

WHEN JESUS CAME TO CHURCH

Intro. - The ~~land temple~~ ^{synagogue} church of Jesus time.

I. Notice the time when Jesus came to church

A. Joan. 2:13-16 - During the Passover

B. We can be sure Jesus did attend faithfully the religious services. - Lk. 4:16 "as His custom was"

C. He could have used many excuses to have stayed away, if He had wanted to

1. That He was holy + didn't need to go.
2. That the service wasn't all it should be.
3. That those there didn't like Him.

II. Notice what Jesus found in the church.

A. merchants selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and money-changers. John 2:14

~~B. Jesus drove them out. 4:15~~

C. Does Jesus find things going on in the church which he is not pleased with?

III. Notice what Jesus called the church, or the house of God. (See Isaiah 56:7)

A. mt. 21:13 - "The House of Prayer"

B. Today much preaching + singing is done in the house of God, but only a few will venture forth "only for a prayer meeting"

IV. Jesus was cast out of the Synagogue at Nazareth. Lk. 4:16-30

A. He read the scripture + applied it to Himself

B. It was a message of grace and hope

C. Many churches today do not like Jesus or His gospel.

V. Notice WHAT JESUS DID in the Temple.

- A. We can be sure that his purpose was primarily to pray and worship.
- B. But first he had to deal with something that hindered the atmosphere of prayer and worship.
- C. He cast out the merchants and their customers.

1. Jesus always protests against the commercialization of the church.
2. John says that Jesus used violence to achieve his ends.
3. This act symbolizes the fact that Jesus is pressing his messianic claim. This is the way the early Christian community viewed this event. It doesn't necessarily give us the right to use violence under similar conditions.
4. It illustrates what can happen when man's perversion of the holy comes under those eyes that are too pure to behold iniquity.
5. Jesus was justly indignant at the secular traffic which had made the temple courts resemble a market place.
6. It is a slow and almost invisible process by which a holy place is profaned and turned into a bargain counter where a trinket replaces the cross.

It might be any distortion of the true purpose for which the church exists; It is every secularization of her life; It is any manipulation of her message or of her ministry to promote some end beyond itself.

Any of these things can turn the House of Prayer into a den of Thieves.

D. But with the judgment that cleanses comes the Word that binds up and heals. We read that Jesus also taught daily and preached the gospel in the temple.

Luke 19:47a & 20:1

When God wants to invade the world,
his first raid is upon his own people.
Judgment must first begin at the House
of God.

It is the "goodness of God" that leads
to repentance

VI. Notice the remarkable results that followed
when Jesus went to church.

A. First, Opposition was Aroused against Him.
The Chief priests and the scribes and
the chief of the people sought to
destroy him.

This is the pattern throughout the
world. When Christ can no longer be
avoided, when it is clear that he never
will be turned aside,

men seek to be rid of him.

They say, "His claims are ridiculous;
his demands are impossible;
his purity is unrealistic."

To officialdom of this world,

he is a disturber of the peace.

The Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevski's
The Brothers Karamazov can think only of
burning him, with all his heretical kin
and kind at the stake.

Some would betray him; others deny him.
Most of his so-called friends desert him
in the hour of trial.

"Away with him," they shout!

"Hide him behind the sanctuary;

enshrine him in ritual or in doctrine
or in a creed!

Do anything but take him seriously and
follow him!"

B. But the will to do evil to Jesus always
comes to wit's end.

The opponents of Jesus can never "find
what they might do."

The buried Christ will not stay dead.
No sooner is His obituary read than He
sits by God's right hand and grins at
Voltaire and other skeptics who predicted
the end of Christianity

C. Yet another important result of Jesus's going to church was that "all the people were very attentive to hear him."

1. From the day when "certain Greeks among them came up to worship at the temple and presented themselves to Philip, and desired him, saying 'Sir, we would see Jesus'-- from that day to this, there have been multitudes who yearned for Jesus and who have made the quest of their lives to find and see and trust and follow Jesus.

2. Are you attentive to hear him today?

--to hear his words of judgment, bringing conviction and contrition?

--to hear his words of grace, bringing forgiveness and acceptance?

IN CONCLUSION we must ask, What would Jesus think if he came to this church today?

Would "his spirit be vexed within him"?

Would he be grieved over anything He should find here?

Or, would he commend you for making this truly "A House of Prayer" for all people?

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