

## What Ought To Take Place In God's House? (Luke 19:45-48)

The Lord Jesus Christ had just been inducted, by His disciples, into the city of Jerusalem as its King and Messiah, much to the chagrin of the religious leaders that were based out of the city (**v.28-40**). He had also just wept over Jerusalem for its unbelief that He was the Messiah and declared a prophecy that would be fulfilled about thirty years later (**v.41-44**). He then came to the Temple, the center of religious worship for the Jews. This was the place of sacrifice for sin, giving to God's work, singing God's praises, and performing other acts of worship toward the Lord God.

However, when Jesus arrived, He noticed that God's House had been turned into a pale shadow of what God intended it to be and set about to correct it. Believers in Jesus Christ do not worship at the Temple today, but are to assemble at local churches to encourage one another (**Hebrews 10:24-25**), learn how to serve Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 4:11-13**), and worship Him in Spirit and Truth (**John 4:24**). In truth, many churches are pale shadows of what they are to be; meaning we need a revolution back to the Bible to see what we ought to do with God's House.

### I. What God's House Is Not Used For (v.45-46)

When Jesus walked into the Temple, the lack of true worship hit Him instantly. He looked about the outer courtyard and saw certain things that troubled Him. One of these was the **dead religion and tradition** that permeated throughout. Have you ever gone to church and known that it was spiritually dead? This was the Judaism of Jesus' day: dead, formal, and traditional religion.

Religion simply defined is *any system of faith and worship* (Webster). The religion of Judaism was once a thriving one that obeyed God, but had become spiritually dead and corrupt by Jesus' day. The Pharisees, priests, and scribes had taken the scriptures and conformed them to their own profiting, while simply going through the motions of being godly. When Man takes the Bible and uses it for his own agenda, by adding to and taking away from it, God gets upset. We see proof of this by the Word become flesh (**John 1:14**) seeing supposedly spiritual men take His words and profiting from them. This was enough to stir Him to action: speaking against their sin more than once (**Matthew 23**).

The second thing that troubled Jesus was that God's House had been **turned into a business**. Inside the courtyard sat money-changers and men that sold animals for sacrifice. These were not present to help the individual worship easier, but to make a profit off God's work. As seen in the scriptures, God's work is a ministry and not a business. The pastor is not the CEO, the congregation is not made up of customers, and the church organization is not out to make a profit. The purpose of a local church is to serve each other and the community by doing the work of Jesus Christ (**Matthew 20:25-28**). This sight made Jesus angry enough to throw these individuals out of the Temple!

### II. What God's House Is Used For (v.46-47)

So, if we are to keep the dead religion and traditionalism out of the church house, as well as keeping the work of God a ministry, what are we to do? Jesus tells us first, that God's House is to be a **house of prayer**. This is not the dead, formal prayer that is found in a hymn book or recited from a bulletin; but a prayer from the heart of the believer to that of our Father in Heaven. We see examples of churches praying in **Acts** many times. Their power came from prayer. It was through prayer that they were empowered by the Spirit of God (**Acts 2**) to preach effectively and see miracles occur (**Acts 12**). When

was the last time you saw God specifically answer your prayers? When did your church last pray together and see God move? We must get back to real, heartfelt, obedient prayer in our churches in order to please God!

The second thing Jesus tells us is that God's House is a **house of teaching**. After cleansing the Temple, Jesus taught the people. What did He teach them? The Bible. True Bible preaching and teaching takes the scriptures and explains them verse-by-verse (***Nehemiah 8:8***) so that the hearers can apply them to their lives. It is not emailed to the preacher by the denomination, but is a result of his study in the Word and relationship with God. It is not muddled by the preacher's opinion, bias, liberal views, or prejudice; but is given as God gave it to us. Oh, that we would hunger to learn God's Word and that it would be fed to the churches today!

So, what ought to take place in God's House, according to Jesus Christ? Should the church be a place of entertainment: movies, worldly music, worldly dancing, dramas, and other things? Should it be a place of meaningless, unbiblical tradition and dead religion? According to Jesus, it should be a place where we foster a close relationship with the God of Heaven through prayer and the steadfast teaching and preaching of His Word. Which of these things occur in your church? If you hunger for the Word and desire to know God better, I encourage you to give our church a try. We are not perfect, but we aim to be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ and welcome everyone.

*James Bussard is the pastor of Heritage Park Baptist Church that meets at 8 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. in Woodsboro, MD @ 11:30am on Sundays. For questions or comments about this article, please call (301) 304-2127 or write him at HeritageParkPastor@Gmail.com. For more service times and information about the church, please go to [www.FrederickforChrist.com](http://www.FrederickforChrist.com) or call (301) 304-2127.*