

Mount Olive Wednesday Night Bible Study and Prayer Meeting

January 6, 2021

Pastor Tom opened by playing the Casting Crowns song, "It Starts Right Here". Very appropriate to our lesson tonight as well as our times.

Then Pastor Tom read all of this passage although our lesson will only cover verse 12 tonight.

John 8: 12 - 20

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. 20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

*This is another of the great "I AM" verses in the book of John. Jesus was speaking in the Temple (vs 20 says 'in the treasury' area of the Temple) A reference from Mark 12:41 - 44. This was not in the sanctuary but the place where the offerings could be dropped off.

*The timing between verse 11 and 12 is unknown. Jesus had just finished speaking to the woman caught in adultery and the Pharisees had left that part of the Temple. But there is some break of time between 11 and 12.

*Jesus is teaching through His testimony again -

Verse 12

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Exodus 3:14

"And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you."

*God identifies himself as the great I AM at the encounter at burning bush. Now Jesus says "I AM the Light of the World" and "I AM the Bread of Life". And the Pharisees knew that Jesus was identifying himself with God.

*Then in regards to the second part of verse 12, *'he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'*

*Imagine the concept of darkness 2000 years ago when there were no street lights, no neon signs, no artificial light. Only candles and oil lamps offered small amounts of dim light at best. Nowhere near what we have to go to except this darkness with no artificial light sources. Dark meant dark to them. So they understood physical darkness better than we do. But Jesus was talking about spiritual darkness-

Ephesians 6:12

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

*Paul is speaking to the church at Ephesus about how our fight is in the spiritual realm not in the physical.

*In the King James Version the term 'high places' is used. In other translations the term 'heavenly places' is used.

*People in power (high places) can be liars, selfish and wicked. There is an unseen battle going on all the time because Satan knows his time to work on earth is short. (Revelation 12:12).

*Our situation in our country right now is hard to comprehend because we have never seen anything like it in our lifetimes.

*These principalities, powers and rulers are all connected to the darkness.

Luke 1:79

“To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

*Here we learn from Zacharias, who had been filled with the Holy Spirit since the birth of his son, John, what Jesus' purpose would be. This was the last prophecy right before Jesus was born. So from the very beginning, before Jesus was born, the prophets said he'd be the light in the darkness (death) And in a culture of death (physical and spiritual) hopelessness pervades and we do not know who to trust or believe. That's why believers in God must be committed to the Word of God which is our hope.

*Psalm 23 also references the valley of the shadow of death. Jesus will give light to our feet and give the way of peace. Like we need so much right now!

I Thessalonians 5: 4 -5

“4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

*This is from the chapter where Paul discussed the rapture when the church will be caught up.

*When we have Jesus in our heart, we have life and salvation and we are not in the darkness anymore. This verse really sorts it out for us. Although there are some who claim to be children of the light but are not living it out.

Ephesians 5:11

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

*Paul now tells the church what not to do - they are not to have fellowship (a relationship) with the unfruitful people.

Pastor Tom had just pruned his fruit trees earlier today and explained that pruning actually creates a wound that is necessary to help the plant to produce fruit. So we need pruned once in a while in order to be productive for the Lord.

Matthew 7: 13-14

*13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

*We see 2 gates here.

1. The Straight and Narrow - followers are to enter here
2. The Broad - even though we think this is easier it will lead to destruction.

*Many choose to go through the Broad Gate but few choose the Narrow Gate.

Pastor Tom spoke about how sometimes our church family is closer to us than our biological family. And since we are family, we want those we love to be in God's family as well. And as the song spoke of at the beginning of our lesson tonight - It starts right here with us, staying on the straight and narrow.

Matthew 7: 15 - 20

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

*Jesus talks here about the false prophets as wolves in sheeps clothing. It seems like they are on the straight and narrow but we must know them by their fruits (what they do). If Pastor Tom had not pruned the fruit trees (even though they looked good), then the fruit would grow wild and be smaller, of less quality.

Matthew 7: 21 - 23

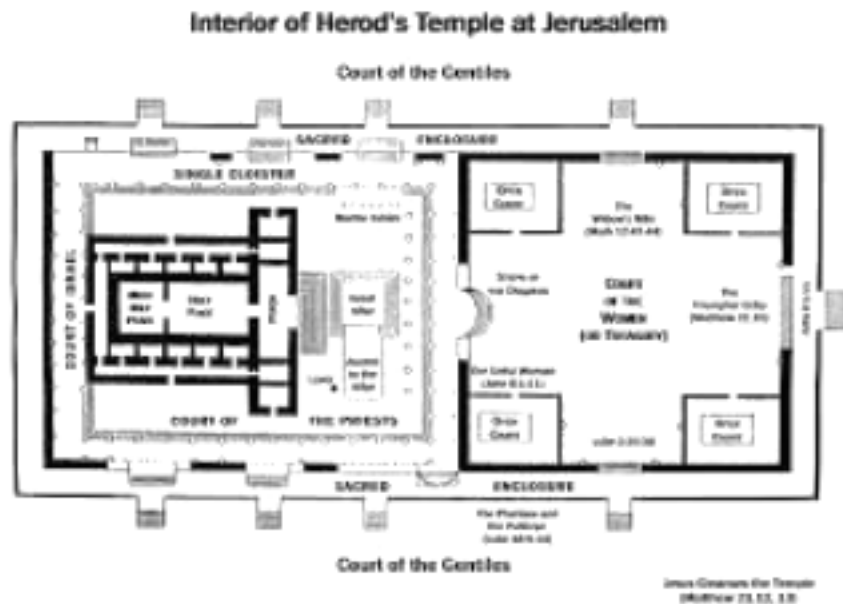
21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

*Then back to John 8:12. This is a Jesus promise verse. If we follow Jesus and not the darkness, then we have the Light of Life

*We cannot depend on the government or who's handling the vaccine distribution. But we can and must depend on Jesus!

And it starts right here!

The following diagram may shed some light on where Jesus was teaching in the Temple:



(I cannot tell if the quality of this diagram will be in focus when printed. I do not know how to make it clearer.)