world. He will give you a new perspective with which you may do the bravest things – through obedience to God and the love of God you will be able to share the Gospel of Christ and change the world from the inside out. I close with the words of Paul the Beloved, **Slide** “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21 NASB) My beloved we are part of the greatest adventure of all – live it with passion!