



## Session 5: Jesus Offended People, Especially in High Places

October 7, 2019 • Rev. Doug Gray  
First Church of Squantum

Bible Study Based on  
Leonard Sweet's *The Bad Habits of Jesus: Showing Us  
How to Live Right in a World Gone Wrong*

### I. Introductions and Prayer

- A. Leonard Sweet writes: “I don’t think it was money; rather, they stole the grandeur away from God by serving the institution rather than God. They turned a house of prayer into a house of profit. When people today work for the church instead of working for God, love a denomination more than they love God, cherish their traditions more than they cherish their relationship with God, then they steal what is due only God. And I bet Jesus still gets angry—not angry *at* us but angry *over* us.” (p. 65)

### II. Jesus Offended People

- A. Read Mark 11:7–11, 15–19
- B. Note the “sandwich structure” of this passage. The fig tree is the “bread” (vss 12–14, 20–24) and clearing the Temple is the “meat” (vss. 15–19).
- C. What does Jesus mean by this? Read Isaiah 56:1–12. What is God saying about who gets to be “part of the family?” How does God open the way?
- D. Apply the Isaiah passage to Jesus’ actions. What do you think He is trying to say to the “powers that be” of the Temple? How might this offend them?
- E. Read Jeremiah 7:1–11. What is God looking for in these verses? Is God content with what they are doing?
- F. Apply Jeremiah reading to Jesus’ actions. What do you think He is trying to say to the “powers that be” of the Temple? How might this offend them?

### III. The Withered Fig Tree (Mark 11:12–14, 20–24)

- A. Read the passage. What are some things you notice? Are you surprised by Jesus’ response to the disciples in the second section?
- B. Since, these stories seem connected, how does this story add clarity to Jesus cleansing the Temple and calling out the Pharisees?
- C. Why does Jesus focus on living a life of faith and finish with forgiveness?

### IV. Conclusions: Jesus Offends Us Too!

“Sometimes the Prince of Peace was a disturber of the peace so that he could be God’s purveyor of true peace—the “peace that passes all understanding,” “peace on earth, good-will to all” peace. Following Jesus in any culture will be offensive.” p. 58

## Mark 11:1–26

**Mark 11:1 ¶** When they came near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ahead of him.

**Mark 11:2** He said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you. As you enter it, you will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it, and bring it.

**Mark 11:3** If anyone asks you what you are doing, say that the Lord needs it. That person will send it here at once.”

**Mark 11:4 ¶** The disciples found the young donkey in the street. It was tied to the door of a house. As they were untying it,

**Mark 11:5** some men standing there asked them, “Why are you untying that donkey?”

**Mark 11:6** The disciples answered them as Jesus had told them. So the men let them go.

**Mark 11:7 ¶** They brought the donkey to Jesus, put their coats on it, and he sat on it.

**Mark 11:8** Many spread their coats on the road. Others cut leafy branches in the fields and spread them on the road.

**Mark 11:9 ¶** Those who went ahead and those who followed him were shouting,

¶ “Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

**Mark 11:10** Blessed is our ancestor David’s kingdom that is coming!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

**Mark 11:11 ¶** Jesus came into Jerusalem and went into the temple courtyard, where he looked around at everything. Since it was already late, he went out with the twelve apostles to Bethany.

**Mark 11:12 ¶** The next day, when they left Bethany, Jesus became hungry.

**Mark 11:13** In the distance he saw a fig tree with leaves. He went to see if he could find any figs on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves because it wasn’t the season for figs.

**Mark 11:14** Then he said to the tree, “No one will ever eat fruit from you again!” His disciples heard this.

**Mark 11:15 ¶** When they came to Jerusalem, Jesus went into the temple courtyard and began to throw out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the moneychangers’ tables and the chairs of those who sold pigeons.

**Mark 11:16** He would not let anyone carry anything across the temple courtyard.

**Mark 11:17 ¶** Then he taught them by saying, “Scripture says, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations,’ but you have turned it into a gathering place for thieves.”

**Mark 11:18 ¶** When the chief priests and the experts in Moses’ Teachings heard him, they looked for a way to kill him. They were afraid of him because he amazed all the crowds with his teaching.

**Mark 11:19 ¶** (Every evening Jesus and his disciples would leave the city.)

**Mark 11:20 ¶** While Jesus and his disciples were walking early in the morning, they saw that the fig tree had dried up.

**Mark 11:21** Peter remembered what Jesus had said, so he said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has dried up.”

**Mark 11:22 ¶** Jesus said to them, “Have faith in God!

**Mark 11:23** I can guarantee this truth: This is what will be done for someone who doesn't doubt but believes what he says will happen: He can say to this mountain, 'Be uprooted and thrown into the sea,' and it will be done for him.

**Mark 11:24** That's why I tell you to have faith that you have already received whatever you pray for, and it will be yours.

**Mark 11:25** Whenever you pray, forgive anything you have against anyone. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your failures.”<sup>a</sup>

## **Isaiah 56:1–12**

**Is. 56:1** ¶ This is what the LORD says:

¶ Preserve justice, and do what is right.  
My salvation is about to come.  
My righteousness is about to be revealed.

**Is. 56:2** ¶ Blessed is the one who does these things  
and the person who holds on to them.  
Blessed is the one who keeps the day of worship from becoming unholy  
and his hands from doing anything wrong.

**Is. 56:3** ¶ Foreigners who have joined the LORD should not say, “The LORD will separate us from his people.” Castrated men should not say, “We’re only dead trees!”

**Is. 56:4** This is what the LORD says: “I will remember” the castrated men who keep my days of worship, choose what pleases me, and faithfully observe the conditions of my promise.<sup>a</sup>

**Is. 56:5** Inside my house and within my walls, I will give them something better than sons and daughters. I will give them a monument and a name. I will give them a permanent name that will not be forgotten.

**Is. 56:6** And “I will remember” the foreigners who have joined the LORD to worship him, to love the LORD’s name, and to be his servants. All of them will keep the day of worship from becoming unholy and will faithfully observe the conditions of my promise.

**Is. 56:7** Then I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them happy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, because my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

**Is. 56:8** ¶ The Almighty LORD, who gathers the scattered people of Israel, declares, “I will gather still others besides those I have already gathered.”

**Is. 56:9** All you animals in the field,  
all you animals in the forest,  
come and eat.

**Is. 56:10** “Israel’s” watchmen are blind.  
None of them know anything.  
All of them are like dogs that are unable to bark.  
They lie around dreaming; they love to sleep.

**Is. 56:11** These dogs have huge appetites.  
They are never full.  
They are the shepherds,  
but they don’t understand.  
All of them have turned to go their own ways.  
Each one seeks his own gain.

**Is. 56:12** “Each one cries,”  
“Let me get some wine,  
and we’ll fill ourselves with liquor.  
And tomorrow will be like today, only better.”

### **Jeremiah 7:1–11**

**Jer. 7:1** ¶ The LORD spoke his word to Jeremiah. He said,

**Jer. 7:2** “Stand at the gate of the LORD’s house, and announce from there this message: ‘Listen to the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who go through these gates to worship the LORD.

**Jer. 7:3** This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Change the way you live and act, and I will let you live in this place.

**Jer. 7:4** Do not trust the words of this saying, “This is the LORD’s temple, the LORD’s temple, the LORD’s temple!” It’s a lie.

**Jer. 7:5** ¶ ““Suppose you really change the way you live and act and you really treat each other fairly.

**Jer. 7:6** Suppose you do not oppress foreigners, orphans, and widows, or kill anyone in this place. And suppose you do not follow other gods that lead you to your own destruction.

**Jer. 7:7** Then I will let you live in this place, in the land that I gave permanently to your ancestors long ago.

**Jer. 7:8** ¶ ““You are trusting the words of a saying. It’s a lie that cannot help you.

**Jer. 7:9** You steal, murder, commit adultery, lie when you take oaths, burn incense as an offering to Baal, and run after other gods that you do not know.

**Jer. 7:10** Then you stand in my presence in the house that is called by my name. You think that you’re safe to do all these disgusting things.

**Jer. 7:11** The house that is called by my name has become a gathering place for thieves. I have seen what you are doing,” declares the LORD.