



**Fellowship of Christian Firefighters
International**

Ministering to First Responders Since 1977

Bible Lessons – Commands of Christ

2-13-2019

Be a House of Prayer

Subject: Be a House of Prayer
 Instructional Setting: Relaxed quiet atmosphere
 Number of Students: As many as the facility will accommodate
 Time: As long as needed to ensure understanding

Objective:	Bible References:
For Christian firefighters and first responders to be equipped to understand the importance of coming together for prayer without polluting it.	<p><u>Primary</u> Matthew 21:13</p> <p><u>Additional</u> I Timothy 2:8 II Chronicles 7:14 Mark 11:17 Isaiah 56:7 Jeremiah 7:11</p>

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Theme: Be a House of Prayer

Life Principle: The Importance of prayer in the fire service

Translation: NKJV

Introduction:

Corruption exists everywhere, even in the fire service. Every now and then you will hear of a department that has corrupt individuals. These stories shake us to the core and cause us to get angry. Fire departments are supposed to exist to help individuals and communities in need. When people take advantage of the trust that has been given to us we usually call for some type of action.

Do we have the same view of today's church? Are we all there for the right reason, or has some people come in with improper motives? See how Jesus viewed worship and what he wants from you and me.

Color Code

Orange – People and pronouns

Blue – Time and chronology

Green – Places

Brown – Events

Red – Reoccurring words or themes

Purple – Main idea, keywords, or running concepts

Definition:

As we look at this command of Christ, we need to be mindful that “My house” as stated by Jesus refers to where worship takes place. Jesus was at the Temple when this story took place. Today it is wherever believers gather together for corporate worship. The term “den of thieves” can be considered any commercialism that has entered into the church.

Lesson – Be a House of PrayerThe Command

Matthew 21:12-17 *“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. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read,*

*‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have perfected praise?’”*

Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.”

Note: We could have easily used red for every time the word Temple was used. It is used enough to be considered a reoccurring word.

- As Jesus went to the Temple to worship notice how He was met, with folks who were selling animals for the sacrifice.
- Jesus is in the change business. Under the Son of Man's leadership, the old way of worshipping is getting ready to change to a new way. God is going to bring all nations into a right relationship with Him, if they will let only let Him.
- Notice also, this place is God's house. It is not our house to develop our own set of rules. As Christian firefighters and first responders we are to obey the truths in the Bible and not rely on our fathers' traditions. That is what got the Pharisees and Sadducees in trouble with Jesus.

Digging Deeper

- The practice of selling the animals for sacrificial purposes did not happen in the Temple proper but rather in the Court of the Gentiles. This practice began to help those who had traveled to get to the Temple. While the practice began with good intent it quickly turned into big business and the priests allowed it to continue.
- The turning over of the tables was not an act of impulse by our Lord but rather a calculated plan to let those know in attendance that God no longer desires animal sacrifice. Only the Messiah could give such a message, and everyone present most likely missed the point. The tables were back in business as quickly as they were turned over, but Jesus made His point.
- Our verse of interest (verse 13) comes to us from Isaiah 56:7. In this passage in the Old Testament we learn how serious God is about prayer and Isaiah points to a day when God's house will be a house of prayer for all nations and not just the Jewish people. Jesus using the opportunity to turn the tables over in the Court of the Gentiles is perhaps an indication of Isaiah's prophecy.
- The main point of Jesus' actions was that God's house is to be a house of continual or unhindered worship and not for commercial purposes.
- Remember Jesus has the authority to "cleanse the Temple" because He is God. Without that authority nothing would have changed. A new covenant was about to take place where all people would be invited to worship God.
- Jeremiah described the Temple as a "den of robbers" (Jeremiah 7:11).

How do we typically view today's church? How have we commercialized its activities?

- Jesus came to Jerusalem as a King. He went to the Temple because His Kingdom is spiritual. His Kingdom is not of this world but belongs in the Temple of God.
- We must learn to obey the truths of the Bible and ensure that our "House of Prayer" is not inhabited with a "den of thieves."

Some people believe that we should never sell anything at church. Do you believe this is talking about that? Can we sell things in our church today?

Other Verses

Isaiah 56:7 – *“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful 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 nations.”*

Mark 11:17 – *“Then He taught, saying to them, ‘Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”*

I Timothy 2:8 – *“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;”*

II Chronicles 7:14 – *“if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

Application for First Responders:

Firefighters and first responders need to carefully consider how they treat worship and ensure that they do not commercialize it in anyway.

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways can we turn our church into a “house of thieves?”
- Why does Jesus put such a high standard on worship?
- Does this section of Scripture apply to today’s churches, or is it only for Temple worshipers?

Bible Memorization:

I Timothy 2:8 – *“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;”*

Prayer Requests:

That I might learn to love to worship God in sincerity and truth.