

THE BIG IDEA: When we start with a high view of God, we end with an accurate view of ourselves. When we start with a high view of ourselves, we end with an inaccurate view of God.

The Take-Off

We've been taking some pretty big chunks of scripture - this week, we'll only look at 4 verses.

If you think Christians are just gentle cookie-bakers, you may see a side of Jesus that surprises you

As the tension grows between Jesus and the religious leaders, Jesus doubles down on His mission by kicking them out of the Temple because they had taken it in a completely different direction and corrupted its purpose

Read with me in Luke 19:45-48

1. Deal with culture vultures (vv. 45-46)

- a. The first step for Jesus in shifting the Temple back to its purpose was to **deal with the culture vultures**
- b. Culture vulture is a weird phrase, and I simply mean those people who eat away at the culture until it's dead and nothing like what it was hoped it would be
- c. Plus, these leaders were acting like vultures!
- d. Vultures are birds of prey, and these leaders were preying on the people coming to the Temple
- e. Here's how:
 - First, they were exchanging unapproved money for approved Temple money
 - Nothing was wrong with that, but there were 2 things that caused Jesus to respond the way He did
 - Number 1 / They were cheating people by charging more than necessary for sacrificial animals
 - We know from Leviticus 12 that poor women could bring 2 doves or pigeons to the Temple
 - According to the Jewish Mishna, the market for birds had risen so much that the poorer women could no longer afford them
 - The result? They couldn't offer sacrifices.
 - Jewish history records that the High Priests who walked the Temple courts were despised by the people because of their brutality and hunger for money
 - Number 2 / history records that the moneychangers were doing all of this in the Gentile court
 - That means that the Jews were cheating Jews and crowding the place that Gentiles were allowed to worship
- f. Jesus walked in and quoted from 2 Old Testament texts as He drives them out

2. Out with the old and in with the original (v. 47)

- a. Let's talk about the phrase "den of thieves"
 - It comes from Jeremiah 7:11, but let's read verse 1-11
 - Basically what God is saying through the prophet Jeremiah is that you can't cheat people and exploit foreigners and widows and orphans and think everything's cool just because you go to church
 - Listen again to Jeremiah 7:8-10 / "Don't be fooled into thinking that you will never suffer because the Temple is here. It's a lie! Do you really think you can steal, murder, commit adultery, lie, and burn incense to Baal and all those other new gods of yours, and then come here and stand before me in my Temple and chant, "We are safe!"—only to go right back to all those evils again?"
 - That's how you turn a house of prayer into a den of thieves, by preying on the people instead of praying for the people
 - What Jesus saw reminded Him of those words from Jeremiah, and He drove them out
- b. But He didn't just drive them out - sometimes we're the worst at stopping bad things without replacing them with good things
- c. Jesus didn't so that - He took the time to point the people back to the original purpose of the Temple, and that's found in Isaiah 56:1-8
 - The purpose of the Temple was to give foreigners a family, to bring the outcasts home. Even to give eunuchs a heritage that would never end.
 - These words should remind us of Ephesians 2:11-18
- d. For Jesus, **it was out with the old and in with the original!**

3. The shift from preying to praying

- a. The way that the leaders were preying on the people was a far cry from what God intended, and so Jesus called the people to stop PREYING and to start PRAYING
- b. Let's put up the **comparison chart** and quickly highlight the shifts
- c. Preying is what was happening in the Temple; Praying is what Jesus modeled for us in Luke 11:1-4. We know it as The Lord's Prayer.
 - Prioritize men vs Praise God / "Holy is your name"
 - Require of men vs Repent before God "Forgive us"
 - Extort from men vs Ask of God "Give us"
 - Yield to no one vs Yield to God "Lead us"

The Landing

God knew that - apart from prayer - we'd never be able to live with and love others who are different from us
We PREY ON MEN by imposing what we want on them.

We PRAY FOR MEN by bringing what God wants to them.

All it takes for a house of prayer to become a den of thieves is to see ourselves as most important.

We remove God from the throne and put ourselves there.

But prayer changes that; it changes our perspective.

The longest Big Idea ever says it like this:

When we start with a high view of God, we end with an accurate view of ourselves. When we start with a high view of ourselves, we end with an inaccurate view of God.

The moneychangers started with a high view of themselves and inaccurately thought God would be okay with them preying on others.

Prayer focused on God results in hearts yielded to His will and to the people He came to seek and save.

In fact, a house of prayer will always be full of servants because we're praying to the greatest servant of all - the God who loved us so much that He sent His servant Son

Let's pray.