

Real Church - Part 5

The Spirit of the Real Church

Opening Text: Matthew 21:12-16

Jesus rebuked people who were in the House but didn't have the *spirit* of the House.

'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'

Something had happened to the original intent of God for His house. Prayer as well as the culture, values, and ethos of the house had been perverted and altered through the centuries. God was being misrepresented by these religious leaders, and the system they came up with.

Neither the greediness of the money changers nor the attitude of the scribes and pharisees embodied the spirit of the house.

These were people who were in the 'house' but they did not have the 'spirit of the house'. **What is then the 'spirit' of the house of God?** What is the real meaning, the real purpose, the original intention of church? What defines real church? What belongs in the church and what doesn't?

From the very words of Jesus in this passage, we can identify 6 things that define the spirit of the real church:

1. Prayer

"My house shall be called a house of prayer"

The house should be known as a place where we commune with God.

Someone like Anna, the prophetess, had the spirit of the house. She was in the temple and she knew what the temple was all about:

Luke 2:37 - *37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.*

2. Praise

15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant 16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise'?"

It is interesting that they were indignant about praise. They were indignant about things that were written, and that Jesus approved – yet not indignant about the

money changers and those who sold doves. They were willing to accommodate things that Jesus drove out – and rejected those things that He accepted (praise).

3. Healing

14 Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

Healing is an expression of the spirit of the house. It is not something peripheral or of less importance.

We believe that Church is a place where miracles happen.

4. Teaching

Mark 11:17-18 - *17 Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’ ” 18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.*

‘His teaching’ – Church is all about His teachings. In the days of Jesus it had become all about the traditions of men and the regulations of the Pharisees.

- **Mark 1:22** - *And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*
- **Luke 4:32,36** - *32 And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.*

36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, “What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”

5. Zeal and passion

John 2:16-17 - *16 And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!” 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.”*

The dictionary defines **zeal** as “a strong feeling of interest and enthusiasm that makes someone very eager or determined to do something”

V.17 NLT – *“Then His disciples remembered this prophecy from the scriptures: **passion** for God’s house will consume me”*

Jesus is moved with passion for His own house. That is the spirit of the Leader, and the spirit of the Leader must be upon His followers.

(In **Numbers 11:17,25** we read how God put the same spirit that was upon Moses also upon those he led).

The church is to carry the Spirit of the Leader (Jesus)

There was one time that Jesus rebuked His disciples because they failed to understand what manner of spirit they were off:

Luke 9:55 - *But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of."*

The Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit of the real church is one of passion, enthusiasm, fervour, zeal, commitment, engagement – not complacency or indifference, or being lukewarm and distant.

6. Compassion

V.14 - *14 Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple*

The house is a place of encounter. People, regardless of their condition can come to meet Jesus. This is a powerful value in the Kingdom of God. We want to be passionate soul winners. We want to introduce people to Jesus.

Jesus was always moved with compassion for the lost, the hungry, the sick. Jesus said, *"All that comes to Me, I will by no means cast out"* (John 6:37).

Anyone, regardless of their condition is welcome to come to Jesus. This is the spirit of the house.

When Jesus came, the house was ruled by a religious elite who were anything but compassionate. That is why they did not have the spirit of the house.

God wants His house filled with people:

Luke 14: 23 - *'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'*

Review of what we have covered today:

Jesus defined what belongs in the house of God and set the agenda of the church. He highlighted 6 ingredients of real church:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Praise**
- 3. Healing**
- 4. Teaching**
- 5. Passion**
- 6. Compassion** (being outward focused – the lost, the nations)

This is real church.