

A House of Prayer or A Den of Robbers

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[0 : 00] So in 1995, I can't believe how long ago this was now. 1995, I was blessed to go to Israel and tour for a couple of weeks.

It was one of the greatest thrills of my life. I remember weeping on three occasions. Once when we landed, and I just, you know, here we are.

Once when I saw Nazareth and Galilee, and once in the temple. I got to see Corinth and walk through its ruins.

Stand on the Bema seat. I got to see Capernaum in its ruins, but I got to see what houses were looked like back in those days.

The size and configuration. I didn't look at Peter's house because it was covered up by a massive Catholic church. So you couldn't really see.

[1 : 09] I got to walk through Galilee, go on a boat on the Sea of Galilee, turn off the engine in the middle of the lake, and read some of the Gospel accounts of Jesus calming the sea, of Jesus walking on the water.

And by the way, I figured out where he walked across. So I think. We came to Jerusalem, and I remember just walking through the streets of Jerusalem, and the marketplace, and all the people. You know, you're like you're being transported. And being in Israel, it's kind of like the Bible comes out in 3D. You know, it's just like it comes alive.

It's like you've heard and read about these places, now you're seeing them. Saw Gethsemane. Not just the garden, but the Gethsemane. I'll tell you about that more later.

But one of the highlights was going to the Temple Mount. Now, there's no temple there. There has not been a temple there since 70 A.D.

[2 : 16] when Titus destroyed it and left no rock unturned and set up his banner in the holy place.

Now there's a mosque. And in 1995, you were allowed to walk into there. You'd take your shoes off. You know, you'd go respectfully. You were allowed to walk in.

And there in the center of the mosque, there was an opening there. And there was a railing where you could walk.

The mosque is circular, so in the center was this circular opening where you could see the bare ground. This was a holy place.

This is, I think, the third holiest place for Islam. It is a holy place to the Jews. Because we were actually standing, looking upon the very place of the holy of holies.

[3 : 17] And I remember the hair on the back of my neck standing up. Now, I had just read in biblical archaeology review before going there about what to look for when I was in the temple mount.

So I saw with my own eyes the very foundation markers of the holy of holies. And I saw with my own eyes the only smooth, level place that was a rectangle in that holy place.

It was coincidentally the exact measurements of the ark of the covenant. Faced in a direction you would never have thought of.

Because as you entered the temple, it was going this way, not this way. And the archaeologists who measured that said, why would, they thought it would be, you know, all the pictures show it's that way.

Well, they've got to get the poles out. Remarkable. It's not like it's there for viewing, right? Only one person gets to go in there a year, so.

[4 : 25] Anyway, I saw it with my own eyes. There was the place where Abraham had taken Isaac to sacrifice him.

Very same mountain. That was the place of the threshing floor that David, King David, bought. There was the place where the temple in Jerusalem rested.

So, in Mark 11, we're told that Jesus enters this temple. Now, of course, he didn't enter into the court of the priests or into the holy place.

He did not enter into the temple proper. He entered into the outer court with everybody else. And now, in Mark chapter 11, 12, and 13, the temple will become the focal point.

It will be where all the teaching is done. It will be what is talked about. It will be in reference to whatever else is going on. And here, in Mark 11, 15, Jesus does something quite dramatic and drastic in this temple.

[5 : 39] Typically called the cleansing. So, let's remember the context first. In chapter 11, we see Jesus' dramatic entry into Jerusalem.

We saw that Jesus fulfilled two scriptures by his deliberate planning and directing of everything that was going on. Remember, he gave his disciples specific instructions about where to find the donkey, colt.

Where it will be, how it will be tied up, what to say if they're asked about it. And, of course, it all comes out exactly as Jesus had described.

He's orchestrating, not just picking up some donkey alongside the road, but getting it and then riding on it, a donkey's colt, into Jerusalem.

Which fulfills Zechariah 9 that says, Your king comes to you humble, mounted on a colt.

[6 : 42] Even the colt of a donkey. Donkey, not a horse. He does not come on a horse for war. He comes on a donkey for peace.

Bringing peace. That kind of Messiah. Not the war kind of Messiah. And then, in verses 7 to 11 in chapter 11, we see that as he's coming down, he is praised and proclaimed from Psalm 118 as the Messiah who comes in the name of the Lord.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And yet, in Psalm 118, in that same context, he's not only the blessed coming one in the name of the Lord, he's also the stone that was rejected by the builders.

So he's coming both as a blessed Messiah and a rejected Messiah. So he's fulfilling those things. He's doing these deliberate things.

And then we saw how that passage ends in verse 11. What is all this fanfare going to? What happens? It's like all these praises and all this drama.

[7 : 54] He gets into Jerusalem. And what happens? Verse 11. He enters the temple, looks around, and then leaves. That's it. It's kind of, that was it?

All this drama and that's it. He enters the temple, looks around. It's late evening, so he leaves. But he's not done. Because we see in verse 12 now, the next day, he begins to do again. Two more acts of dramatic symbolism.

And I want you to notice, Mark does this for us so we understand where he's going with these stories. It's another sandwich of Mark. Remember what a sandwich is?

You got a bread on top, bread on the bottom, meat in the middle. So the outer story in Mark, it begins with the fig tree and then ends with the fig tree.

[8 : 54] Remember? He starts by cursing the fig tree, goes then into the temple, does the temple work, and then the next day they see the fig tree that's withered. And so Mark is sandwiching it.

So he's linking the two stories. And by linking the two stories, we see that there's a light, shedding light in terms of how to understand the inner story.

So the outer story tells us how to understand the inner story. Mark's done a lot of sandwiching. He's talked about, remember, he's healing Jairus' daughter on the way there.

The woman bleeding interrupts that and then he finishes. So he's linking the stories. Another time he linked the healing of a blind man with the spiritual blindness of the disciples.

He's linking these things so we can see, okay, there's a story within a story and they're both pointing in the same direction. One's helping us understand the other one. So this is what's going on.

[9 : 59] They're linked and they're bracketed. And we see the same pattern in both of these stories. Both have an inspection, both have a discovery, and both have a pronouncement.

He goes and looks. There's an inspection. There is a finding out what's in there and then a pronouncement. So we have the same kind of things, pattern of things going on.

So let's look at the outer story first here in Mark 11 so that we can better understand the significance of the inner story, the temple acts.

In verse 12, we see Jesus beginning his dreadful signs for the temple. Jesus declares judgment on a tree and then upon a temple.

He pronounces judgment. He's not cleansing the temple. He's judging the temple. He's condemning the temple.

[11:01] So let's look at the outer story first, the fig tree. First he pronounces judgment on a tree that appears fruitful, but on closer inspection is barren.

Okay? It appears fruitful. He sees from a distance the leaves, but on closer inspection all he finds are leaves, no fruit.

So let's look. There's three parts here. The inspection in verse 12 and 13, the discovery in the second part of verse 13, and then the pronouncement in verse 14.

So verse 12. On the following day, when Jesus came from Bethany, he was hungry, and seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it.

So first there's an inspection. He sees a fig tree in leaf, which if you see a fig tree in Palestine in leaf, you expect to find the beginnings of fruit.

[12:13] You expect to find the early unripe knops, K-N-O-P, a pre-English word for knob, like a swollen bud.

You expect to see the unripe knops, the beginning. See, in fig trees, the buds sprout through the winter.

And then into the spring, then in March and April, they begin to swell into small green knops. Pagim in Hebrew.

So this is the time that Jesus is there, Passover, March, April. So as Mark says, it's not the season of figs. In other words, they're not ripe yet, but you expect to see the unripe fruit.

You expect to see the knops. And by the way, according to the natives of Palestine, they eat these unripe things.

[13:23] It's not something for a regular diet. But in a pinch when you're hungry, it'll do. Not for all of us, I imagine, but Jesus was hungry.

Maybe he didn't get a chance to eat that morning. Maybe he was out praying. We don't know. He just says he was hungry, so he's checking out the tree. So, the inspection from afar.

Now when he comes to it, verse 13, what does he discover? Verse 13, seeing in the distance fig tree and leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it.

When he came to it, what did he find? Nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He didn't expect to see full, mature figs, but he did expect to see the pre-swollen knobs, which were edible.

See, the one thing about fig trees is that the fig buds come before the leaves do. So, if there are leaves on a fig tree, there must be, if it's a healthy fig tree, knops on it, buds on it, small unripe fruit.

[14:50] There must be. And so, when he finds nothing but leaves, there's something wrong with the tree. Where are they? So, in other words, the leaves of this fig tree are deceptive.

They are signs of early fruit, yet when on closer inspection, there's no fruit. So, Jesus gives a surprising pronouncement.

And by the way, as we see what Jesus says in verse 14, many liberal scholars have a hard time with this. Oh, Jesus is being unfair to this innocent fig tree.

As if fig trees have moral obligations. As if Jesus is on a whim, or just a, you know, he's just, what do you call it?

Not hungry, grum? Hangry. Hangry, that's it. He's hangry. Hangry. Is this an unfair curse?

[15:58] Is he hangry? Or is this, as Jesus is a prophet, an enacted parable? A deliberate sign.

That's how Mark understands it, as he brackets this story around the temple acts. It's a sign for the deceptive show.

From a distance, the fig tree was promising. Closer inspection? Not what it should have had. Not what a healthy fig tree would be.

Not ripe figs, figs, figs, figs. But at least the beginnings of figs. So what Jesus does is pronounce judgment on this tree.

May you, verse 14, may no one ever eat fruit from you again. Wow. And then as we see in verses 20 and 21, on the next day as they come by, they discover the fig tree, verse 20, is withered away

to its roots.

[17:11] A miracle. A destructive miracle. And it's the only destructive miracle, Jesus does. So again, out of character.

But deliberate as a sign. He's now in Jerusalem. You know, here's the difference too. We've been reading Mark and we see that Jesus is not wanting attention, right?

When the demons shout out, he silences them. He tells people that he heals, don't go tell anybody. You know, he doesn't want attention. He doesn't want publicity.

And now he enters, excuse me, now he enters Jerusalem all of a sudden. He wants attention. He is drawing attention. He is throwing down the gauntlet to the religious authorities.

Notice me. I enter as king. And I'm about to do something to your temple that will offend you to the core.

[18:19] Because notice in verse 18, so-called cleanses the temple. They heard it and immediately began to plan his destruction.

He wanted them to hear it. This is what he's doing. He's enacting judgment. Now with the fig tree in the Old Testament, figs and fig trees are a common picture in judgment passages in the prophets.

Let me just show you one example from Micah 7. Micah declares, Woe is me! For I have become as when the summer fruit has been gathered, as when the grapes have been gleaned.

There is no cluster to eat. There is no first ripe fig. I want to say fig. That my soul desires.

What is he talking about? I'm expecting the harvest of fruit. And what happens? No fruit. No grapes. No figs. What does that mean? He goes on and he says, It means that the godly have perished from the earth.

[19:36] There is no one upright among mankind. They all lie in wait for blood. And each hunts the other with a net. Their hands are on what is evil to do it well.

The prince and the judge ask for a bribe. The great man utters the evil desire of his soul. Thus they weave it together. The best of them is like a briar.

The most upright of them a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen, of your punishment, has come. Now their confusion is at hand.

What's happening here? We have a fig as an illustration, again, of expectation of fruit.

No fruit there. It's a picture, a prophetic picture of spiritual barrenness. See, he's saying the fig is just a picture.

[20:38] I expect fruit. What it really means, what I'm really seeing, is that there's no godly people left. There's no one upright anymore. Everyone is a predator.

Everyone is out for a bribe. Everyone is out doing evil. There's no fruit. There's spiritual barrenness, is what he's saying. That's the picture of the fig.

Jesus is going to use the lesson of the fig again in chapter 13 when he's describing the destruction of the temple. When you see the figs, you know summer's near.

That means the time of your end is here. And then he says that within 40 years, this temple will be destroyed. And to the year, 40 years later, the temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D.

So, the outer story sheds light on how to understand the inner story.

[21:47] What happens in the outer story? Not a cleansing. He's not cleansing the fig tree. He's not reforming the fig tree. He's not trying to redo the fig tree so it can produce again.

He's not pruning the fig tree. He's pronouncing it done. It's over. So, in other words, he's pronouncing the same on the temple.

Let's look at that inner story now in verse 15. He comes to Jerusalem, verse 15, and he enters the temple and immediately, what does he do?

He begins to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple. Overturns the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.

He does three things. So, again, we have three parts. We have the inspection and then the discovery and then the pronouncement. But let me give you the judgment, a summary of the judgment that he's pronouncing.

[22:50] He's pronouncing judgment on a temple that is called the house of prayer yet is what? A den of these. So, he pronounces judgment on a tree that appears to be fruitful but is barren.

Now he's pronouncing judgment on a temple that is called a house of prayer but in actuality is a den of it's corrupted to the core.

It is spiritually barren like the tree. And he says very personally, he says very directly in verse 17 where the pronouncement is he says at the end of verse 17 you have made it a den of robbers. And who is the you? Verse 18 you is the priests and the scribes. He's looking right at them in their eyes and he's directing it right to them.

And they didn't miss it to plan destruction. Now he has done it.

[24 : 12] How dare you? In our temple. Whose temple? That's the problem. That's what they didn't know.

Thought it was our temple. So let's walk through this. So the inspection of verse that began the night before verse 11. After the triumphal entry he enters Jerusalem he looks around.

He's inspecting it. He's looking around at everything. He doesn't do anything. It seems like it's pointless. Why did he do that? He walks around it's evening so he's got to go. Well it's just the inspection.

The action comes the next day. So he comes in and he looks around what does he see? Well let me tell you a little bit historically what he sees. He sees the third temple.

Remember the first temple was the one built by Solomon. That was the first temple. That one lasted about 300 years until 586 when Babylon came and destroyed the temple and destroyed Jerusalem and carried away the captives remember for 70 years.

[25 : 17] The second temple was part of the coming back to Jerusalem as God brought them back. Zerubbabel led one of the returns and he built the temple. Remember Nehemiah comes later builds the wall remember.

Ezra comes and restores the worship. That was the second temple. This is the third temple now. In 20 BC Herod the Great began a building project of mass proportions.

This is the biggest greatest temple ever. Massive. Much bigger than Solomon's. Perhaps not as glorious as Solomon's in terms of gold plated everything but bigger and grander.

the outer court by the way it took 84 years to finish this project long after Herod the Great is dead. It didn't finish complete until 64 AD so it stood for a whole six years before it was demolished.

But the outer court just to give you an example how big this place was the outer court which was not then called the court of the Gentiles it's called the court of the Gentiles by scholars because that's the only part that Gentiles can go into in the temple and then there's a wall that says proceed here upon penalty of death so there was a court where the Gentiles could go in.

[26 : 49] The outer court was 500 yards long by 325 yards wide so that's over three football fields wide five football fields if you think in terms of football which you know that's all or baseball field okay you know down the line the baseball field I can't relate it to basketball sorry Mark I can't relate it to basketball that's like a hundred basketball courts probably I don't know well Mark it figured out it's 35 acres it's huge when you compare that to the original tabernacle in the wilderness with just a little tent and then just a little outer court this has all these courts it not only has the outer court then it has a court for the women and then because the Jews got into really separating and let's keep the women here and then the regular men here and then the priests here and then the high priest goes in the holy of holies remember so there's kind of this stay out stay alive philosophy going on and then the whole court was enclosed by porticos in rows of huge columns that it would take three men holding hands around the column to show you how broad how big the columns were rows upon rows of these columns so it's just huge the porticos are like little porches so he goes in and what does he discover inside the temple he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple he discovers sellers and buyers people who are selling animals for sacrifice like lambs oxen doves for the poor people who can't afford a lamb that was

Jesus' family when they came to sacrifice with Jesus they got the turtle doves because they're poor lots and lots of doves lots and lots of sheep then the tables for the money changers turns those over and by the way in Deuteronomy it talks about for the traveler the Israelite who has to travel a long way he doesn't have to get the money exchanged from foreign currency to the temple shekel before he comes he can do that when he can that's okay what they were doing was okay where they were doing it was not okay they were not to do it in the temple in the first century there was already four markets set up on the Mount of Olives for this purpose historical evidence shows us that this being in the temple was a recent innovation by Caiaphas who was competing with the markets out on the mountain which gives a little bit of flavor to Jesus saying thieves he's making money and we later find out about who this

Caiaphas is he's not a good guy not a good guy he's a high priest he's not a legitimate high priest he was a political appoint you know how those go so Jesus is essentially stopping all of the activity of the temple he's stopping the money changing so they can't pay their temple tax he is stopping the buying of animals for the sacrifices and surprisingly in verse 16 he's not allowing anyone to carry the vessels through the temple now if we read into that from our thought thinking oh he's probably talking about people casually treating the temple as a you know a pass through you know they're taking shortcuts well that's not if you know historically where the mount was that wouldn't have been an option there's nowhere to go if you take a shortcut you still have to go all the way back around to the gate and get out there's nowhere to go there's no shortcut he's talking about the regular people taking the regular offerings the priests he is literally stopping all temple activity momentarily symbolically and then he begins teaching for the rest of the day because by the time he's done teaching it's evening so in verse 17 so

Jesus has done an inspection he's done a discovery he's driven out all of this stuff he's stopped temple activity and verse 17 he gives a pronouncement a surprising pronouncement we're told in verse 17 that he began to teach he was teaching them and was saying to them raises a question from the scriptures is it not written is it not written my house shall be called a house of prayer for who for all the nations by the way Mark's the only one that includes that little phrase at the end for all the nations who are the nations Gentiles where have they set up these tables and seats in the court of the Gentiles they are treating the Gentiles like you don't matter we'll just use your area of your worship for our prophet is it not written in

Isaiah 56 that my house is a house of prayer for all nations it's not an exclusive club Israel priests Sadducees Pharisees they have distorted its purpose on the outside again from a distance the temple looks beautiful it's grand it's glorious it appears good once you walk in the first gate on closer inspection you see all is not well its purpose has been distorted it has been corrupted on the inside you see its true condition and Jesus tells proclaims its true condition you have made it a den of thieves you in big letter in the

[34 : 18] Greek it's emphasized emphatic you have made it perfect tense not just casually done it but you have done this as a completed act to continue to do a den of thieves what's a den is a den where thieves how do thieves use a den is that where they steal things in their den no den is what it's their hideout it's where they hide they go do their thieving and robbing by the word the word for thief is not tricking people for money it's plundering it's pirating it's violent they go do their plundering and then they come back to the temple as if that's!

their safe refuge let me show you where Jesus takes this phrase from in Jeremiah 7 let me read you the context of this phrase in Jeremiah 7 the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord stand in the gate of the Lord's house and proclaim there this word and say hear the word of the Lord all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord thus says the Lord of hosts the God of Israel amend your ways and your deeds and I will let you live in this place do not trust these deceptive words this is the temple of the Lord this is the temple of the Lord this is the temple of the Lord for if you truly amend your ways and your deeds and if you truly execute!

justice on one another if you do not oppress the sojourner the fatherless or the widow or shed innocent blood in this place and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm then I will let you live I'll let you live in this place in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever yeah it's a forever land but there's there's conditions on that behold you trust in deceptive words to no avail will you steal murder commit adultery swear falsely make offerings to bail and go after other gods that you have not known and then come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name and say we're delivered only to go on doing these abominations has this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes behold

I myself have seen it declares Yahweh see what he's doing he's pronouncing judgment if you amend your ways well he's Jesus doesn't say if you mend your ways he said you've already made it you've done it you've made it a den of these no if you amend I'll let you live in fact in two chapters Jesus is going to declare that within one generation this temple will be destroyed when Jesus is hanging on the cross and the moment that he dies what happens in the veil is split in two not an easy thing to do oh I rhymed a little rap when the veil is split in two not an easy!

The point is that Jesus is not trying to reform the temple he's not trying to cleanse the temple it's too late for the temple he is judging it it is at its end why?

[38 : 42] because Christ is the new temple in the gospel of John he cleanses the temple immediately after he cleanses sorry cleanses quote unquote cleanses does the same thing in the gospel of John chapter 2 immediately after he does that the authorities come and say by what authority are you doing these things he says destroy this temple in three days I'll raise it up what temple was he talking about his body you see the physical temple on Mount Moriah is no longer necessary it is being replaced by the true temple that's why it's at its end as the book of Hebrews tells us over and over and over again it was a shadow not the real thing it was simply a reminder of sins year after year not a forgiveness of sins it simply covered momentarily and those only the sins that were unintentional if you broke a commandment you're a dead man so David learned and he broke several commandments in one simple little mistake let me read from one of the good theological commentaries on Mark he says nothing in Mark 11 verses 15 and 16 suggests that Jesus is ire over dishonest business practices or profiteering provokes his attack on the money changers and animal merchants he throws out both the buyers and the sellers if he only threw out the sellers then it might be about this commercialism he throws out the buyers too he throws out everybody in fact in John chapter 2 he talks about how he made a whip and drove everyone out the key question to ask

Garland says is why Jesus would attempt to reform or purify something that he predicts without any great anguish will soon be destroyed the best answer is that he does not intend to reform the temple Jesus has been acclaimed as a prophet prophets do not simply make announcements they also engage in prophetic actions to communicate Jesus appears in the temple as a charismatic prophet and graphically acts out God's rejection of the temple while actions may speak louder than words they're not always clear Jesus actions are designed to make a point rather than to have a concrete result his demonstration is a prophetic protest that symbolically stops the activities that contribute to the temple's normal functioning as one who comes in the name of the Lord he trains his sight on three things the fiscal foundation of the temple a vital component of its sacrifices and a crucial element of its liturgy if money cannot be exchanged into the holy currency then monetary support for the temple sacrifices and the priesthood must end if sacrificial animals cannot be purchased then sacrifices must end if no vessel can be carried through the temple then all worship activity must cease

Jesus does not seek to purify the current temple worship but symbolically attacks the very function of the temple and heralds its destruction this is what Jesus is doing what was the purpose Jesus brings up this statement is it not written my house it's called the house of prayer for all the nations let me read you the context from Isaiah 56 that enhance what Jesus is talking about in other words what was the purpose that they lost sight of what was the aim of the temple what was its witness and here we see through Isaiah what the temple was supposed to be to the nations Isaiah 53 verse 3 let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say the Lord will surely separate me from his people let not the eunuch say behold I'm a dry tree for thus saith the Lord to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbath who choose the things that please me and hold fast to my covenant I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off and the foreigners the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord to minister to him to love the name of the Lord to be his servants everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it and holds!

fast my covenant these foreigners I will bring to my holy mountain! in my house of prayer their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples the Lord God who gathers the outcasts of Israel declares I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered God's house is a place of prayer for all particularly the outcast the foreigner!

[45 : 18] the outsider the leper the eunuch who under the law could not enter those gates God says I want you in modern day to the unchurch I want to reach the outcasts outside the church walls those who are sinners could it be people not like us could it be oh I pray it be let me ask a practical question what does all this mean for us okay I get it

Jesus is saying the temple is over I'm its replacement what about us how can we distort our purpose we say every Sunday it is good to be in the Lord's house this is the house of the Lord we've dedicated this building to glorify him and serve him this is sacred only in the sense that we've dedicated it to that okay it's not a temple this building is not the church you're the church this is

simply the house the church meets in to pray and worship how can we distort that you know how we distort that by making coming to his house about us about us we want to be served not to serve we want our needs met we want our wants met we want to sing the songs we want to sing we want to worship in the way that makes me feel good do you what does the

Lord want have you thought about that well it's not always what I want is that good for you yeah it's not that we seek to make a place of worship painful not at all glorious worship this morning see worship is distorted when it becomes more about music and songs than about who and why we sing we distort worship when it's about being creative and upbeat to move people instead of simple movement toward God see music can be a tremendous help can also be a tremendous hindrance that's why there's worship wars may it never be here oh

Lord I wouldn't be surprised yeah that would get yeah wonderful what a terrible witness of the church oh I like hymns oh I like praise who cares what is the Lord like and what words that we sing matter the most not how it sounds no I like how certain songs sound too they help me but that's not what it's about Lent how we're in Lent how many upbeat songs can you do during Lent well don't do Lent but Lent is good for us it's really good for us and then and then it makes a difference on Easter when we're able to just boom I'm probably talking too much about this

I'm just trying to get practical what distorts our our own purpose of worship and prayer and what we're here for so okay let's just apply it now I have two questions for you when you're in God's house why are you here why are you here do you come to be served or to now I'm not I'm not down down something down playing that we come needy because I come needy and I need transformation I need I need uplifting I need all those kind of things of course but at the end of the day do I come to be served to be made felt better that was good for

[50 : 56] I'm just illustrating the English language to a teach or to serve you come to give you come to seek Christ you come to worship pray and of course to be transformed the hope of being transformed the hope of being renewed the hope of being encouraged and uplifted and Rick and Don and I try to work our service in a way that it will be encouraging and uplifting and instructive and corrective and then second question is this whole house of prayer for all nations who is welcome here I don't want to just hear words

I want to know your heart who is welcome here are the people downstairs welcome up here because they're asking that question I know that for a fact AA I'm sorry downstairs too who are they I'm sorry I'm sorry Raquel could testify to you she was a downstairs person she was afraid to come up she didn't know she could you know how she is she just did and she wasn't welcomed by all I want to know what kind of church we are I want to know who's welcome and if they're different if they're broken if they're messed up you know don't look in the mirror when you say that right because that's what God is getting at in Isaiah 56 that's what Jesus is getting at when he comes into the temple says look what you've made it do we want sinners here do we do we want sinners here that are confused about their lifestyle choices

I want them to hear the gospel I want them to know God loves them there's hope and that the church reflects kindness and an awareness of our own hypocrisy I told one of the young men who is thinking about coming upstairs I told him I didn't know who he was at the time I told him I think that one of maybe the things about Little Log Church is we know we're hypocrites and we're working on it and he said I like that I said I like it too I don't like being a hypocrite but we recognize that we all are on some level but we're working on it and God's working on it and so we don't have these blinders toward other people for the most part and

I'm begging that we all become like that I can't imagine what's going on up here don't look at the man behind the screen alright this is the Lord's house a house of prayer for all peoples we welcome the broken the lame the blind the deaf the lepers the outcasts to experience the power of God through his powerful gospel let us pray our father we thank you lord for this word this hard word of Jesus as he condemns his very own house his very own temple father may we see lord that you are a god who doesn't just let things go you are a holy god you are a just god you are a righteous god you do deal with sin and father as people who are sinners we are so grateful that you have chosen to deal with sin through your son that he would bear our punishment that he would bear the debt we cannot pay and then that he would transfer his righteousness to us that we might enter your holy temple that we might boldly approach your glorious throne we thank you in christ's name amen to take

Thank you.