

Church: Place of Business or Worship?

John 2:13-17

9/15/2019 Sunday AM

Scripture: John 2:13-17

Introduction

- If I was to ask you how many churches were there in the United States; what would you guess?
- The answer is: nobody knows exactly.
- It is estimated that the total number of Christian congregations are well over 350,000. That is one church for every 935 people in the country.
- Macon has 200+ churches which is a church for every 766 people.
- **How does someone choose which church to go to?** Within the 350,000 churches, they are split into over 30,000 different denominations.
- Not only do the different churches have different beliefs surrounding certain subjects, but each one has a different experience for church goers.
- Some churches are really large with over 43,000 people in attendance and some are small with less than 20.
- **Why so many churches, and why are they all so different?**
- Despite all the choices in churches today, overall attendance has been declining for decades. Wonder why?
- This morning we will look at **Church: Place of Business or Worship?**

John 2:13-17

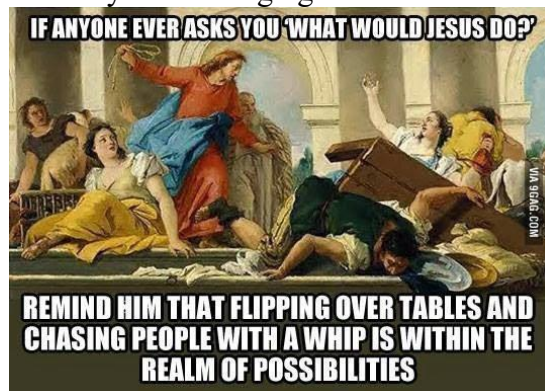
¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my

Father's house into a market!"

¹⁷His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

- **V.13** – The Passover celebration took place yearly at the temple in Jerusalem.
- Every Jewish male was expected to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during this time (Deuteronomy 16:16)
- **V.14** – When he arrived, “he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.”
- The Temple was the place for sacrifices to be made and God had originally instructed the people of Israel to bring the best animals from their own flocks for sacrifice. (Deuteronomy 12:5-7)
- Later, the temple priests instituted a market for buying sacrificial animals so the pilgrims would not have to bring their animals on the long journey.
- Over the years the Jews spread out across the known world at the time and that would mean that many of them would have to travel great distances to reach Jerusalem every year.
- The original “market” for the animals would most likely have been along the route to Jerusalem where local farmers would sell animals to the pilgrims as they passed by.
- This practice in and of itself was innocent and probably well intended, but it had gradually grown into an institution which found its way into the temple courts.
- This is what Jesus witnessed when he arrived at the Temple.
- Merchants were set up all over the Temple selling sacrificial animals.
- He also seen “others sitting at tables exchanging money.” The travelers would need to change their currency into the local currency to purchase the animals and to pay the temple tax.
- This too seems to be a solution to a problem that they would have with so many people arriving.
- **V. 15-16** – Jesus apparently had a major problem with what he saw that day because this verse says that, “he made a whip our of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"”

- This really isn't the biblical scene that you see hanging on the walls of churches today, is it?



- What was Jesus' problem with the merchants? It wasn't necessarily what they were doing, it was how they were doing it and where they were doing it.
- The sacrificial animals that were sold at the Temple were much higher in price and the money changers were charging people exorbitant exchange rates.
- Jesus had a real issue with their greed and dishonesty, and it made it worse that they were doing all this on the Temple grounds.
- He says here at the end of **v.16** "How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"
- The people had created an environment that, in essence, put a price on what God had intended to be free.
- **V. 17** – "His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." This is a quote from Psalm 69:9. The future Messiah would be consumed with zeal for God's house.
- Jesus was and is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the World.
- In this passage we can see how much zeal Jesus had for God's house and we should have that same zeal.
- Unfortunately, if Jesus was to walk into many churches in America today, he would find the same type of things going on, or worse.
- Many churches have become nothing more than consumer driven businesses that are looking to profit off of the "faith business."
- Just like secular businesses, these churches are constantly changing their operations to fit the needs of the consumer.
- This has caused the church to be seen more as an entertainment venue than a place of religious worship.
- What is worse, is that the average Christian drives this change because they have the mindset that they must attend a church that meets their "consumer" mindset.
- Churches today feel compelled to conform to society and they have begun to blend in with the world.
- The issue with this, is that when the church does that, they become useless.
- If the church is going to imitate the world, then that is all that it will ever be, a cheap imitation of a world.
- That is the reason that people are choosing not to go to church anymore.
- People are starving today to fill the void that is in their souls, they are asking deep questions and are dealing with tremendous trials and tribulations.
- These are not things that the world can satisfy, but the church can through Jesus Christ!
- **Let's focus on being who God has called us to be and doing what God called us to do, and in turn lead the world, rather than allowing it to lead us!**
- Jesus wants us to operate like his Father's house, not like a for-profit business.

Wednesday Night Bible Study:

Genesis 1:20-23

Bible Knowledge Question:

In the "armor of God," what does the shield represent?

A.) salvation B.) righteousness C.) faith D.) truth

(Last week's answer was, C.) 40 days.)