

# Matthew 21:12-17 | David Vinyard

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[0:00] All right, good morning. You guys hear me okay? Is that coming in? Yeah, loud and clear? Awesome.! It's good to be here, despite the cold and the flurries and this persistent winter that we seem to be having.

Last time I was standing here, I think it was just before Christmas, and the topic was on... Does anybody remember? I won't feel bad if you don't remember. It was about Jesus, a little bit. Sorry, I was feeling good about myself anyway, so I'll just... No, it was on forgiveness, if that rings a bell. I described it as a topic or a piece of character that does not come naturally to me. It's an area of weakness. And I thought that was fitting, because today is the complete opposite. Today we have a completely different story, a completely different theme, from the book of Matthew in chapter 21, if you want to turn there.

And it's on the topic of anger and frustration. And, you know, these are my next of kin. It's, uh, it's... This one feels right. Like, the last one I thought, I'm not the guy for this.

[1:08] But this one feels like somebody lined it up. Good job, Teddy and Brad. Yeah, for me, it's like drinking coffee, right? I don't know when it's going to happen, but it's going to happen early and every day, you know?

Maybe not at the exact time, but it's coming. So, that's our... That's our segue today in Matthew 21. I did feel a little better in prepping for this.

I started looking at examples of anger or frustration in the Bible, and there are numerous, right? So I felt like, all right, it's not just me. You know, we have Cain and Abel. There's like a jealous anger. We have Simeon and Levi.

Just a violent anger. We even have the Apostle Paul. And I thought this was kind of an interesting little intro story. He has a frustrated anger. Which, I mean, come on.

Who can't relate to that sort of anger, right? It's actually from Acts 16. I don't know if we have... You can advance the slide. There's a story in Acts where Paul is in his ministry, and he's working through the different towns.

[2:09] He's picking up some followers. And this demon-possessed girl is following him. And it's not really that bad what she's saying. She's saying, These men are bondservants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.

That's the words out of the mouth of a demon girl at Paul. But here's the thing. It happened for days and days, until Paul was finally so fed up with this shouting, that he turned, and in the name of Jesus, cast the spirit out.

Not out of compassion, but out of frustrated anger. And I was like, Hey, for those of us with kids who sometimes never stop talking, I get that feeling. Like, just...

Stop. Anyway. Lots of anger in the Bible. Lots of frustration in the Bible. The good news is this. We're not looking at those imperfect examples.

Today we get the opportunity to look in Matthew 21 about a righteous anger, or the anger from the Son of God, Jesus. And that's helpful.

[3:14] I found this helpful for myself. I thought there were some good applications, some good reminders, a little bit of history sprinkled in, and some things that I hope will be beneficial. So, this is for Teddy and others who are in the world of AI.

No, you can advance it. So, I asked AI to create an image for me of Jesus flipping over the money tables. And, needless to say, I was both disappointed and impressed at the same time.

I was like, Okay, you got what you asked for, but didn't frame it quite right. So, you can't see it from here. He's got like a mangled face and feet for hands. But it's, that was something.

I was like, that, that was, that was fine. But I went to look for something that was a little more historically accurate. And so, we go to the next one.

And I don't know why this just appeals to me. I don't know if it's like, I used to watch westerns as a kid, or just an old-fashioned sense of humor. But I love this caption. For those that can't see it, it says, I'm here to heal lepers and whip hypocrites.

[4:15] And I'm all out of lepers. Like, it's, I love that one. Still, I don't know if quite historically accurate, but it's a little better. Right.

Yeah, it's got that, it's got that John Wayne feel. Yeah. All right. So with that, I just have to say, let's actually look at what really happened in Matthew 21. Now, we're going to start back in verse 10. The text is 12 to 17. We're going to start at 10, and we'll get to that at the very end. But here's how it goes. I'll start reading. It says, And when he had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

And so the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth. Then Jesus went into the temple of God, and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the money tables, sorry, the tables of the money changers, and the seats of those who sold doves there.

And he said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. Then the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

[5:15] But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, saying, Hosanna to the son of David, they were indignant, and said to him, Do you hear what these are saying?

And Jesus replied, Yes. Have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants, you have perfected praise? Then he left them, and went out of the city to Bethany, and he lodged there. God, I lift this morning up to you. I ask that you would speak through me. Give us some encouragement. Give us some challenges. Help us to hear, and help us to think about how this matters to us, and what we can do with this insight and this example from you.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Alright, so most of you, at least a number of you, may be familiar with this account in Matthew. It's a familiar text.

I feel like sometimes it's used incorrectly to justify an angry action, or some sort of violent procedure. And being that we don't have temples, necessarily, that we're engaged in, or procedures, or sacrifice today, I really did think the context was helpful here to see the full picture of what's going on.

[6:23] What was happening in that day? What led to Jesus' response, right? So I did a little digging, and the first item in a few pieces of context is the where is all this happening.

This is the easy one, right? It's happening in Jerusalem. It's happening specifically in the temple area. And Jesus refers to this area in multiple places as my Father's house. So we get that again in the text. We know that that's true from other places in Scripture.

That's where this is going down. The second piece is the when. And I think Dave actually hit on this last week. And I think it's going to be a theme next week with the other Dave. You've got a trio of Dave's, by the way, three in a row.

I don't know if you noticed that. But the when is also in particularly interesting as we look at the rest of Matthew. So these events take place only a few days before Jesus' trial and crucifixion.

And it's the time of Passover. But from a macro perspective, if you're thinking about this, in Jesus' ministry, in his time frame, it's different. And I say that because if you think back on what we've looked at in Matthew, of all and other parts in the Gospels, so many miracles, so many encounters, or so many events that we were familiar with, Jesus would say things like this.

[7:38] He would say, he healed the blind man in Matthew 9. He says, see that no man knows it. In Luke 5, he healed a leper or two and says, don't tell anyone. Go straight to the priests.

In Mark 9, after the transfiguration, Jesus comes down and says, don't say anything about this until after my resurrection. And the point is this. By Matthew 21, there is a major shift in that approach. Even starting earlier last week. The urgency is at hand. There's no more waiting. There's no more deferral. We're not hiding out.

We're not going to hold tight. It's like, I put this into John Cena, if you know who that is. My time is now. That's it, Jordan. Thank you. I needed that. It's boldness in action.

And so that's going to be the theme. I was listening to another pastor's, somebody, some other message on YouTube about this. He said, the entirety of Jesus' ministry in the first 20 chapters of Matthew is however many years.

[8:37] And the next rest of Matthew is only a handful of days. So it's like this ramping up, this arrival. And so that's sort of the context in a bit. And we see Jesus publicly coming into town, riding on a donkey, and accepting the praise of the people.

And now, here in this segment, he's crashing on the scene, calling out these folks in real time, loudly declaring the sins of these Jewish priests and leaders and folks that are in charge of this. So, I was talking to Dave last week. Is this the same account in John 2? Is it a different one? Did Jesus do this more than once? I kind of lean towards the side of these are two separate events, which kind of begs the question, what is it about this that bothers Jesus so much?

Does that question make sense? If it happened once or more than once, why does this particular thing make Jesus angry? So I was kind of a history guy in school.

I like school in general. A little bit of a nerd. You know, I don't think I grew out of that ever. But history is helpful for a lot of ways. And I did a little history digging. And it turns out there's more going on than I initially realized at this moment when Jesus walks in.

[9:52] So I'm going to give you this. I'm going to sum it up hopefully quickly. There's three things that are going down. And some of this is from Jewish records. Some of this is from the historian Josephus. But this place, this exchange, it was named or referred to in some of these historical records as the Bazaar of Annas.

Does that name sound familiar? The high priest. The high priest before the high priest that's in active duty with Jesus' time right now. He declared the need for shops within the temple.

He kind of set up this scene as a way to make money. As a way to rake in profits off of the procedures going on. And so I started digging in a little bit.

You know, it's the Feast of Passover. It's Unleavened Bread. Thousands of people are coming into the temple. And the law required that all visitors age 20 and up had to pay a little bit of temple tax, right?

You guys might be familiar with that. So the first of three abuses that Jesus would have witnessed as he walked in involved this temple tax. And the whole idea was Roman coins or international money was more common.

[11:00] But that was not good. You could not use that to pay because it had the face of a foreign god on it, right? So the history here or the first item that would have caused Jesus to respond this way is this currency transfer.

And so they would, based on what I could find, the rate was like 25 to 30%. So you're going in trying to be obedient, trying to pay what you owe. And because of these Jewish abusers, you're getting charged, you know, a substantial rate.

You might think, well, Exodus 30, you know, there's some prescription around this. This was, you know, maybe not the worst thing in the world. Maybe these are just opportunistic Jews, you know. There's a reason we have banks named Goldman and Sachs, right? Those are not, you know, Anglo-Saxon surnames. But they were taking advantage of individuals who were trying to worship, who were trying to obey God and they were being financially fleeced in the process.

That's the first thing. Here's the second piece and this was the part that, you know, I didn't really understand much about how this worked. There was, there was a system of animal purchasing as well that was offered in this area.

[12:13] Number two, worshipers had to bring in a spotless lamb, right? If you couldn't afford a lamb, there was like a stack ranking of what you could go down to, doves and so on. I don't know the intricacies of that

all the way through but basically there were more and lesser options, right?

So many of these folks came from a long ways away and the whole idea is even if you had a spotless lamb, travel is not what we think of it today, right? I mean, we travel, maybe you go somewhere, you stay in nice accommodations, you get away.

Travel was hard, travel was dirty, people got injured during travel. Your spotless lamb when you left the house may not be spotless by the time you make it to where you're heading, right?

So that was a logistical challenge and so to accommodate that real life challenge, there was another station set up to where you could purchase a spotless lamb.

Here's the problem. They were being sold at a rate of three to four times traditional market rate.

This is like a ballpark hot dog, right? Because of where you're standing, you are going to pay substantially more because that's what the mechanism is in place.

[13:18] All right? So the rates are outlandish. Here's the third thing. We'll keep this moving. If you were lucky enough to live within proximity, close enough to make that trek without coming into harm's way, and you happen to be wealthy enough to have a good set of, you know, flocks and a spotless lamb and you brought it to the temple so everything's looking good.

You're like, they're not going to get me this year, right? There was also a mandatory inspection fee. So you went in with your spotless lamb and said, oh, hold on, let's take a look at that thing first, right?

If they find an imperfection, back of the line, now you have to buy one of ours. There was this whole charade set up in the time of what I discovered and looking into the history. It sounded to me like the DMV.

You know, you've got your sales tax, your emissions testing, your inspection, your property tax. It's like, they're going to get you either way. So, and I tell you all that because it helped me to kind of see the picture of Jesus walks in and rather than this process of, you know, facilitating worship and obedience to the law and honoring God through prayer, they walk in and Jesus sees this just disgusting exploitation and greed and abuse and I was talking to Dave last week too, the Chosen, in the first season at least, does a good job of showing the state of God's people at the time of Jesus. They're not, you know, they're not blowing through money. Like, they're scraping by and instead of seeing God's people repenting of sin and in prayer, they're, I can just, you can just feel this scene of, what are these guys doing?

[15:01] You know? It's a cash grab. Anyway, instead of walking up to potentially decompress before a crazy next couple days, Jesus is greeted by this, you know, terrible scene in a house of worship and it was infuriating that they would stoop so low as to take advantage of their own people.

Jesus, who came to help the poor and the sick and the outcast, witnessed all of those same groups just being taken advantage of. So, that history was helpful for me as I was thinking about why is it? What was it? How did they get here? And filled with this knowledge of what was going on, filled with this righteous anger, he casts them out. I mean, he's shouting, he's turning things over.

It says the tables and the chairs, like, you're not staying here, get gone. Which is interesting, you know, normally, Jesus, full of compassion, temperance, patience, even in the face of insult, is just, justifiably angry.

And it's important to remember that even in his anger he did not sin, but to add to their conviction he quoted scripture. Did you catch that? In Matthew 21, 13, he goes back and says, it is written, and he quotes from Isaiah, my house shall be called a house of prayer.

[16:20] And then he pivots to Jeremiah 7, I think I put that one up there next. Has this house, which bears my name, become a den of robbers to you?

But I have been watching, declares the Lord. What happened, what was going on in Jeremiah back in the day is Jeremiah rebuked the temple leaders for their abuse and their pretentious religion while oppressing the needy?

And that's exactly what was taking place. So it's as if Jesus lands and says, man, you guys should have known better. You should have known better than this. Not everybody's a fan of history, so we can move on from that.

I just, I thought it was enlightening. I thought it was very interesting to think about what was he looking at when he arrived. But as I mentioned, we don't have temples.

We're not standing in a formal temple court. We're not exchanging monies. We're not providing for our own sacrifice. Thank God, right? But at a minimum, I'll challenge you with this because I thought of it as an application for us living today.

[17:25] It's a caution of how easily something normal or something routine or something that sounds lawful can turn into an occasion for sin.

Something, something at its face that may have otherwise been good, right? Offering a place to accommodate these needs is, has become an opportunity for abuse.

It's just a call to look back, look at ourselves, look at our own lives and think, have we let anything get out of line? Have I, have I taken advantage of something that I shouldn't have? Have I let something that started good pivot beyond that?

And I do think it's relatable because our world around us does the same thing. It's ripe in opportunities for abuse, right? We have a caution here, I think, in this example from Jesus' life to be on guard against things that may segue into a snare for greed.

Even decent things. I wrote this down. There is hardly a moment where discernment can be absent from the life of a believer. Do you believe that? Do you think that's true? Man, I do.

[18:34] Especially today. I also found this short clip from a different sermon. It's been condensed, Dana, if you want to share that, but it's like 30 seconds and it's another challenge on this topic of the temple.

I think it's really well done if you want to cue him up. Yeah. The sound is the most important part, though. No, I just meant like the video, as long as you get the sound to play.

Yeah. The apostles say now that the presence of God dwells in the church, both collectively as a people and also individually, each person. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3, 16, do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you?

In 1 Corinthians 6, he says, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God? You are not your own, but you were bought with a price to glorify God in your body.

The point is that we are the place now where God's presence dwells. And if Jesus were to come to this temple, if Jesus were to come to this church, this gathering of believers, if Jesus were to come to you as an individual, what would he find?

[19:42] Would he find fruit? Would he need to cleanse things, to turn over some tables, to drive some things out? The church should not be a people of perverted purpose. Our purpose is to worship, to glorify, to honor God, to live for his purposes.

The apostles say now that the presence of God dwells... I just, I like the way he summed that up and I thought it was a worthy challenge. I thought there was some validation there. So I want to pivot.

We've got about 15 minutes left and Dave asked me, he's like, what do we want to sing about today? You know, anger, what else? And I said, actually, as I've been thinking about Matthew 21, I like the way it ends.

Or at least this segment. I like the way this segment ends because it's not about anger. That's what I told him. And he picked the song accordingly. But, the angry person of Jesus pivots very quickly into redemption and compassion.

So watch this. Jesus drives out these... I'm sure he felt a certain way. You know, others may have used different language but thankfully we don't have that recorded.

[20:54] But verse 14, watch this. Then the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them. And that seems normal. That's what we would expect. But it's not until you look back into Leviticus and the history of this circumstance that you really appreciate that statement.

And here's why. Leviticus 21 says, for generations to come, none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer food of his God. And no man who is blind or lame or disfigured or deformed, no man with a crippled foot or hand or who has a hunchback or a dwarf or who has an eye defect or who has a festering or running sores or damaged testicles.

Sometimes the Bible is oddly specific. I don't know. But, but verse 14, just days before Jesus would give up his life, standing in a place where otherwise these folks are not invited near.

They weren't even included in the process. And that day, after the chaos of Jesus' response, they're invited in. Jesus heals those individuals who were formerly debarred from entering.

Even those with, you know, severe issues. Christ was the living example of how God's love will triumph over the failures of men. And I love that theme for the rest of this text.

[22:13] this could have been potentially one of his last public healing occasions like he had done so many times in his ministry. And what a statement to make where he made it after what he said by doing that.

I thought that was so neat. And there's a reason I started back at verse 10 in Matthew 21. I think this, there's something that runs through Dave's message and then mine and maybe even next week.

but it pulls the segments together and verse 10 if you remember reads this. And when he came to Jerusalem all the city was moved saying, who is this? Who is this man?

Who is this Jesus? And hidden in this chaotic week of everything that's going on in Jesus' life at the end of his time on earth between his triumphal entry and the flipping of the money tables, the most appropriate, the most impactful question that anyone could ever ask is embedded right there.

That each of us has to answer at some point. Who is this Jesus? And I like this because it's sneaky in here between verse 15 and verse 16 but in our segment today we actually get the two different potential answers to that very question.

[23:30] Did you notice? There's the first one from the chief priests and there's a second one out of the mouth of the children. Again, it doesn't just jump out at you but if you look at it you kind of see maybe where I'm going with this.

So verse 15 reads this. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did and the children crying out in the temple saying, Hosanna to the son of David they were sorely displeased or they were indignant.

So who is this Jesus? The chief priests and scribes looked at Jesus and they decided he was an imposter. They said he's undeserving of that.

Why are you saying that? He's unqualified. He's just a nobody. He's unworthy of that praise. And I think in full transparency I think that's what most would say today.

Outside of the church I'm saying in the world today. He's just a guy. He's unworthy. He's not the son of God. But watch this. The children nearby they were watching this whole scene and what did they say?

[24:37] Who is this Jesus? Hosanna to the son of David. And everyone knew what that meant. Everyone hearing those words knew what that meant. They were saying this is him.

This is the Messiah. And not only did Jesus this is one of those other texts where Jesus never claimed to be God. Well yes he did. Not only did Jesus accept this but he referenced this as prophecy or came back to Psalm 8 where he says out of the mouth of babes thou hast perfected praise.

And so we have these two completely different responses. And it's a challenge. Maybe it's a challenge to you. Maybe it's a challenge to your friends and family. But is Jesus an offense to our pride and our shame as sinners?

Or is he the God who saves us? Matthew Henry comments on this. I like this snippet from him. He says proud men cannot bear that honor should be given to any but themselves.

And so when Christ is most honored his enemies are most displeased. I thought that sounds true today. And there's this beauty in simplicity. Matthew 21 kind of gives us this very simple picture.

[25:46] We can either acknowledge we can either believe in Jesus and who he was who he is and what he did or we can flounder in pride and shame and disbelief. And I'm thinking that describes a lot of folks that I know.

Not necessarily in this room. I just mean you know in general. I have one final encouragement. I think we're coming up on it here. We looked at what fundamentally made Jesus angry. When the things of God were perverted and distorted by thankless men when hypocritical men disrespected his father that's what really got him going. When what God had established to bring men to worship and to pray was turned into selfish gain Jesus became angry. But I like this and maybe this will make sense and then I've got a couple verses to close with.

Did Jesus sin by getting angry? No. We know that he didn't. If he did we wouldn't be here today. [26:55] We wouldn't be talking about this. Is there such a thing as justifiable anger? I think there is. Am I personally anywhere near the level of control and maturity of Jesus?

I would have to say I'm far from it. Are 95% of my own angry moments justifiable? Also no. I would say not. But it's a worthy excerpt for us to consider because we do live in a world where truth and the things of God are perverted.

We live in a time where the God of this world has blinded the eyes of many and we live in a time where the God that we serve is mocked and disregarded. And I think it's validation for us to understand why we feel certain ways about certain things.

Does that make sense? Like, it bothered Jesus when these things were so disregarded and thrown out and I think it's okay that it bothers us. It's not a point of well, is there something wrong with me? I don't want to see the things of God. I don't want to see the truth that I know to believe in being completely cast aside. Isaiah 5 reads, woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, woe to those who are wise in their own eyes.

[28:19] If the musicians want to come up, here's the final challenge. It's a little bit of a pivot, but here's what I'll close with. And I have some verses.

I think these verses are helpful, something to meditate on for the next seven days if you'd like. What speaks the loudest on the subject of Jesus' anger are all the things that didn't make him angry. Let me say that again. What speaks the loudest on the subject of Jesus' anger are all the things that did not make him angry. It wasn't personal insults. It wasn't those doubting his deity or his sanity or his purpose.

It wasn't the confusion of his own followers and their prideful conversation of who's the best. Which would have frustrated me, right? Dealing with the 12, I'd be like, you guys, you're killing me, right? It wasn't anything with his own temporal circumstance. When he didn't have a place to go home to, when they didn't have food, when they had to sit and wait until people left town so that they could go to the next place. None of that is what we read that made Jesus angry.

[29:24] Those weren't the times. It's only when men would have the audacity to disrespect God. So I'll close with that thought. To be like Christ in light of Matthew 21 is to very rarely become angry.

And to walk cleanly, purposefully, and compassionately through this world. Through this fallen world. I like these next couple verses. I'll read them for you and then we can wrap up here.

Ephesians 4. These are verses on directly, I think, to us and have application for how we should govern ourselves. Ephesians 4 in 26. Be angry and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your wrath nor give place to the devil. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away. James 1.19. Know this, my beloved brothers.

Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Colossians 3. But now you were to put off all anger, malice, wrath, blasphemy, and so on and put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him.

[30:35] Proverbs 19. The discretion of a man deferreth his anger and it is his glory to overlook a transgression. Colossians 2.6 So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness.

And the last one here is Ephesians 5. It reminds us to be careful then how we live. Talking about discernment. Be careful then how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil.

I just thought those were encouraging and helpful and let's pray today. God, thank you for this example. I'm so grateful that you're human, that you came to intersect this piece of history and declare what is right, declare the truth of yourself and give us things that we can understand, that we can relate to, that we can watch your perfection through.

I pray that you would help each of us as we are challenged with circumstance, challenged with emotions, challenged with this world around us, that we would navigate cleanly, that you would give us comfort and discernment from the Holy Spirit that we could take with us.

And God, just that we would look for ways to honor you and bless those around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.