

**I. Read Luke 19:45-48**

A. Read Mark 11:15-18 and discuss Jesus' response to those profaning the temple. Consider in particular these questions:

\* Wasn't Jesus a *nice* person? If so, why would He act in such a manner?

**It is important to distinguish between being *nice* and being *good*. Many in our day have lost the distinction. Mr. Rogers was *nice*. Jesus was *good*; indeed, He was the very epitome of goodness.**

\* How does *goodness* affect a person's behavior?

***Goodness* is related to holiness and justice. Consequently, it is grounded in what is "true... honorable... right... pure... lovely... of good repute..." and excellent (Philippians 4:8). Goodness is always reflected in the characteristics listed in Philippians 4:8. Consequently, a *good person's* behavior would reflect these characteristics as well.**

\* How does *niceness* affect a person's behavior?

***Niceness* is related to characteristics like courtesy, consideration, propriety and relational concerns. That means that, ultimately, being *nice* is its own reward. *Nice* people are easy to be around and attractive socially. When possible, it is important to be *nice*, but not as important as being *good*. This may seem an unnecessary distinction, but when we consider the prophetic ministry of Christ, we see that it is sometimes *wrong to be nice* at the expense of righteousness.**

\* If Jesus was angry in the temple, did He commit sin? (Read Hebrews 4:15; Ephesians 4:26.)  
**No.**

\* Is anger ever sinful?

**Yes. First of all, there is a difference between *righteous indignation* (anger) and *self-righteous indignation* (anger). Jesus exhibited *righteous indignation* in the temple. *Self-righteous indignation* is related to selfish concerns about one's rights or interests. It can lead to sin, particularly if it is not dealt with appropriately. For example, Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be angry and sin not; do not let the sun go down on your anger." Therefore, one who experiences the human emotion of anger, yet does not allow it to result in sinful behavior, has not sinned. Of course, the temptation to sin must be dealt with just as any other temptation; therefore, the Scripture warns us not to "let the sun go down on your anger." In other words, "Get over it!" Anger can turn to bitterness and fester like an infection in the body. It is also important to learn to be honest with ourselves and objective about our motivations. Folks who are overtaken with anger and/or bitterness seldom recognize that their anger is often more akin to self-righteous indignation than righteous indignation. Jesus did not have our problem because He was sinless and untainted by the Fall.**

B. What are some circumstances in the contemporary church that are analogous to the temple incident?

**The *charlatans*, who use Christianity as a tool to manipulate people into giving money (like the corrupt televangelist); the *liberal apostate*, who uses the pulpit or the classroom to destroy the faith of God's people; or the *opportunist*, who always seeks ways to use the church and ministry for self-aggrandizement, are all similar to the sinful money changers. Use your imagination to come up with other examples.**

Apply the aphorism “*the corruption of the best is the worst*” to what is happening in pulpits all across America.

**What comes from the pulpit ought to be the very best. When it is corrupted or diluted, this is the worst sin man can commit.**

- C. In verse 47, we read that Jesus continued “teaching daily in the temple.” Why?  
**At that time, the temple was *the* place in which the ceremonial law was lived out. As such, it was not an optional religious practice but was the expression of true religion — in spite of the Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ roles in the temple. The situation is not the same today since the ceremonial law was fulfilled in Jesus’ sacrificial death and the *people of God* are the *temple of God*.**
- D. In verse 48, we read that the people were hanging on Jesus’ words. How might we reflect this same hunger today?  
**By taking advantage of the teaching and preaching ministry in the church. By *hungering and thirsting* for the Word of God! (For personal reflection: Do you *hang on the words of Christ* in your study of God’s Word?)**
- E. Consider the following:
- \* Bill is a new Christian. He has been told that Christians are happy all the time. This creates a lot of pressure on him. Is this true?  
**No. Happiness is related to circumstance (happenstance). Sometimes it is appropriate to be unhappy, as in the times when we should be filled with *righteous indignation* or the times we see the sad consequences of the Fall on the lives of people we love. It is also helpful to make a distinction between *happiness* on the one hand and *peace* and *joy* on the other. No matter what the circumstances, we can have *peace* and *joy* as Christians.**
  - \* Does anger present the same temptation equally to all men?  
**No. The *tendency* to become angry is related to our temperament and personality. While anyone can become angry, some seem more inclined to do so. Consider Peter and the Sons of Thunder (James and John) as compared to someone easy-going like Barnabas or Luke.**
  - \* Is anger contagious? (See Proverbs 22:24.)  
**Yes, it is.**