

Rev. Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church

**Matthew 21:14-17 | The Simple Church**

Sunday July 13, 2025

**WELCOME:**

- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- My sermon notes are in the foyer—please take them home with you.

**REVIEW:**

For the last several weeks, we have been studying chapter 21 of Matthew's Gospel.

Chapter 21 is a turning point in the life of Christ—it's also a turning point for us as His followers.

In other words, a turning point is code for *change*.

Illustration:

Yet, the Christian life is all about change—growing up into maturity.

(Immutable) God never changes and yet is totally committed to changing us. (Mal. 3:6). *→ Reforming & Transforming*

This turning point, also known as the *Triumphal Entry*, is a significant milestone.

After three years of Jesus teaching, preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, and training His Disciples—Jerusalem is His final destination.

The Roman cross is His destiny.

From the very beginning, John the Baptizer said, "***Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!***" (John 1:29)

The only way Jesus can take away the world's sin is to become the sacrifice that God the Father demands for sin.



To do that, Jesus must become the Mediator between God and Man.

**Hebrews 9:22**—... without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey that day, He fulfilled OT prophecy.

Tens of thousands of people were celebrating and worshipping.

However, the further Jesus rode into the city, the more the crowd lost their enthusiasm—and by the end, people didn't even know who Jesus was.

The following morning, Jesus arrives at the Temple.

But there's a big problem because He doesn't see people worshipping, praying, or being taught the Word of God.

Instead, Jesus sees a county fair.

He smells the stench of farm animals instead of incense being burned.

Jesus hears the sheep bleating rather than prayers being prayed.

He watches all the money changing hands as businesspeople extort money from the Pilgrims, who have traveled far distances to celebrate the Passover.

And then he sees the religious leaders and priests, smiling, laughing, and talking—instead of weeping, repenting, and loathing their sin.

God's Temple turned into a secular circus.

So the Lord Jesus Christ decides to do something about it.

Jesus began His ministry in the same spot at the Temple three years earlier.



Jesus made a whip and turned into a Jewish Indiana Jones. (John 2:15)

He drove out the people who were desecrating the Temple.

He turned over all the tables that had money on them.

He cleansed the Temple of its impurity.

Now, Jesus stands in the same spot three years later.

The businessmen have turned their tables and chairs right side up—and they are abusing and stealing from God's people once again.

Last Sunday, we watched Jesus cleanse the Temple for the second time.

We watched Jesus use physical force—forcefully driving these money changers and businessmen out of God's holy place.

During the first cleansing...

**+** *John 2:17*—And his disciples remembered that it is written: **Zeal for your house will consume me.**

During the second cleansing...

**+** *Matthew 21:13*—He said to them, "**It is written, my house will be called a house of prayer,**

In other words, there is no room for worldly enterprises in God's house. NONE!

We learned why by tracing the roots of God's Temple back to the Sanctuary.

Before the Sanctuary was the Garden of Eden.



We discussed how these beautiful places were manifestations of Heaven on Earth.

We learned why the Lord Jesus is so zealous for His house.

### **Last Week KEYPOINT 2:**

*The Tabernacle/Temple represents the holiness of a Holy God.*

So when people disrespect the Temple, they disrespect God Himself.

And the Lord Jesus has zero tolerance for anyone disrespecting His Father.

Yet, in this case, the entire religious establishment of Israel was profaning the Temple.

We examined why there is no Temple today.

There's no Temple in Jerusalem because God's people are now God's Temple.

And through the community of God's people, God has created a new institution into which God's people are to worship Him.

Jesus called it His Church.



MAT 16:18

This is important because it's through this lens that we consider our own church.

Scripture paints many illustrations of Christ's Church:

- **Ekklesia** (The called out ones/set apart from the world/different)
- **The Body of Christ:**

**1 Corinthians 12:27**—Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it.

A church community involves members and membership.



It's tragic today how many in the church despise the thought of church membership.

But no one can get around it—it's right there in that verse.

In fact, the apostle Paul used that term "member," *melos* in Greek, twelve times in 1 Corinthians 12, describing the church.

In other words, Christ has committed His life to the Church, and we are to make the same commitment. How can we not?

Another illustration of the church is marriage—**The Bride of Christ**.

*→ Early Marriage*  
**Ephesians 5:32**—This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

A third Biblical illustration of the church is **The Family of God**.

**Matthew 12:48**—"Who is my mother and who are my brothers?"

**Matthew 12:49**—Stretching out his hand toward his disciples (Believers), he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"

Understanding that the church is the *Family of God* brings reality and tangibility to these Biblical illustrations.

Lastly, the church is illustrated as **The Flock of God**.

**John 6:27**—Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, ~~which the Son of Man will give you,~~

Have you ever watched a flock of sheep? They're always eating!

When it comes to the church, we too, are always eating—eating spiritually.



Please make sure you're not grazing on spiritual junk food.

With those metaphors on the church, we saw a common theme: community and commitment to one another.

We then looked at how we are to view the church.

- 1. Church Home vs. Church Hotel
- 2. Place of Transformation vs. Point of Transaction
- 3. Spiritual Growth vs. Personal Ambition
- 4. Godly Community vs. Worldly Commodity
- 5. Eternally Holy vs. Temporarily Happy

Finally, I encouraged you to spend time in prayer, reflecting on how you view your church.

Asking yourself whether your view of church matches the passion and the zeal of Christ for His Church.

**1 Corinthians 12:18**—God has arranged each one of the parts/members (you) in the body (Church) just as he wanted.

If you are a member or committed to calling RBC home—you didn't choose River, God chose River for you. ☺

Since God chose this little church on the hill for you, He expects you to treat it as your own home, being transformed by living a spiritual life inside a spiritual community, serving with the gifts that He's given to you, so that God Himself will make you holy.

And from God's holiness comes eternal happiness.

That's all a review from last week, and it sets us up for part two today.



## INTRODUCTION:

Today marks the second part of the cleansing of the Temple.

We're going to examine what happens when the dust settles after Jesus stops all money from changing hands.

He drove the farm animals out of the Temple.

Jesus stopped all the foot traffic because they were using the Temple as a shortcut.

What happens directly after this dramatic event? How does it impact you? Let's find out!

*\*Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.\**

## SCRIPTURE:

**Matthew 21:14**—The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

**Matthew 21:15**—When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonders that he did and the children shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant

**Matthew 21:16**—and said to him, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" Jesus replied, "Yes, have you never read:

**You have prepared praise  
from the mouths of infants and nursing babies?"**

**Matthew 21:17**—Then he left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

*These are the holy words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, infallible, sufficient, and efficacious Word of Almighty God.*



**PRAY:**

*I have asked one thing from the Lord;  
 it is what I desire:  
 to dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
 gazing on the beauty of the Lord  
 and seeking him in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)*

**EXEGESIS:**→ *Last week*

**Matthew 21:12**—Jesus went into the temple and threw out all those buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves.

**Matthew 21:13**—He said to them (Isa. 56:11 & Jer. 7:11) **"It is written, my house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of thieves!"**

We don't know how long this transition is from verses 13-14.

But, after the dust settles a bit...

**Matthew 21:14**—The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

This is fascinating.

After the Lord Jesus uses force to cleanse the Temple and places the fear of Almighty God on the people who hate Him and disrespect His house...

Look who's not fearful—the blind and the lame!

These people are in awe of Jesus—how can they not be—they just witnessed God take control of His House.



They probably thought, "It's about time!"

After Jesus' dramatic display of divine indignation, the blind and the lame knew that the Lord's fury wasn't directed at them.

Have you noticed that Jesus' anger is with the so-called "shepherds" of Israel?

The Lord was also angry with them in the OT:

+ **Jeremiah 23:1**—"Woe (curse) to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" This is the LORD's declaration.

+ **Jeremiah 23:2**—"Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds who tend my people: You have scattered my flock, banished them, and have not attended to them. I am about to attend to you because of your evil acts"—this is the LORD's declaration.

Jesus was never angry at the sheep—no matter how lost they were.

Jesus did get angry at the Disciples once. Why?

Because they were keeping children away from Him.

+ **Matthew 19:14**—Jesus said, "Leave the little children alone, and don't try to keep them from coming to me, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

The Disciples were unknowingly doing the same thing as the false shepherds of Israel!

They were both keeping God's people from God.

+ **Matthew 21:14**—The blind and the lame came to him in the temple,



Similar to Bartemeaus, even those who are physically blind can spiritually see.

Even the lame are determined to make their way to Jesus—remember Bart?

How he screamed at the top of His lungs for Jesus!

In a similiar way, these men and women are disabled.

Some who can't walk are finding the strength and willpower to come to Jesus.

No one and no thing is going to keep them away from God.

Isn't it amazing that directly after Jesus cleanses the Temple from the religious businessmen, the religious politicians, and the fake shepherds of Israel--

Those who remain are people who are drawn to Jesus, not intimidated or repelled by Him.

And because Jesus does not repel these folks, watch what happens.

**Matthew 21:14**— and he healed them.

Jesus now shifts the focus of the Temple from being a shopping mall to what it was designed for.

The Temple is where the God of the universe is present with His people.

The Temple is a place for God to be worshipped, for the Word to be taught and explained, for hymns to be sung, and to care for those in need.

*Healed* is the Greek verb *therapeúō*. We get *therapy* from it.

It not only means to heal physically and restore, but also to serve.



Jesus said...

**Matthew 20:28**—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,

The Shepherds of Israel refused to serve the sheep.

What's really interesting here is that the same Jewish leaders who turned the Temple into a shopping mall are the same people who banned the blind and the lame from the Temple altogether.

Jewish oral law (not the written law) prohibited the blind and lame from even coming to the temple to worship.

How tragic is that? How did that happen?

They misinterpreted and intentionally misapplied a Leviticus passage that prohibits blind and lame priests from offering *certain* sacrifices (Lev. 21:18).

So they twisted God's Word by taking it out of context to make their lives easier.

They didn't want to get their hands dirty ministering to those with special needs.

But Jesus makes all things new—He is the Good Shepherd. (John 10:11)

In a few days, Jesus will lay down His life for His sheep, but today He cleanses the Temple by casting out the insiders—and welcoming the outsiders.

From the very beginning, the Lord Jesus emphasized the priority of mercy over sacrifice.

**Hosea 6:6**—For I desire faithful love and not sacrifice,  
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.



**Micah 6:8**—Mankind, he has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Obviously, the Lord Jesus is the perfect example of faithful love, justice, and humility.

The shepherds of Israel—not so much. We see that next...

**Matthew 21:15**—When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonders that he did and the children shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant

Wonders: 1) Healing miracles, 2) Worship taking place

Picture the scene—Jesus is healing the blind and the lame.

As Jesus heals and serves the lame in the Temple, children start to worship Him!

This evidently was the last straw for the fake shepherds.

**Indignant**—The chief priests and the scribes missed their anger management meeting again.

These men are furious that children are worshipping God in God's Temple!

Do you see the dichotomy?

Jesus was angry for two reasons:

1. His people were being used and abused.
2. The Temple was not being used as a place of worship, thus the Father was not being honored.

In other words, Jesus' anger was spiritual, not personal.



But the religious leader's anger was very personal—and the more personal our anger is—the angrier we become.

The religious leaders are furious for three reasons:

1. The cleansing of the temple—The Temple can no longer print money.
2. The Messianic Miracles of those who were blind but can now see.
3. Children worshipping God in God's Temple!

### KEYPOINT 1:

*When the Temple is cleansed, the real work of the Gospel is done.*

Not only are the blind and lame being healed by God Himself in His Temple—but the Lord Jesus Christ is being worshipped with no agenda.

When the kids cried “Hosanna,” it wasn’t for political, economic, or vocational reasons.

They cried “Hosanna/Praise the Lord” because they wanted to worship God with all of their hearts!

These children, (Greek) boys, most likely around 12 years old, passed their bar mitzvahs.

They worship the Lord Jesus in the same way they heard their parents worship the day prior.

**Matthew 21:16**—and said to him, “Do you hear what these children are saying?”

*Wasn't this blasphemy? These children must stop praising God!*

**“Do you hear?”** Yes! I’m pretty sure Jesus can!

All these holy things ( healings and worship) are going on in God’s Temple! The nerve of Jesus!



Jesus responds to their question in the same way as the day prior.

**Luke 19:40**—He answered, "I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out."

**Matthew 21:16**—Jesus replied, "Yes, have you never read:

When Jesus asks, "**Have you never read ...?**" he means, "Have you never considered this Biblically—instead of personally?"

**Matthew 12:3**—He said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry?"

**Matthew 12:5**—Or haven't you read in the law that on Sabbath days the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and are innocent?

**Matthew 19:4**—"Haven't you read," he replied, "**that he who created them in the beginning made them male and female,**"

**Matthew 21:42**—Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

**The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.**

In other words, have you ever exegeted a passage of Scripture without trying to force it to say something that's going to benefit you?

As Jesus did on numerous occasions, Jesus shamed the Jewish leaders by quoting the Old Testament against them, the so-called experts in Scripture.

Jesus does it again by quoting one verse from Psalm 8.

Psalm 8 is about God's glory and human dignity.



The refrain to this Psalm is...

**Psalm 8:1**—LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!

**Matthew 21:16**—You have prepared praise from the mouths of infants and nursing babies?" (Psalm 8:2)

These children are rightly praising the Lord's magnificent name. Therefore, Jesus rightly accepts the children's worship and shuts them down.

**Matthew 21:17**—Then he left them,

~~priests/religious leaders~~

If people don't want the Lord Jesus—He will leave.

The Greek sense is that Jesus will depart and leave them to their own sin.

Please know this—when Jesus does leave—so does their only hope of forgiveness.

Jesus left the unbelieving priests and scribes because they refused to repent.

Jesus will not stay where He is unwanted.

After Jesus healed the demon-possessed man by casting thousands of demons into a herd of pigs, the townspeople came, not to thank Jesus...

**Mark 5:17**—Then they began to beg him to leave their region.

Although every person is accountable to God, God does not force Himself on anyone.

Salvation is first based on God's sovereign choice, but please note that no person is saved against their will.

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone.







**APPLICATION:**

As I close, I want to build upon last week, because the cleansing of the Temple and the children praising Jesus today happen back to back.

Throughout this past week, you have been praying and pondering how you view your church:

1. Church Home vs. Church Hotel
2. Place of Transformation vs. Point of Transaction
3. Spiritual Growth vs. Personal Ambition
4. Godly Community vs. Worldly Commodity
5. Eternally Holy vs. Temporarily Happy

There are two responses.

Some of you call RBC home and are eager to learn and serve.

However, if we're really honest with ourselves, many of us would confess that the church really doesn't mean that much to us.

We would confess that we're just not that excited to be here.

*Have you ever thought about why that is?*

Why don't we experience the type of zeal, passion, and commitment that Jesus has for His church?

There are many reasons.

Many of us are here today out of some childhood obligation, a moral sense of duty, trying to make God happy.

But also, I'm guessing today's passage is one of them.

Jesus cleansed the Temple—in other words, He purified it.



He got rid of all the things that were not supposed to be there in the first place.

All those things that distract us from true worship.

I'm guessing that in some way, you, too, have experienced these worldly things brought into your church at some time or another—only to leave you frustrated, disappointed, and angry.

What's the difference between the marketplace in the Temple back then—

And the coffee shops, bookstores, restaurants, sports leagues, music concerts, programs and comedy shows that are in the church today?

Aren't they one and the same?

And aren't all these people and all these things making money off the church today?

There is not a week that goes by that somebody is trying to sell me something for the church.

Or they want to use our building—and these people certainly want to use you and get into your wallets!

*But it's always been that - to his passage Textles that.*

I want to close by doing two things.

First, I want to explain our ecclesiology—the way that RBC is run and how we make decisions to keep the church pure.

Second, I want to ask about some personal tables in your own life that Jesus is turning over. *today.*

Let's start with the big picture.



**Matthew 28:19**—Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

**Matthew 28:20**—teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

It's because of this command that we are a small, simple, and gimmick-free church striving/struggling to fulfill the Great Commission.

*Please Know That*

We are not all things to all people.

We are a teaching church—and we put the Bible back in church.

Our God given mission is to experience God verse-by-verse.

Our vision is to share Jesus day-by-day.

Our mission and vision are the lens through which we make every decision.

We believe that the church is a place of reverence.

We believe that the church is where the Body of Christ comes to worship and commune with our Heavenly Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

We worship through:

Prayer, songs, proclamation of God's Word, the explanation and application of God's Word, giving of ourselves, serving with our gifts, we tithe with our money, and fellowship with our hearts.

We are a simple Bible-based, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-filled church.



Look what happens when we stay on mission.

 **Ephesians 4:12**— *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to the body of Christ,*

In other words, the church equips the church by teaching God's Word and then applying it to our lives.

And then over long periods of time, as you get the Bible into your bones—as God renews your mind— the Lord prepares you to use the gifts that He's given to you to share Jesus Day-by-Day.

We believe that the teaching ministry of the church is the most important ministry because everything flows from the pulpit.

As the pastor, I'm a Bible Teacher—not a comedian, not a life coach, not a psychologist or a therapist.

I'm not going to use gimmicks to get your attention—movie clips, sports analogies, or the latest headline news story.

*I'm not going to bring in the world - I'm going to immerse you into God's Kingdom!*

I'm not going to stop our study in Matthew's Gospel to celebrate a secular holiday.

The church is not about us—it's about the Lord.

Which means I'm also not going to use *emotional* gimmicks like guilt and shame to get you to do something you don't want to do.

Jesus never focused on any of that stuff.

He taught the Word of God because there is power in the purity of God's Word.



**Psalm 12:6**—The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in an earthen furnace, purified seven times.

**Psalm 119:140**—Your word is completely (exceedingly) pure, and your servant loves it.

**Hebrews 4:12**—For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

When we read and hear the Word of God by the Spirit of God—God changes us.

He's the one who convicts us of our sin.

He's the one who leads us to repentance.

He's the one who moves us along in our walk with Him.

There is power in walking slowly, teaching you God's Word.

When a church doesn't do that—when they focus on the world's needs—social Gospel—they lose God's power.

Over time, they lose their purpose for existence.

A. W. Tozer called it "Sermonettes for Christianettes."

Much of today's preaching is nothing more than a motivational talk with a Bible verse.

Is it any wonder that many people treat the church like a hotel?



But Jesus cleansed the Temple—He made it pure.

In other words, Jesus made the Temple gimmick-free.

So that's a glimpse into why we do the things that we do.

That's why we are laser-focused on teaching you the whole counsel of Almighty God.

Secondly, Jesus turned over the tables of commerce in the Temple so that people could worship without distractions.

As a point of personal application today—

*What is distracting you from experiencing God verse-by-verse?*

*What is preventing you from having the Lord's peace & joy?*

In other words, what table is Jesus turning over in your life?

Table of:

- Money
- Physical health
- Worship Music — style — rather than words.
- Doctrine/Beliefs
- Politics
- Love of a certain ministry
- You fill in the blank...

Whatever it is...

## **KEYPOINT 2:**

*Jesus loves His church too much to leave any of these tables right side up.*

He will flip these tables over in our lives.

*we can't have Jesus AND...  
" " " Plus..*



turn your table over  
And when Jesus does, it's a painful process.

Now, for those of you who love this church—love the people, love the mission, and love the vision—and you don't want it to change.

Please know that if God is not changing/reforming us—we're dying.

Just as Jesus disrupted the entire Temple that day, He will disrupt your life today. —  
which means He will disrupt the Body of this church.  
Many times, Jesus uses people and circumstances to do so.

When Jesus flips over your table, you have two options:

1. Blame the people involved—because you don't want things to change.
2. Trust the Lord with all of our heart and not lean on our own understanding.

We can choose to set the table back up and keep doing what we've always done.

Or, we can leave the table where it is, confess that table as sin, repent, and choose to do something different.

It's our choice.



## **PRAYER**

## **BENEDICTION**

*And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts.  
(Col 3:15)*



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