

18. The Gospel of John—2:13-17 (c)

“The Temple of God” Pt.3

(2/11/18)

For the past couple of weeks, we have been studying a section in John’s gospel chapter two where Jesus cleanses the temple (v.13-17).

In fact, all four gospels record the cleansing of the temple by Jesus—although John places it at the beginning of His ministry, whereas Matthew, Mark and Luke place it at the end (the week of His crucifixion) causing many to believe the Lord cleansed the temple twice.

I. The Temple of God in Jesus’ Day

As we have already pointed out—God had ordained that the temple was to be a place where He and man could come together thru the animal sacrifices, the blood of which would atone for their sins and allow Jehovah and Jew to have fellowship (communion) with one another.

Also, we know from Scripture that the temple was to be a place where prayer and worship would be offered to God—and where healing on an emotional and even physical level could happen.

But the temple was also to be a place where Gentile seekers could come to the Outer Court also known as the Court of the Gentiles to talk to the priests, have their questions answered—in the hopes they would want to convert to Judaism and become part of God’s covenant people.

Unfortunately, all of this had been corrupted by the Sadducees and chief priests who had turned the temple into a money-making business instead of a spiritual place where people could come to the house of God to find forgiveness and enter into communion with Him.

And so Jesus had no choice but to cleanse the temple from this thievery and merchandizing—

John 2:14-17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" ¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "*Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.*"

Matthew also records that after the Lord had cleansed the temple He said to the corrupt spiritual leaders in charge—"It is written, '*My house shall be called a house of prayer,*' but you have made it a '*den of thieves.*' " (Matthew 21:13)

Now, last week we saw that it wasn't until Jesus cleansed the temple in His day from all the corruption that it could then become what God intended it to be—the same is true with God's temple, the Church (Eph. 2), today.

II. The Temple of God in Our Day

What is the Church to be if it's going to fulfill the purpose for which God created it?

Last week we said that in looking at what the Church *is to be*—we first needed to look at what the Church is *not* to be.

A. What the Church is not to be

1. The church is not to be a money-making business

2. The church is not to be a place where pastors and preachers are turned into celebrities who then exploit their congregations for personal gain

B. What the Church is to be

1. The Church is to be a house of prayer

2. The Church is to be a place of worship

3. The Church is to be a healing place

4. The Church is to be a place where God's Word is taught faithfully and in truth

Luke 19:45, 47 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it...⁴⁷ And He was teaching daily in the temple...

Wherever Jesus went He taught people God's Word—but especially when He was in the temple.

You see, the house of God was to be a place where people could go and know they would hear the truth of God proclaimed—whether thru prophet, priest or rabbi.

At least that was the way it was supposed to be—before corrupt men like the Sadducees hijacked the temple and turned it into a money-making business.

The Sadducees were a sect of Judaism.

The Sadducees were materialists who didn't believe in the supernatural—and as such they didn't believe in angels, miracles, or in life after death (resurrection).

Now, because the Sadducees didn't believe in life after death it caused them to put all their time and energy into the pursuit of pleasure, power and wealth in this life.

They gained power by getting cozy with the Roman government who put them in charge over the temple and its concessions (money changers and sellers of animals for sacrifice).

And that brought them great wealth and with it the ability to have whatever they wanted—which fed into their materialism and hedonism.

These so-called spiritual leaders were nothing more than greedy, materialistic, charlatans who, as Paul the apostle would later characterize them, thought that ‘godliness’ (religion) was a way to get rich.

These were the men in charge of the temple—those who were masquerading as men of God.

Today, we would categorize them as theological liberals—men who gave God’s Word ‘lip-service’ but in reality, didn’t hold it in high esteem.

Since they didn’t believe in the supernatural, they didn’t *really* believe the Scriptures were the divinely inspired, supernaturally revealed Word of God.

In fact, they rejected all of the Jewish Scriptures as *not* coming from God (simply the words and teachings of men)—all except the Pentateuch (5 books of Moses).

So consequently, they didn’t believe (as Jesus did) that man should live “*by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God*” (Matt.4:4)—because they didn’t believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

“*Verbal inspiration*” carries with it the idea is that every single word in the Bible is there because God put it there—without exception.

“*Plenary*” means that “all parts” of the Bible are equally authoritative.

Whenever a spiritual leader, like a pastor or professor today, doesn't hold to a high view of Scripture—they're not going to teach it with any kind of conviction or authority because in their mind it isn't 'trust-worthy' as being inspired by God.

Of course, that wasn't true of Jesus preaching and teaching—He knew He was proclaiming God's Word and as such, "*they were amazed at His teaching, for His word was with authority and ability and weight and power.*" (Luke 4:32 AMP)

And that is the single greatest reason why so many pastors today don't teach with any kind of power or authority—it's because have a low view of Scripture.

They teach that the Bible is a collection of man-made myths, legends, allegories, and moral principles all brought together under a single cover which we can learn from but can't take literally as inerrant, divine truth.

Of course, that runs contrary to what the writers of the N.T. said about the Scriptures—

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

"Inspiration" is a translation of the Greek word *theopneustos* which literally means "*God-breathed*"—or in other words that all Scripture has been '*breathed-out*' by God.

That's an interesting way to put it because it reminds us of Genesis 2:7—"*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed [out] into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*".

The idea is that God breathed life into the Scriptures the same way He breathed life into Adam—even as the book of Hebrews declares, "*The Word of God is living and powerful...*" (Heb.4:12)

Now, of course, the Sadducees weren't the only spiritual leaders in Israel back then that weren't teaching truth—just like liberals today aren't the only ones not teaching the Word of God in truth—plenty of evangelicals are guilty as well.

Now hear me out—I believe most if not all evangelical pastors would defend the inspiration, the inerrancy and the infallibility of the Bible with their last breath.

And yet when it comes to the *sufficiency* of Scripture they stumble by believing that the Bible needs to be supplemented with the wisdom of the world if Christians are to be fully victorious and fruitful (my professor in Bible college—“*we need to combine the secular and the sacred...*”)

Sufficiency simply means that everything we need in the way of truth to live our Christian lives is contained in God's Word—it doesn't need to be supplemented with any other source of knowledge or information.

And therefore, when it comes to an instruction manual for Christian living—the Bible is complete—it is sufficient—it is perfect!

Psalm 19:7-10 (NKJV)

⁷ The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple; ⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹ The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether. ¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

“**Perfect**” is the translation of a Hebrew word meaning, “*whole, complete or sufficient.*”

It conveys the idea of something that is *comprehensive*, so as to cover all aspects of an issue.

But as I just said, it is at this point that many evangelical pastors and leaders have fallen victim to the wisdom of the world (which has come into the church).

They no longer believe that the Bible is sufficient for all matters that pertain to life and godliness—in other words, that it contains everything we need in the way of truth to live a spiritually productive and emotionally healthy life.

Instead, many Christian leaders (by the thousands) have bought into the lie of psychology believing that the Bible must be supplemented with it if Christians are to be mentally healthy and even spiritually mature and fruitful.

They teach that while God's Word is sufficient for spiritual matters—it can't be relied on to help those who are dealing with emotional issues like depression, low self-esteem or a plethora of other mental maladies that are inflicting folks today—for that people need a professional like a psychologist or a psychiatrist.

For eighteen hundred years, before modern psychology came on the scene the Bible was sufficient in the lives of God's people.

For all of those years the cure of souls used to be handled by clergymen in the Church—I mean what did Christians do for eighteen-hundred years before psychology came along?

They flourished under the teaching of the Word, the biblical counseling ministries of godly pastors and other Spirit-filled believers, and the love of the Body of Christ which was instructed by the Lord to bear each other's burdens by loving, encouraging and praying for one another.

And remember these people were not free from problems by any means.

They lived with extreme poverty, disease, persecution and every other form of hardship you can imagine—and yet the Word of God was sufficient for them.

But that all changed with the coming of psychology onto the scene.

The devil pulled off a major coup when he psychologized the Church—recovery replaced repentance—therapy replaced theology—sin was turned into sickness—and happiness replaced holiness as the chief pursuit of the Christian life.

And the reason that psychology has had such an easy time infiltrating into our society and into the Church is because it has entered under the guise of *science*—but is it really a science?

The word ‘*psychology*’ come from two Greed words, ‘*psuche*’ which is the Greek word for ‘soul’ and ‘*logos*’ which is a Greek word that refers to a body of knowledge and or the communication of that knowledge.

Therefore, psychology is the knowledge and communication of that which deals with the soul of man.

Some of you might be thinking, “*So, what’s wrong with that?*”

Psychology, by its very definition, claims to deal with the non-physical soul of man which places it outside the realm of science which by its very definition can only deal with the physical.

As one author points out,

“Scientists develop theories based on what they observe. Then they examine each theory with rigorous tests to see if it accurately describes reality.”

Science only deals with the physical realm—those things which are governed by physical laws which can be observed or reproduced.

Unlike medicine which deals with the physical *brain* and is a science—psychology deals with the non-physical *mind* of man (they are not the same)—and therefore can't be a science.

And yet Christian leaders by the thousands have bought into the lie that psychology is an irrefutable science and therefore the Bible must yield to its wisdom—even though psychology isn't based on any observable scientific laws.

“Well”, you say, “*what then is it based on?*”—it's based on human philosophy, worldly wisdom and conjecture.

And please don't just take my word for it listen to what the secular professionals have said about it—

Sigmund Koch, appointed by the American Psychological Assoc. to direct and oversee a study involving 80 eminent scholars in assessing the facts, theories and methods of psychology made this statement: “*The entire subsequent history of psychology can be seen as a ritualistic endeavor to emulate the forms of science in order to sustain the delusion that it already is a science.*”

Psychiatrist Lee Coleman, in his book about psychiatry which he entitled, “*The Reign of Error*” says that “*...psychiatry does not deserve the legal power it has been given*” and that “*psychiatry is not a science.*”

He's talking about how in a court of law you have defense lawyers presenting psychiatrists swearing under oath that the defendant was insane at the time of the crime and should therefore be found innocent by reason of insanity.

And then you have the prosecution countering with an equal number of competent, erudite psychiatrists declaring under oath that the defendant was sane at the time of the crime and should therefore be found guilty.

That's why Coleman goes on to say,

"I have testified in over one hundred and thirty criminal and civil trials around the country, countering the authority of psychiatrists or psychologists hired by one side or the other. In each case I try to educate the judge or jury about why the opinions produced by these professionals have no scientific merit."

In an article entitled, *"Psychology Goes Insane, Botches Role as Science"*, psychiatrist Roger Mills writes,

"The field of psychology today is literally a mess. There are as many techniques, methods and theories around as there are researchers and therapists."

I have personally seen therapists convince their clients that all of their problems come from their mothers, the stars, their bio-chemical make-up, their diet, their lifestyle and even the Karma from their past lives."

You can see that these experts all admit that psychology isn't a science because it deals with the non-physical mind of man—and yet the mental health industry has packaged and presented it as medical in nature (so as to get insurance companies to cover treatment).

Look, if you break your leg and go to a medical doctor he or she knows exactly what to do to fix the problem—why? Because medicine is a science.

You can go to five doctors and they'll all treat you the same—because they're dealing with a physical problem.

But when a person starts to try to fix problems in the non-physical realm—the realm of the *soul* there aren't any physical or scientific laws to govern them.

And that's the problem with psychology and why it isn't scientific or medical.

So, then what is it? Any system that seeks to understand and help the soul of man is by its very definition a *religion*.

Now let me just stop a minute and say that there is a segment of psychology that is scientific—that part that studies human behavior.

But when they move from studying human behavior to explaining it and in particular to offering theories and opinions on how to change it—it then moves from the realm of science (the physical) to the realm of religion (the spiritual).

Again, this view is supported by many secular psychologists including Thomas Szasz, considered by many as one of the masters in the field of psychology and psychotherapy, he says,

“The human relations we now call psychotherapy are in fact matters of religion, and that we mislabel them as therapeutic at great risk to our spiritual well-being...It is not merely a religion that pretends to be a science, it is actually a fake religion that seeks to destroy true religion.”

Now, that’s quite an indictment out of the mouth of a secular Jewish psychiatrist against his own profession.

Much of psychology, although it has been passed off as a science, is actually a religious system

In that regard it is the religion of humanism—which is exactly why a major branch is called ‘Humanistic Psychology.’

He’s right, psychology is not a science it is a rival religious system (humanism) which places man at the center instead of God in an effort to undermine the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures.

When it comes to explaining the soul and changing human behavior—the Bible claims to speak with absolute authority and why God is described in Scripture as the “*Wonderful Counselor*”. (Isa. 9:6)

But if Satan can get you to believe that the Bible isn't adequate (sufficient) to deal with the complex problems you face today then he can turn you away from the truth and get you to embrace a false religious system (psychology) in the hope that it will provide the answers you are looking for.

"You Christians always base everything on the Bible, and if it's not in the Bible it's evil."

Dave Hunt—

"Well I don't think you should go to the Bible for your chemistry lessons or for how to fix your car or to learn how to balance your checkbook—but when it comes to the soul of man the Bible has always claimed to speak on that subject with absolute authority."

And when psychology claims to be the authority on the soul of man it has encroached into an area it has no business being in—and is nothing less than Satan's attempt to undermine the sufficiency of the Scriptures in our lives.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

Only God's Word has the power to transform a life.

But sadly, far too many churches have rejected that idea as foolish, archaic and naïve choosing rather to make the focus of their churches things like—

The latest pop-psychology trend, mysticism (contemplative spirituality), materialism (word of faith), environmentalism, and social justice (Christianized socialism) just to name a few of the themes that dominate many pulpits in our country today.

That's why more and more Christians all over the country, and the world, are saying, "*Our church isn't what it used to be.*"

The host of the Christian radio show *Cross Talk* read some letters she had received on this subject—

"Our church is changing, something's happening, our church is moving away from a biblical Christ centered approach to ministry. The meaty sermons have disappeared and we're getting entertainment. Our small group is memorizing large portions of the Purpose Driven Life instead of memorizing Scripture. Something's changing in our church, we can't put our finger on it but it seems that our voices are being ignored. When we try to speak out in our small group people shout us down. We are viewed as Bible-thumpers in our own church."

Colossians 2:8-10 (NLT)

⁸ Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. ⁹ For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. ¹⁰ So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

Please understand it's not my desire to hurt you by destroying your faith in something you believe is your last hope, namely psychology or psychiatry.

And certainly, there are individuals who have brain disorders like, chemical imbalances, and a medical doctor (psychiatrist) might be needed to prescribe some kind of medicine (remember the brain and the mind (soul) are not the same).

My desire is to help Christians renew their faith in the sufficiency of God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit to be all you need to live a life of victory and power—which is what people need to be taught when they come to church.

The church is (or should be) a place where God's Word is taught faithfully and truthfully.