

Zeal of Thine House

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Date: 15 January 2023

[0 : 0 0] Turn with me to Luke chapter number 19. Let's be praying for them as they make that trip there. Luke chapter number 19, while you're turning there, let's play a little fill-in-the-blank game here, okay?

Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello, and... Good, all right. So you knew four of the most important ninja turtles. No, that was not right, Caleb.

Four of the most famous artists of the Renaissance, all right? And so why did you guys think I was talking about somebody else here? So Mike Angelom, and if you're wondering, know the pastor here if you're visiting doesn't know a lot about fine arts, okay?

I covered that a couple weeks ago. I just stare and then walk away, you know, a few minutes later. But I read this story as I was looking at examples of great zeal or commitment to their art or craft.

You see it in sports, but that's not the only place that you would see it. So Mike Angelom, he paints the 16th Chapel. He sculpted the statue there of David. He was known to be radically given to his cause.

[0 : 5 9] He wouldn't hardly sleep or eat. He wouldn't take his shoes off. One time they had to cut his shoes off because he had been working for so long, just working around the clock. He was known for that.

And what brought him to that place, when he was a student, an arts student, his teacher looked at him, and he looked deep into Mike Angelom's eyes. I'm going to call him Michael from now on if you're okay with that, all right?

And he looks into his eyes and he says this, this will cost you your life. And without a moment's hesitation, Michael Angelom responds with this, yes, I know, but what else is life for?

And so this is a story of just great zeal. And there's histories just filled with those, of people of just great zeal. However, the direction of zeal is more important than the degree of zeal.

The object, the knowledge, is more important about your zeal than the degree of it. Today we see that Jesus is consumed, eaten up with a zeal for his house.

[2 : 0 3] We're going to see a zeal according to knowledge. So the title here, Zeal of Thine House. If you're looking at Luke chapter number 19, you're not going to find that expression. That's not even an expression when Jesus comes to the temple the second time.

But that expression comes when Jesus first came to the temple. Some three years earlier, we find Jesus in the temple, and the disciples, when he comes in there, the same thing had happened, the same manner.

Jesus comes in, that's the time that he braids the whip, and then he comes in and he clears out the temple. And when they see this, the disciples say in John chapter number 2, verse 17, and the disciples remember that it was written, the zeal of thine house has eaten me up.

Quotation from Psalm chapter number 69, verse number 9. And so they remember that the zeal of thine house had eaten me up. And so he was fulfilling the second time the prophecies that were given in scripture.

So even though it's the second time in the temple, not much had changed. The same things were happening that he found the first time. It's the second time, but his zeal had not faded either.

[3 : 15] When he comes into town, people that are following are expecting that he's going to go to their version of the capital. They think that he's going to go to the place of the government. He doesn't go there.

We even have this big fish story, right, where Jesus pays the temple tax, where he gets the money, he goes fishing for it, they get it and he pays the temple tax. He doesn't go to the back alleyway, where you think the most corrupt of all sin is happening, but he walks right into the temple and he says that all of this is completely unacceptable.

I like how Pastor John MacArthur says it. He says this, there were things in that nation that only soldiers could make right. There were things in that nation that only righteous leaders could make right. There were things in that nation that only compassionate philanthropists could make right.

There were things there that demanded social reform if they were to be altered, but none of that matters. That is just rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic because what matters is a person's relationship to God.

As Peter puts it, judgment begins at the house of God. And so here's Jesus, who is going to be the refiner that the Old Testament prophesied about.

[4 : 30] In Malachi chapter number 3, verses 1 and 2, it says, He shall suddenly come into the temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in. And at the end of verse number 2, it says that he will be like a refiner's fire.

This refining meant removing what did not belong. As we see it in the different gospel accounts. In John 2, it says that they drove all of them out of the temple. And then in Mark 11, it even goes so far to say, He would not even suffer them for any man to carry any vessel through the temple.

He put a cease and desist completely on the temple in that moment. Nobody move. Nobody can carry this. You cannot continue your actions. So he runs them out of that place.

Jesus is attacking a system. It's an incredible show of power and authority. I don't know if you've ever considered this, but this is a miracle. It's unparalleled.

It's a preview of the power of Jesus to judge. He walked in and his father was being dishonored by what they were doing. And so it needed more than modification.

[5 : 35] It needed more than reforming. They needed more than a life coach. They needed refining. And I'm aware this morning that this building that we are in is not a temple. But I also know this, that this is the place where those who have been indwelt by the Spirit, which are believers, meet for the purpose of worshiping and hearing from God.

And let us pray that Jesus would never need to come to this place among us and tell us to stop. May he receive the glory that is due unto his name. And so before we get to that place where Jesus takes those actions, we find Jesus there in tears.

In Luke 19, 41, when he come near, behold the city, he wept over it, saying, if thou hast known even now, at least in this day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now thou hast hid from thine eyes.

Jesus was weeping over the city because they did not understand the significance of what was happening on that day. I've asked you to pray with me often over the last year. Psalm 90, verse 16, which says, let thy work appear unto thy servants and let thy glory unto their children.

Here the glory of God was being hid from the children. Here the glory of God was being hid from so many people. The purpose of that place was not being fulfilled because it had been overran with selfish ambitions.

[6 : 57] And so do you see this world as God would have us to see it? There are religious systems today that keep people blinded to the gospel. And if we as a church aren't able to identify them, be moved to tears by them, what keeps us from believing that we are not building them ourselves?

Occasionally, I get to go to other churches and preach about missions, which is what you do when you pastor a church that has so many missionaries on the field. You go to a church and they will ask.

And many churches have heard just about everything you think you could say about missions. But there's one thing that I know that I can always say that makes people wake up for a moment and it's this, this.

If they understand this, what really seems for them to understand is that if you're not helping people in your community and your children find and follow Jesus now, then you better pray that this community will have a church that will reach your grandchildren.

Because if you're not a church that is sharing the gospel with our community, if we're not a church that's wanting to send the gospel around the world, then we're going to be a church that is building a system that keeps people blind to the glory of God.

[8 : 09] And that makes sense to people as it ought to make sense to you. Do you want your grandchildren to be able to come to this church and hear the gospel and great-grandchildren and for the generations to come? So as I think about that, helping people find and follow Jesus, how important it is for this generation and for the generations to come, I'm very much convicted because yes, we can have programs.

Yes, they can come here and hear the gospel proclaimed. Yes, we'll have ministries dedicated to studying about the world, telling us about different people groups, telling us about the differences between the Gen Z and the millennial generation, and there's so much study that's going on, but where are the people that are just moved to tears because there are people that are living in darkness?

Where is that in this generation? Are we providing that as a church? And so I'm deeply convicted that we may be giving all kinds of things to this community and this world, but are we shedding any tears?

Are we following an example of what zeal is by our Savior when he looks at the scenario and he says, I don't need to just put another program in place, but I ought to shed tears over this.

It ought to break our hearts. So what Jesus should have found that day when he goes there is he should have found a house of prayer, but he says, what I found is a den of thieves.

[9 : 31] You know, the way that the temple was set up is that there was different courts that you would be able to go into. The apostle Paul takes a Gentile, they accuse him in Acts chapter number 21 of taking a Gentile into a place, a Greek, that wasn't supposed to go into the temple and they said, you polluted the place because we have a place that the women can go to and we have another group where men can go to but those men that are, if they're not a Levite, if they're not one of the priests, they can go to this area but then we have another court that the priests can go to but then we also have what is called the court of the Gentiles, this outer court.

And that's where Jesus is at that day that he comes into. And we learn so much about God's love for all people and the design of that temple. In Old Testament ceremonial laws, the foreigners were excluded from this holy precinct of the temple.

But Isaiah predicts a day when the Gentiles like you and me will be brought into the presence of the Lord in worship. Isaiah 56, 6, And the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord to serve him in the love of the name of the Lord.

Verse number 7, Even them will I bring my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer. And so while Jesus quoting this saying about this ought to be a house of prayer and not a den of thieves, he's referencing Isaiah where he is the fulfillment of it.

You might not have caught it today but we even sung the song that will end our services today, that we're rejoicing that there will become a day of endless joy and feast. There will come a day that we will be in his presence and it will be an endless feast and joy.

[11 : 10] And so that's what Isaiah is predicting, that God is welcoming all people. And so this court of Gentiles was very important because they could, people like you and I, Gentiles could come in and we could look in on what was going on.

We were supposed to go there and we were supposed to hear them praying for the nations. We were supposed to see a light unto the nations. But that area that was made for that has now been filled up.

So the temple was designed and intended by God to be a place of prayer, a sanctuary of hope. Remember when Hannah goes into the temple and she prays? That people were able to hear her and what was going on.

She went there to pray. Or what about Solomon when he builds the first temple? He says, My name shall be there and thou mayest hearken unto thy prayer which thou servant shall make towards this place.

And the dedication of that is to the purpose of this temple. It should be a place of worship. It should be a place of prayer. It ought to be a place that the foreigner and the stranger could come in and hope should be offered to them.

[12 : 08] But what is it now? It has become a den of thieves. See, thieves like to hole up in a cave. You know? I won't tell who told me recently about when they were getting, when they were a teenager and they thought a police officer was behind them.

So they took driving off really fast and they pulled into a driveway. Okay? They pulled into a den of thieves. All right? They pulled into a place to hide from the police. A lot of you are convicted right now.

I'm not even talking about you. All right? And maybe I am. All right? If let's have the altar call at this point. All right? And so it's a place that you would go and hide. And so that's what was happening. There was caves and people would, they'd be along the road, right?

And they might rob somebody that's coming through town. They would take the stuff and they would run to the nearest cave. They would run back into it and they would hide. And that's what Jesus is seeing in that temple that day that it was a den of robbers.

Jeremiah had stood in the same area of the temple and the same court and said the same thing. In Jeremiah chapter number 7 verse 11 became a den of robbers in your eyes.

[13 : 12] Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord. And so when Jesus says that, they have no doubt that he is following what Jeremiah had said that that house of prayer had become a den of thieves.

Let's talk about that briefly, what that looked like. I said before that there could be, they said that 10 years after this, some 260 lambs were slain. And I just want you to think about this place being filled with different lambs for sacrifices.

And the question that I asked when I thought this was, why wouldn't you just bring your own animal from home? Why wouldn't you bring your own lamb from home? And in the context of understanding what's going on, it would make sense to us to know that they would bring a lamb from home.

All the struggle of bringing it from home would be a challenge. But when they get there, all it would take is for somebody to come out and inspect it and say, no, this one isn't going to work. You're going to have to buy one of ours.

And not only was that happening, and so there was this buying and selling of these animals for sacrifice, and then there was also, they had to come in, there's different currencies coming in, and they were brought there, and they were going to have to exchange it.

[14 : 19] Many of you have traveled to different countries before, and you know that the exchange rate is different at different places, right? If you go to the airport, it's one place. If you go to a shady corner of the street, it might be a different place, you know?

Everybody knows that it varies from place to place on the exchange of money. Well, the temple exchange is going to be the highest because they were taking advantage of the people. It was a system that was set up to take the privilege and responsibility away from the family at a cost.

Come to the temple, you can buy an animal here. Don't worry about bringing one from home, and they marked it up ten times. The temple would become a hiding place, it would become a cave for thieves, a refuge for robbers rather than worshipers, a place to protect the blasphemers.

Every generation has those that would do that. Every generation has people that take advantage of a religious system. Next week, I'll be in New York City for the organizing Living Hope Baptist Church with the Canavans.

I'm really looking forward to that. Just down the road from John's church, it was a Baptist church, and I said, well, this is wonderful. Just down the road from me, it was a Baptist church, and he began to tell me some of the things that they teach and about how they believe that African Americans are now Israel and that Jesus, and they just told me things that I just could not believe that I never heard that a Baptist church had believed before.

[15 : 40] And he told me about how wealthy the pastor was and how they had taken advantage of a religious system, and there's still many dens of thieves that happen today. That people where places ought to be a place of worship, ought to be a place of evangelism, become a den of thieves.

I heard a comedian once talk about how you ever hear those commercials and they'll say, this is valid at participating McDonald's. All right? And have you ever been to a non-participating McDonald's? You walk in and say, I would like two sausage McMuffins for \$2.99, and they say, we're sorry, sir, we're a non-participating McDonald's.

We serve spaghetti and we sell welcome mats. All right? And like, this wouldn't make any sense, a non-participating McDonald's. Well, I can tell you, there are non-participating places of worship that are not doing what they have been called to do.

And I'm not so concerned about the ones that are not at 355 Windy Hill Drive. They are always going to be, and you can identify them as you study God's Word, but you and I are very much concerned that this would be a place that would never become a den of robbers or thieves, but we would be a place.

So what keeps that courtyard open for prayer and worship? It's the teaching of God's Word that does the refining. Look at verse number 47. And he taught daily in the temple, but the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him and could not find what they might do, for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

[17 : 03] When the temple was in its right place, Jesus could come in and sit down and have an audience with the people. In Matthew, we learn that not only is he teaching, but the lame and the blind are coming in and they're being healed, that lives are being changed.

And could there be anything any more captivating in all of the world than to sit down at the feet of Jesus and have him teach? The temple was doing what it was called to do.

And that's why I would rather hear a third grader try to explain the Bible to me than to have anybody professionally try to tell me what life is about outside of the scriptures. Because when we go to God's word, then we get to hear from God.

It's that simple, right? If you want to hear from God, we can go to God's word. And Satan will always be looking to destroy the place where God's word is being heard and lives are being changed.

It says that the religious leaders were sorely displeased. Sadly, in a few days, the crowds will thin out. There'll be screams for blood. An innocent man named Barabbas will be let out as opposed to Jesus.

[18 : 05] And the fulfillment of Isaiah 53 will happen. Jesus will be despised and he will be rejected. And all they needed was a way to get to him. In verse 48, it says, and they could not find what they might do about this.

They were sorely displaced. This industry, this system that they have been, have been turned upside down by Jesus. And now what's happening? There's a group of people that are sitting around Jesus and they're hearing and they say, we can't let this stay.

So what they'll, they'll eventually, they'll find a Judas, they'll manipulate the crowds, and by later that weekend, what people will be unfulfilled with their expectation of what they wanted Jesus to do, and the desire for personal gain will be strong.

I believe one of the saddest profiles of selfishness come from Matthew chapter number 28, verses 11 and 15. Right before the text that we know as the Great Commission, it says, Now, when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city and showed unto the chief priest all the things that were done.

And when they were assembled with the elders and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept.

[19 : 19] And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you. So they took the money and did as they were taught. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

That a lie was created, that our brother Sam over here, that when he speaks to Jewish people, is a lie that still continues the day that Jesus did not rise from the dead, that Jesus was stolen away.

And it was a lie that was started that day from people that they knew the truth, but a large sum of money was given to them. And they took the money and they did as they were taught.

And so this message of the resurrection is going to run from person to person until it finds a person who can be bought by the things of this world and we would take the money and we would do as we were taught.

You know, we live in a world that is very good at programming us to be silent about Jesus. It even offers financial compensation for playing by its rules. So that's what's happening there, is that these people, they're looking there and they say, we've got to do something about this.

[20 : 24] And they do. And that same false system, that same evil desire to keep from people knowing who the true Jesus is, it continues even to this day. So now we look at the zeal, as I said, according to knowledge.

Zeal is not just sufficient in itself. You and I, we do not pursue zeal. We pursue Jesus. We pursue the glory of God. Stephanie and I were in a conversation the other day and the person said skip.

Meaning they didn't want to say anything, alright? I'm not going to say skip, I'm going to say repeat, okay? I'm going to repeat that to you again. We do not pursue zeal. We pursue Jesus and we pursue the glory of God.

Romans chapter number 10, verse 1 and 2 says, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer for God for Israel is that you might be saved. For I bear them record that you have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

So what would a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge look like? Well, we've already read it in verse number 47 and it says the chief of the people sought to destroy him.

[21 : 30] That was zeal, but it wasn't zeal according to knowledge. There's not only a right conception of who God is, but there's also a right affection to God. These people did not have a right understanding of who Jesus is and so their zeal was misdirected.

Their zeal was not according to knowledge. And so zeal is not the primary thing. The knowledge, the direction of it is. But that doesn't mean that zeal doesn't matter.

When describing believers, it doesn't just call us people that believe in Jesus. It says in 1 Corinthians 16, 22, it says, If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatham, which means withdrawn, separated from all those who not love the Lord Jesus Christ, the same Lord who will be Jesus Christ in his coming.

It says, If any man not love the Lord, we're speaking about zeal. We're speaking about a fervent love. Romans 12, 11, Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

Fervent. It means that you should boil, that you should be aglow. It means that this theology that we have, if it isn't transforming our life, it's not good theology. It's not zeal according to knowledge.

[22 : 42] It means we should be transformed in the people that love God. Love is not equal to an emotion, but it is not less than an emotion. It's more. It's not less. You should be able to express yourself as a person who loves the Lord.

As I look back over the sermons over the last year, and I look at that, and I think so many times they begin to sound so much the same, and they probably will. And I think about if God would allow me to do this for many decades, if I could stand up here every Sunday and just tell you that you ought to love Jesus, it would be well worth my time and my life.

We love him. We don't just believe, but we love him with all of our hearts, everything about us. And so an example of those who do not have a zeal for God's house is shown throughout the Bible.

It's thrown out through Scripture. I can give you many examples. For time's sake, I'll give you one. In Haggai chapter number one, verse two, it says, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say that the time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.

Verse number five, Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. You have so much and you bring in little. You eat, but you have not enough. You drink, but you have not filled with drink.

[23 : 53] You clothe you, but there is none more. And he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put in a bag with holes. The prophet here, in essence, is saying, God has delivered you and he has set you on a mission to build his house.

But you're so busy building your own homes, you're neglecting his. And the Lord's concern are no longer your focus, and you're all wrapped up in your own interest.

And that is, as a people, that is not what we would want to become. So let me ask you some questions for application as Kristen comes to play the piano today.

So what does this have to do with us? I've already stated there is no temple anymore. There's no physical building for us to build. There's no way to measure it. We're not measuring it in the same way. There's no courtyard that we walked into the day to measure it.

But even though there's no building, there is a temple, and we are that temple. And judgment should start with us. Judgment begins at the house of God, so it begins with us.

[24 : 51] 1 Peter 4, 17. For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it is first began at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

And then Paul, as he's teaching about the Lord's supper, this is what he's speaking to them about. He says, for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

And so we ask ourselves today, if you were to imagine inside of yourself, if you imagine being the temple of God, if you'd imagine your heart being the courtyard, inside of that courtyard are there all kinds of distractions?

Is there all kinds of confusions? Is there all kinds of things that would prevent you from seeing the glory of God? Or would you say, inside of my heart, there is worship, there is attentiveness to the word of God?

If you and I were standing in the courtyard that day, would we be part of the distraction of those who go and sit at his feet as he teaches? It would really be but determined by our understanding of who he is.

[25 : 59] And so individually, there's decisions to be made today. But as a church, we are more than a collection of individuals, and we should respond together.

So just in summary here today, what does a zeal for the things of God look like as demonstrated by Jesus? First of all, we saw Jesus move deeply to tears.

The word is, the expression there is very strong. Overcome emotionally with grief because of the blind condition of the city. So that means that zeal for us should be moving us to tears for those that have been blinded to God's glory.

What we also see is a desire for his people to be a people of prayer, welcoming all nations to worship him. We should desire to be a people of prayer and not just the people of activity.

Zeal should be expressed in a desire for prayer over meaningless activity. And when the father was dishonored, Jesus felt the pain. A way to know that your heart is maturing and growing and that you have a proper zoom is the things that would grieve our father, they should grieve us.

[27 : 13] He looked there that day and he said, this, this isn't acceptable. Something has to change. Would you mind bowing your head and praying with me? In a moment, I'm going to ask you to stand and respond to God's word.

But first of all in here, those of you who come here today and you recognize your lack of zeal for the things of God as a result of not knowing him, I would like to speak to you for a moment directly.

If you know what needs to be done, I implore you to come to the altar and to give your life to Jesus. To recognize that you could say, I've had an academic understanding of you, I could tell what I was supposed to do, but there's never been a love for you and the day you would recognize that.

So maybe you've been in church for some time, you've heard the gospel, and you know exactly what needs to happen today. And I would strongly challenge you to find your place at the altar and cry out to him.

But if you're in here today and you would like to learn more, you have questions, let me encourage you to go to the next steps table in the back. Someone will help you, give you the resources that you need, take you to a counseling room, but they will help you find and follow Jesus today.

[28 : 26] I'm going to pray for you in here today. For those that watch online today or those that may watch someday online, let me pray for you because this is the most important decision any of you will ever make. Heavenly Father, I pray right now for those who do not have a love for you, they do not have a zeal for you, that they would, Lord, they are more interested in being the lords of their own lives than they want to submit themselves to you.

Lord, may the day, may they find you lovely, may they find you wonderful, may they see you as the king, Lord, that has come into town, that is going to die for them.

So, Lord, I pray that those that would be under this conviction of the Holy Spirit, Lord, would respond today as the day is the day of salvation. And then I pray for us as believers in here.

Do our lives demonstrate a zeal that's according to knowledge? When has zeal moved us to tears for the lost? Has it been expressed in just the desire to want to speak to him? Or would you say there's just been so much busyness and so much activity for him that your heart has not been out of place where it's been done, what has been created to do, which is the commune with him and the worship him.

And zeal should cause our heart to be broken over the things that grieve our God. Would you mind standing with us? And as you do, I'm going to pray for the believers in the room. If you're in here today and you haven't put your faith and trust in Christ, would you meet me down at the front?

[29 : 53] Would you go back to the next step table? But believers, would you speak to the Lord? Would you make sure the courtyard of your heart is cleared out and inside of it, the purpose of the temple is doing all that God has designed for it?

the work that I do on the walk, would you miss the whole yard? How can we actually do it in the room... See me ■ Laxley's