

The Call to Commitment

Chapter 17

Audio lesson: New Testament 17



Objective: To understand the invitation Jesus offers His followers and the radical commitment He expects of them.



“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

—Matthew 20:26-28

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you.”

—Ephesians 4:32

Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem the week before His crucifixion, and when He arrived in the city He cleansed the temple and cursed a fig tree. These acts created the context for a powerful parable that made the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders even more intense.

Some of the hardest words ever spoken by Jesus are found at the conclusion of this long chapter of Matthew 21 when Jesus informs the religious leaders that because they were not bringing forth the fruit of the kingdom, the kingdom would be taken away from them (the Jews) and given to a people (the Gentiles - all those who are not Jews) who would bring forth fruit.

Jesus taught His disciples to have the heart of a servant and to commit to follow Him at all costs. This servant attitude and radical commitment still apply to His followers today.



1. True or false? It is never too late to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. Those who accept Christ late in life go to heaven just like those who follow Him their whole lives.
2. True or false? It is better to have an extremely sinful life before coming to Christ than to come to faith as a child and have only sinned a little.
3. True or false? Jesus praised the mother of James and John for her great faith and wise advice.
4. True or false? Jesus invites us and wants to have fellowship with us as a king invites his subjects to a banquet.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. How did Jesus cleanse the temple?
 - a. He and His disciples picked up all the litter on the grounds.
 - b. He expelled all the non-Jews.
 - c. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and drove them away.
 - d. He prayed a cleansing prayer over it.
6. What did the withered fig tree symbolize?
 - a. Israel
 - b. Gentiles
 - c. The temple
 - d. The law of Moses
7. What did Jesus present as His credentials when the religious leaders questioned His authority?
 - a. His status as a priest
 - b. His ancestry
 - c. His works
 - d. His knowledge
8. Because Israel had mistreated its prophets and the Son of God, what did Jesus say He would do?
 - a. He would take the kingdom of God out of Israel's hands.
 - b. He would send them even more prophets.
 - c. He would declare all other religions valid.
 - d. He would personally take over Jerusalem and expel all of the Jewish leaders.
9. Where is God's headquarters today?
 - a. The United States
 - b. The largest church in the world
 - c. Jerusalem
 - d. Wherever His people bring forth the fruit of His kingdom

10. In Jesus' parable of the wedding feast, what were the excuses people gave for not accepting the invitation to the feast? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. They had bought a field and needed to go see it.
- b. They had bought some oxen and needed to test them.
- c. They didn't think that they were worthy to be invited.
- d. They had just gotten married.

11. What did Jesus require of those who would follow Him?

- a. That they take up their cross and follow Him
- b. That they sell all they have and give to His ministry
- c. That they learn how to do miracles before identifying with Him
- d. That they memorize the four gospels

Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him (have fellowship), and he with me.

—Revelation 3:20



How much do you value your fellowship with God? How does knowing that Jesus wants to enjoy time with you make you feel? In what ways would you like to see your fellowship with Him grow deeper and stronger? What is keeping you from enjoying fellowship with God?



Thank God that He desires to fellowship with us even more than we want to fellowship with Him. Ask Him to help you bring forth the fruit of the kingdom internally and externally.



Going Deeper

1. How can you apply the parable about the king inviting guests to his banquet to your own personal fellowship with your King of kings and Lord of lords? (Consider Revelation 3: 19, 20)

2. In what way did the withered fig tree prefigure the hardest things Jesus ever said to the Jewish religious leaders, as recorded near the end of Matthew chapter 21? _____

3. What did the metaphor used by the Lord, when He challenged His followers to take up their cross and follow Him, mean to those who heard that awesome and very difficult invitation?

4. How do we apply personally the teaching of Jesus that His followers should follow His example to minister or serve, just as He came to serve and give His life a ransom for many? (Matthew 20: 27, 28) _____

5. The cleansing of the Temple describes the zenith of the hostile dialogue between Jesus and the religious leaders. If He came back today, would He “overturn the tables” in the churches? Why or why not? _____

6. How does the most solemn message Jesus ever gave to the Jewish religious leaders apply to a church, a missionary organization, a Christian college or university, and any other ministry today? _____

7. Since the kingdom of God is now in the hearts of those who crown Jesus to be their king, how does this sobering and solemn message apply to you and me today? In other words, will He take away our opportunity to bring forth fruit for him and give it to those who will bring forth its fruit? _____
