

Does Your Temple Need Cleaning?

by

Ellis P. Forsman

Does Your Temple Need Cleaning?

by

Ellis P. Forsman

October, 7, 2011

Does Your Temple Need Cleaning?

Matt. 21:12-14

Shortly after entering Jerusalem at the beginning of His final week, Jesus entered the temple.

Matt. 21:12-14, *“And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.”*

Angered by the presence of the moneychangers and merchants, He drove them out. He decried their turning the house of God into a den of thieves. With the temple cleansed, He then healed the blind and the lame.

Jesus had cleansed the temple before.

John 2:13-17, *“And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”*

It was during the Passover, three years before.

Then He rebuked them for making the house of God a house of merchandise.

In both cases, we see Jesus’ anger for their misuse of the temple; not that there was anything inherently wrong with buying and selling, but it was not the proper place, or use of the temple.

How about your temple? Is it being properly used? Does it need cleaning? Are you aware that you even have a temple?

Yes, you do have a temple. As with the temple in Jerusalem, it is to be used in the service and praise of God. If it is not, then it too needs a cleaning! What am I talking about?

Your body is a temple.

It is a temple for God to dwell in.

Your physical body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you if you are a Christian. 1 Cor. 6:19, *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”*

This *“indwelling”* refers to a special relationship between you and the Holy Spirit.

By which God strengthens you.

Eph. 3:16, *“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;”*

By whom we can deal with the power of sin.

Rom. 8:11-13, *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”*

As Solomon recognized with the temple in Jerusalem, no physical dwelling can contain the omnipresent God; that is, God who is everywhere at the same time.

2 Chron. 6:18, *“But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!”*

Such is true of the Spirit of God.

Psa. 139:7-12, *“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”*

Hell — Hebrew “Sheol” in this verse — is the waiting place of the soul after one dies in this life.

Yet, the uniqueness of the Spirit’s presence in the life of a Christian is such that it is proper to speak of Him *“indwelling”* the Christian. Gal. 4:6, *“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”*

What is said of the physical body is also said of the church as a whole. 1 Cor. 3:16, “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*”

Paul was just speaking about the church in the preceding verses:

1 Cor. 3:9-15, “*For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*”

What is said of the church as a temple is also true of the body. 1 Cor. 3:17, “*If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*”

Defile the temple of God and you will incur the wrath of God! For the temple is to be holy! We have a temple that is to be devoted for service to God.

The temple of Jerusalem was to be a place of prayer.

- Matt. 21:13, “*And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*”
- 2 Chron. 6:19-21, “*Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee: That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place. Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.*”

So, your temple, including both body and mind, is to be devoted in service to God. Your body is to be a living sacrifice.

- Rom. 12:1, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*
- Col. 3:5-9, *“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds,”*

Your mind is to be renewed, focused on things above.

- Rom. 12:2, *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*
- Col. 3:1-2, *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

Let not the temple of God be abused. We have seen how the temple in Jerusalem was abused. A place designed for prayer, turned into a marketplace. A place that needed to be cleansed, once and again.

This can be true of our temples. We can become guilty of setting our minds on earthly things. We begin serving our bellies (fleshly appetites), rather than Jesus.

Phil. 3:18-19, *“(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)”*

We find ourselves unable to abide by the will of God.

Rom. 8:5-8, *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”*

We can begin to let the temple of God be abused by offering our bodies to that which it does not belong. Some which is inherently sinful.

1 Cor. 6:13-18, “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”

Other things (cares, riches, pleasures of life) which detract us from our true service and hinder our ability to serve God with our bodies.

Luke 8:14, “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”

What is the condition of your temple? Perhaps you are in need of a “major overhaul” (salvation). Perhaps you need some “spring cleaning” (restoration and rededication). In either case, the principles for cleaning are similar.

What you need in order to be cleansed — the presence of Christ.

Jesus is an expert at “temple cleansing”! Even more so, when it comes to cleansing the temples of our bodies and spirits. He knows that it must occur from the inside out.

Matt. 23:25-27, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.”

Jesus died that He might purify us.

Titus 2:11-14, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

His blood is the cleansing power to purify us from all sin.

1 John 1:7, *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

That is His gift to us.

How do we ensure the presence of Christ in our “temples”?

Through faith.

Eph. 3:17, *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,”*

We must have a working faith. James 2:18-20, *“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”*

Through obedience.

- John 14:21, *“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”*
- John 14:23, *“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”*
- 1 Pet. 1:22, *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”*

For the non-Christian, such faith and obedience includes baptism.

Baptism unites us with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed.

Rom. 6:3-4, *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

In baptism we put on Christ. Gal. 3:27, “*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*”

Through baptism God, Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ move into our body. Our body becomes a temple of all three.

For the Christian in need of cleansing, faithful obedience includes repentance and prayer.

Acts 8:22, “*Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*”

Repentance is needed, as Christ counseled the Laodiceans.

Rev. 3:14-19, “*And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”*

Change the things you are doing. Change your attitude.

Prayer is needed through which the Lord is allowed back into our hearts. Rev. 3:20, “*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*”

We access Him by prayer.

What you need to have to be cleansed — the power of Christ.

Jesus exercised strength to overturn the tables and drive out the merchants; even more so, does He offer strength for the Christian.

Without Him, we can do nothing.

John 15:4-5, “*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*”

With Him, we can do everything through Christ.

Phil. 4:13, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”*

That is, we can do anything that is according to His will. That is why we have the Holy Spirit; to aid us in our difficult times.

Thus, we also need to stand strong.

Eph. 6:10, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”*

Don't be a lukewarm Christian. Stand strong.

- Col. 1:11, *“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;”*
- Isa. 41:10, *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”*

What you need to have to be cleansed — our participation with Christ.

While we are dependent upon Christ for our cleansing, we cannot sit by idly. We must take action to “cleanse ourselves”.

2 Cor. 7:1, *“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

Stop doing things to our bodies that the Lord hates. We must “pursue holiness”. Heb. 12:14, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”*

This involves both “putting off” and “putting on” things in our life.

As counseled by James.

James 1:21, *“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”* Study.

As instructed by Peter.

1 Pet. 2:1-2, *“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”* Desire His word.

As commanded by Paul.

Eph. 4:22-32, *“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God*

is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”
Put His words in our hearts and minds.

Our cleansing will be greatly facilitated by what we allow in our minds. For things that are worthy of praise and virtue will ensure God's presence in our lives.

Phil. 4:8-9, *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”*

Our transformation will take place as our minds are renewed.

Rom. 12:1-2, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

Conclusion.

In what condition is your temple? Is it a place where God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit can reside?

Is your body and mind “a place of prayer”; one that brings glory to God? Or have you allowed the mundane things of life to so pre-occupy your temple that it is not what God intended, that it is a place that is common and profane?

If your temple needs cleansing, then look to Jesus. Only He can provide the cleansing you need. But He also provides power for godly living.

But be careful that you do not just let Jesus clean your temple and nothing else. For cleansing without replacement can make things worse.

Matt. 12:43-45, *“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”*

Therefore, we must fill our temples with prayer, praise, virtue, and godliness. Otherwise our temple will soon be filled with idols.

Do not forget the words of the apostle Paul:

2 Cor. 6:16 – 7:1, *“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

Are you participating with Christ in your cleansing and perfecting holiness in the fear of God?

