

Cleansing the Temple (3)

Scripture Reading — Matthew 21:12-17

*He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.
Matthew 21:12 —*

It wasn't just the Gentiles who were being pushed to the margins by the business trade in the temple. The poor were also prevented from worshiping God as God intended.

God had commanded that no one "should appear before the LORD empty-handed. Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way your God has blessed you" (Deuteronomy 16:16-17). The place for buying animals for sacrifice and the exchange of money had always been outside the temple courts. But the religious leaders had moved the marketplace inside the temple. Worshipers were allowed to sacrifice only those animals they had bought in the temple court. Offerings too were to be of money exchanged only by the official money changers. Since the prices charged in the temple were higher than those outside the temple, the religious authorities were making exorbitant profits off of the poor.

Matthew records that Jesus overturned the benches of the dove sellers. A dove was the offering that someone brought if they could not afford a lamb. With prices so high, the poor could not even fulfill the command not to come empty-handed before the Lord.

Jesus' point is clear. He gets angry when the poor are prevented from worshiping God. Are there barriers to the poor around you who want to worship God?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you always have a heart for the poor. Thank you for loving us all and for showing us that we all need you. Make us more like you each day. In your name, Amen.

Devotion topics: [Seasons](#), [Easter](#)

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