

BIBLE STUDY HELPS

TITLE: Remembering Christ [Adjusted Title]

TEXT: John 2:11-23

TARGET: SESSION IN A SENTENCE

Remembering Christ—who He is and how He works—strengthens our faith.

LOOK UP: FOCUSING THE GROUP

Ask (Option- list responses on the markerboard): What are some of your favorite memories of Christmas? Why are these memories important to you? In what ways does recalling those memories help you today?

Today we will focus on John 2 and some things the disciples remembered about Jesus that affirmed and strengthened their faith. The memory of how Jesus, the Son of God, worked among them while He was still on this earth, affirmed their faith in Christ as the Messiah and gave them strength to continue serving Him.

The specific events John references are included in John 2. After giving an account of Jesus' miracle at the wedding in Cana of Galilee in John 2:11-12, John takes us to an event that takes place when He is in Jerusalem. This incident involved the cleansing of the temple. It is this specific event where John mentions twice that fact that the disciples "remembered."

Let's look at what the disciples remembered because of this incident and consider how remembering Christ—who He is and how He works—strengthens our faith.

LOOK IN: UNPACKING THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Remembering Christ reminds us of His authority and the importance of pure motives– John 2:13-17

¹³ *The Jewish Passover was near, and so Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* ¹⁴ *In the temple he found people selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and he also found the money changers sitting there.* ¹⁵ *After making a whip out of cords, he drove everyone out of the temple with their sheep and oxen. He also poured out the money changers' coins and overturned the tables.* ¹⁶ *He told those who were selling doves, "Get these things out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"* ¹⁷ *And his disciples remembered that it is written: Zeal for your house will consume me.*

Option: Display image of Jerusalem provided as a downloadable PDF [\[LINK\]](#)

The phrase "*went up*" has both a literal and spiritual meaning. Jerusalem sits approximately 2,600 feet above sea level, meaning approach from any direction is an uphill climb. When one *went up to Jerusalem*, one *went up* to meet God!

- It was the holiest place on earth. It was on this mountain—known at first as Mount Moriah, then later as Mount Zion—that Abraham had sacrificed a ram as a substitute for his son (Genesis 22:2-14).
- On this mountain, the Lord God had stopped a plague in the days of King David and revealed His glory during the reign of King Solomon (2 Samuel 24:15-25; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 3:1).

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the **Court of the Gentiles** in the **temple** area.

Option: Display image of temple provided as a downloadable PDF [\[LINK\]](#)

The temple had multiple sections: (1) There was the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place. It was surrounded by porches, the treasury, and other sections. (2) The western court was used solely by male Jews. (3) The Court of Women was the place designated for female Jews to worship. (4) The Court of the Gentiles was on the outer edge of the temple, and it was designated for non-Jewish people to come and pray and worship.

But, by this time in Jewish history, the motives for temple worship had shifted:

1. **It had become a place of exclusivity** – Even though the Lord proclaimed in Isaiah 56:7 that "*my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations*" the Jews had become exclusive in their worship. Gentiles had ceased being allowed into the temple area (Acts 21:29). The place where the entire world could encounter the God of Israel had ceased. The people had turned inward. They forgot that they were to be a light of the Lord to all nations. No one who desired to make a commitment to following God was to be excluded from worship - *No foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord should say, "The Lord will exclude me from his people."* (Isaiah 56:3). For those who desired to worship God at the temple, the only requirement then was to fully surrender their lives to the God of Israel and believe in Him – see Isaiah 56. Today, the only exclusion is reserved for those who refuse to turn from sin and surrender their lives to Christ.

2. **It had become a place for personal gain.** We see in this passage that the Jewish leadership began allowing merchants to do their business in the Gentile court. It was busy with activity as merchants sold animals for sacrifice and exchanged money into idol-free currency the temple authorities would accept. It had become a very profitable enterprise instead of a house of worship.
3. **It had become a place of deception.** Sadly, the merchants were taking advantage of worshippers by overcharging, using a poor rate of exchange, and purposely measuring inaccurately. Their intent was to deceive people so they could take advantage of them.

Respond: Consider the motives for worship on display in these passages. How can remembering who Christ is and what He has done, prevent you from adapting these and other ungodly motives into your life?

Notice how Jesus responded. It was not a burst of human anger but was a calculated reaction based on righteous indignation.

Discuss: How difficult is it for you to respond to wickedness with an anger that is controlled and calculated? How can remembering how Jesus responded in the temple, help you to use caution when you are growing angry about sin?

There is one more thing we must observe in this passage about remembering Christ.

Identify: What did the disciples specifically remember?

The disciples specifically remembered a Scripture passage—Psalm 69:9. It reminded them that who they observed clearing the temple was God incarnate. God's Son was cleansing His temple of the sin that permeated the very purpose for which it was designed.

The entire Word of God points us to Jesus Christ as John had mentioned in chapter 1. Remembering Christ isn't just about remembering His birth but remembering who He has always been, who He was, who He is, and who He will always be—Christ, the Son of the Living God. These memories are only possible if we are learning more about Christ through His Word. These memories can prompt us to check our motives as we strive to live for Him.

There was a second memory that became a light bulb moment for these disciples.

Remembering Christ brings clarity to our questions—John 2:18-22

¹⁸ So the Jews replied to him, "What sign will you show us for doing these things?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days." ²⁰ Therefore the Jews said, "This temple took forty-six years to build, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² So when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the statement Jesus had made.

The disciples were most likely as perplexed about Jesus' response to the question as were the Jews who asked Him to give a sign. But God would use this moment and Jesus' words to bring clarity for the disciples later, after Jesus was raised from the dead.

Jesus' response is so much more than a prediction of his death and resurrection on the third day. He was identifying Himself as the Son of God who had authority over all things. His authority was much greater than any of the other events these disciples had observed—the healing of the sick or changing water into wine. His authority was over the house of God because He was and is God!

Discuss: How do you suppose remembering this (as described in verse 22) changed their lives? Who could share a time when you examined a passage repeatedly and then, finally, you had that light bulb moment when God brought clarity? Who can share a time when you were faced with a circumstance that produced questions about God's authority and work, and God brought clarity to your situation?

LOOK OUT: LIVING OUT THE TARGET

Christmas is not only a time to remember Christ's birth but to remember all Jesus Christ has done to bring salvation to a lost world. It's a time for you to consider if you are worshipping and living for Christ with the right motives. It's a time for you to remember the times when Christ has brought clarity to you about His word or your circumstances. It's a time to see Him for clarity. And, if you don't know Christ, it's a time to come, receive, and worship Him with a surrendered and committed heart.