

## Matthew 21:12-14

*Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.*

Jesus cleansing the temple, we all love this story, because it shows Jesus getting busy and getting those darn thieves out of God's house.

And when we read this story, we realize what was going on was that these guys were overcharging God's people to worship GOD. For example, say a turtledove was sold for \$5.00, but they would jack up the price to \$10.00 because they would say that the one you brought with you was not good enough. So you would give them the one you had brought, and they would over charge you for another one. Then they would take what they just told you that was not good enough, then turn around and sell it to the next person for \$10.00. Jesus couldn't stand this anymore, and He drove these robbers out of the temple. Then the cool part comes in verse 14:

† *"Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them."*

These poor people could not afford to enter the temple, according to those who were robbing the people; therefore they were outcasts from the temple and being held back from coming to God, in a sense. It kind of makes you stop and wonder how we keep others out of the churches with our manmade rules and regulations.

It reminds me a story about pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, who when he and his wife were starting out their ministry in a small church, that they would go down to the beach and witness to the surfers and invite them to church.

Eventually they got new carpet and pews for this church and the surfers would come in from the beach all wet and full of sand. The people in the church didn't want these surfers in the church messing up their new carpet and pews with their stinky sea water feet and sand being spread throughout their new carpet. Chuck's response was to tear out the pews and carpet, because these material things meant nothing and the souls of these young men and women meant everything to God.

If you have ever heard of Calvary Chapel, you will find that there are thousands of churches now throughout the USA and around the world. All because one man had the heart of God to see the more important things, which were the people and not the material things that we sometimes tend to find more precious than the souls of men.

† *Psalm 36:7 How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.*

So let's stop allowing our traditions and way of thinking keep those stinky sinners out of our church, because we too were stinky sinners just like they are, and we sometimes forget that we used to be just like them and smell like them with our sins, until we were allowed to walk into a church and be cleansed by Jesus!

† **John 13:7-9** *Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"*

† **Luke 18:9-14 (MSG)** *He told his next story to some who were complacently pleased with themselves over their moral performance and looked down their noses at the common people: "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax man. The Pharisee posed and prayed like this: 'Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like this tax man. I fast twice a week and tithe on all my income.' "Meanwhile the tax man, slumped in the shadows, his face in his hands, not daring to look up, said, 'God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner.' " Jesus commented, "This tax man, not the other, went home made right with God. If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face, but if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself."*