

What Is the Church Supposed to Do?

Lesson 28

Matthew 21:12-13

Memory Verse

Guide me in Your Truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior and my hope is in You all day long. Psalm 25:5

Introduction

When Jesus came into town, He stopped at the temple church. It was a beautiful place where people came to worship God. It was very different from our church. (TEACHERS: talk about your church building—maybe it is an apartment, or clubhouse, or laundry room, or even four trees and a tarp.) The church that Jesus was visiting was very magnificent. It was probably as big as a gigantic football stadium and it took over 40 years to build! It had big columns around the whole building. There were probably many gold decorations on the inside too.

Scripture

Matthew 21:12-13

Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

Well, Jesus was probably excited about going to this temple church. He knew that a church was a place where people worship God and tell Him how much they love Him. He wanted to see people with attitudes of worship.

Discussion

Ask: What did Jesus see when He entered the temple?

When He arrived, He saw just the opposite! He saw people selling things and cheating people. This made Jesus very upset. He was upset because these traders were robbing people in God's house. They cared more about making money than helping the people. It was dishonoring God.

Ask: What did Jesus do when He entered the temple?

In His heart, Jesus knew that He must do something. He did something that will not be forgotten. He made a whip out of cords and forced the animal traders to leave. Then He turned over all the tables and asked the sales people to leave.

Ask: What did Jesus say when He entered the temple?

He went over to the tables and said, "This is my Father's house. Don't make it a place to buy and sell things." "It is a place to pray and worship God."

Ask: What did the people do?

There was lots of noise and confusion. The sales people couldn't believe what Jesus did. He had ruined their business. They were angry, but they did not do anything to Jesus. Jesus simply walked away. No one dared to fight back because they knew that they had done wrong and Jesus was right. They had cheated people and they had wrong attitudes in church. They were not there to worship God. They were there to make some money the wrong way.

Discussion

Ask: Why did Jesus do what He did?

Please remember that Jesus did not do this out of hateful anger or rage. He was not taking revenge. He did not sin or do wrong. He was upset about the traders' attitudes and their deception. Remember this: Jesus still loved them. In fact, He made a way for them, and us to get to Heaven. Jesus knew that in a few days, He would die on a cross. Jesus did this because He knew that if He died for all the wrong things we have done, we could be with God in Heaven, if we believe. Jesus did this for us and the traders too.

Application

Ask: What can we learn from today's lesson?

This lesson helps us see that we must treat God's house with honor and respect. We come to learn about Jesus, sing songs to God, pray, and worship God. In fact, the church building is not the thing that is important. It is the people. That is really what a church is—the people who come together to worship God. Jesus knew that it wasn't the building that was important, it was the attitude of the hearts of the people. When we come to church, we should focus on God. Our attitude, behavior and words should say to God that we are there to meet Him.

Ask: How should we react?

Jesus did something very dramatic when He turned the tables over. Please don't decide to turn over someone's desk or table because you think they are wrong.

Ask: How did Jesus know what He was supposed to do?

Jesus knew how to respond because He had been talking to God. He knew what to do. AND, He did not sin. Jesus did NOT turn the tables over so that people would notice Him or so that He could feel powerful. In other words, He was NOT making Himself look good.

Ask: How should we respond when we are in a difficult situation?

When you are in a tough situation, ask God what you should do. Don't just react to the situation. Respond the way God wants you to. It might mean walking away or being silent. Jesus did that too.

Ask: Would you like to invite Jesus to be a part of your life?

Romans 10:9-10

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:9-10 tell us that we need to do two things. First, we have to confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord. Second, we have to believe in our heart that God has raised him from the dead. Then we will be saved and we will have a new life.