

# Lessons from the Withered Fig Tree

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, before we come to our passage this evening, I've got one or two questions for our young friends. Three questions, and if you listen really carefully, you should be able to get the answers as we go through the sermon tonight.

So question number one, what was happening in Jerusalem that was really special? Why did everyone, or why was everyone in Jerusalem at this time?

That's question number one, something really special that was happening in Jerusalem. Question number two, name two things that the people could offer for sacrifice.

There were actually three, but if you get two, that'll be fine. Two things that the people could offer for sacrifices. And then question number three, which in a way is the whole central message of this passage.

What had the religious leaders made the temple into? They were doing something in the temple or the church, if you like, that they shouldn't be doing. What was it that they were doing?

[ 1 : 18 ] What had they made the temple into? So let's turn back then, friends, to Mark 11. We're going to think about verses 1.

Sorry, not verses 1. Verses 12 to 24. Verses 12 to 24.

If we were to give our sermon a title this evening, we could call it Lessons from a Withered Fig Tree. Lessons from a Withered Fig Tree.

Now, the atheist Bertrand Russell wrote a book. He's no longer with us. But his book was entitled, Why I Am Not a Christian.

Why I Am Not a Christian. And in this book, there are various and many reasons as to why he refused to be a Christian.

[ 2 : 18 ] Now, interestingly, one of his reasons for not being a Christian was the passage that we have before us here tonight. And in particular, specifically, he questioned how the Son of God could be so angry to a plant.

That was one of his reasons for not being a Christian. That Jesus here is angry at this fig tree, that he curses this fig tree.

How could the Son of God do such a thing? But of course, he was missing the point. Because the point of this passage is not plants, but people.

And in fact, what Jesus does here in this passage is he uses this plant as an object lesson. Your minister, I know, in the morning in his children's talk, he'll use objects, as do I, in speaking to the children to make a point.

Well, Jesus himself did that. He would use objects in nature, and he would point to them. And from these objects, he would take a meaning, a deeper meaning.

[ 3 : 30 ] He would teach a lesson from it that could apply to his hearers. And that's what we see here tonight. He uses this plant as an object lesson for the state of the people, the Jewish people, the people who here claimed to know the Lord.

Here we are in the last week of the life of Jesus, what's known as the Passion Week. And of course, we know, and the young ones might want to listen at this point, we know that the disciples have made their way to Jerusalem for Passover.

Thousands of people are making their way to Jerusalem because of the feast of the Passover. They would come from all different places, some shorter distances, some long distances.

They would make that pilgrimage towards Jerusalem, towards that holy city. And we see Jesus and his disciples amongst those pilgrims.

Now, the previous night to the night that we have this encounter with this fig tree, we see that Jesus and his disciples, they arrive in Jerusalem in verse 11.

[ 4 : 45 ] And in verse 11, we see that Jesus went into the temple. He doesn't say anything. He doesn't do anything. But he goes into the temple. He looks around.

He surveys the scene. He absorbs what he sees. And then he leaves. He goes back to Bethany. Now, it's what he saw in the temple that night that informs what we have here before us, what happens, if you like, the next day.

Let's turn together to verse 12. Verse 12. On the following day, when they came from Bethany, so he had been, he had surveyed the temple the night before.

He looked around. He hadn't said anything. Now, the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. This, of course, reveals to us afresh the humanity of our Savior, God becoming man and dwelling amongst us.

And seeing in the distance a fig tree and leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves.

[ 6 : 00 ] So he saw this fig tree in the distance. He's hungry. He's wanting something to eat. He's needing that bodily nourishment.

And so he sees this fig tree quite naturally. He goes along to it, hoping to get something to eat. But when he comes to it, we read, he finds nothing but leaves.

Why? For it was not the season for figs. And so what does he do? Jesus comes to the fig tree. He finds no fruit. Does he move on?

Does he look for food elsewhere? No. He says to it, may no one ever eat fruit from you again. And the disciples heard it.

May no one ever eat fruit from you again. He curses the fig tree. And this is some reaction, we might think. A reaction that almost seems unreasonable.

[ 7 : 05 ] Especially when we read here that a fig tree would not be in season. So understandably, it wouldn't have any fruit. How could it have any fruit?

And so we need to ask, well, why does Jesus curse it? Well, there are two things we need to think about. Firstly, if we do a little bit of research into fig trees and the climate that they found themselves here in, we find that there's a smaller fig, a smaller edible fig that actually grows out of season.

And this smaller edible fig, it was there as a sign. It was a sign that later on a full crop of figs would come. These were known as the early figs.

And if there were no early figs, there would be no latter figs. And if there were early figs, just these small, small figs, these buds, if there were these early figs, this was a sign that a large harvest was to come.

And so when Jesus, of course Jesus knew this. Jesus having been brought up in this culture, he wouldn't have gone to a fig tree for no reason. He would have known it was out of season.

[ 8 : 21 ] He would have known that the bigger, riper figs wouldn't have been there. But nonetheless, he still knew that these smaller figs should have been there.

But they're not. Instead, all he finds are leaves. And secondly, the point of this whole encounter, it's, as I said before, it's actually not the plant, but the people.

It's always important that when we're looking at narratives like this, it's so easy to become, I suppose, engrossed, entrenched in the detail of the stories.

You know, what do the figs mean? What do the leaves mean? But that's not the point of this narrative. Because what we see here is that this is about people.

And we see that often in the Old Testament, God's people are referred to as what? As fig trees. And so what we see here is an illustration of the importance of fruit.

[ 9 : 29 ] Here we have a fruitless tree. There should have been signs of fruit. There should have been signs of fruit indicating a full harvest. Yet all we find are leaves.

Now this was, of course, as I said, going to be an object lesson. What was the object lesson? Who were the people that could be seen in this object lesson?

Well, the disciples wouldn't have long to wait to find out. Because this picture of the fig tree, it would then be personified in what Jesus saw in the temple.

Let's look at verse 15 together. And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple.

And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. What's happening here? What's going on here?

[10:36] Well, this, of course, was the time of the Passover. Many people had made that pilgrimage towards Jerusalem. And, of course, at a time of Passover, sacrifices were needed to be offered.

Young ones might want to listen again. Goats and lambs. And for those who couldn't afford those, there was that provision made by the Lord, accommodating our needs, that those who couldn't afford a goat or a lamb could instead offer a dove or a pigeon.

Now, bearing in mind, the people who traveled towards Jerusalem had traveled thousands of miles, some of them, hundreds of miles, sorry, some of them. And they had come long, long distances. And because of this, it wasn't really practical for them to carry their sacrifices with them. Why? Well, by the time they would have got to Jerusalem, the sacrifice would no longer have been without spot and without blemish.

That was a requirement. They had to be the best of the best. And if they had got to Jerusalem and taken their sacrifices with them, the chances are that when the priest inspected these sacrifices, they would be tarnished.

[11:53] They would be no good. That's when the church came in. That's when God's people came in, the leaders of the day, because they made provision for this.

So if you came to Jerusalem, you didn't have your own sacrificial lamb or goat, or if you did and it was blemished, what would happen is that you could go to the temple and they would be on offer there.

You would have to buy them. Of course, you would have to buy them. They couldn't afford to pay for the thousands of sacrificial animals that would be needed. And of course, that provision was there.

And so far, so good, we might say. This is the church helping meet the needs of the people in their effort to worship God. And so we need to ask the question, well, why does Jesus begin to drive them out?

Well, because all is not as it seems. Because what we see happening in the temple here, friends, is this exploitation and extortion.

[12:57] How was it exploitation and how was it extortion? Well, yes, these sacrificial lambs are provided for sale. Fair enough, as I said. But the reality was this, that these religious leaders, they weren't just selling these lambs and these goats and these pigeons at the going rate, at a rate that the people could afford.

No, that's not what was happening. Instead, these people who were the leaders of the day, they were selling these sacrificial animals at ten times the going price.

Imagine men of God capitalizing at this holy feast by lining their own pockets and all in the name of the worship of God.

And not only that, not only that, because people had come from a long distance, many of them had a different currency. And so before they could buy these sacrificial animals, they had to have their own currency exchanged.

Again, you might say, well, fair enough. But the reality was that in exchanging their currency for the local currency, the exchange rate was extortionate.

[14:19] An exchange rate that was also lining the pockets of these religious leaders, those that the people trusted, those that the people looked up to.

Isn't that sad? Desperately sad. And of course, we see something similar with the Church of Rome. You might remember those indulgences that the church in Rome offered.

Now, indulgence was a piece of paper from the church. And on this piece of paper was written that which was to lessen a person's time in what they believed to be purgatory.

So you would get this indulgence. And if you had this indulgence, this piece of paper, it would lessen your time in purgatory and hasten your journey, if you like, to heaven.

You would get to heaven quicker if you had this indulgence. Now, of course, this indulgence was to be bought. And of course, everybody wanted to buy an indulgence so that they would get to heaven.

[15:27] And of course, what happened in the process was that the church in Rome lined its own pockets. That's why Martin Luther, of course, nailed the 95 Thesis to that door.

That's where the Reformation came from. This was greed. This was extortion. This was exploitation of God's people in the name of God.

And of course, it has to be called out even today. I don't know if you watch the God channels. Be careful, friends. There are good things that are not so good things. Always be selective and discerning with what you watch and what you listen to.

Because you might notice on some of these channels, if you're flicking through them, there are telephone numbers scrolling along the bottom of the screen. Phone this number to donate and you will receive X, Y, and Z as a blessing.

Exploitation. Extortion. Greed. People seeking to gain for themselves by taking from others.

[16:36] And what makes it even more sad is that it's all in the name of God. And of course, that's not worship. It's wickedness. And that's why Jesus is so angry.

That's why we see Jesus angry. That all of this has been done in His name. That these people are offering these things to people.

They're making a profit from them and it's all in the name of worship. Let's look at verse 15 and 16 and 17 together.

And they came to Jerusalem and He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple. And He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

And He would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And He was teaching them and saying to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it into a den of robbers.

[17:45] You see, the Pharisees were not all that they seemed, or the scribes or the elders. They were all about show. They wanted to look the part, yet a scripture tells us they were like whitewashed sepulchers, but within they were full of dead men's bones.

And part of their deadness was in the reality that they didn't want anyone else really to know the God of Israel. Here we read that the Lord Jesus Christ is calling them out.

He's overturning the tables because they have not made this a house of prayer for all nations. They were called to go out to all nations with the truth, as are we, Jew and Gentile, but they despised the Gentiles.

They had this mentality, we are the people. We must never have that. The gospel is for all, every tribe, nation, and tongue. It's not just for us here in Lewis.

It's for every country, every person, every tongue. But they didn't see it like that. They saw it as being theirs.

[19:00] And of course, not only did they have it as an exclusive place for Jews, it was also a den of thieves.

What does this mean? Well, it means that the place where God's people were to collectively gather and worship had become a place where these corrupt extortioners could feel safe.

They could practice their lawlessness fully and freely without anyone interrupting. Now, this, of course, is not talking about using church buildings for coffee mornings and things like that.

We can misquote Scripture, and we have to always be very careful that we don't just pluck texts out of context and impose them onto situations that we haven't really studied ourselves.

That's not what's happening here. These men are doing that which is sinful in the name of worshipping God. We do things in our church buildings, bricks and mortar, that are to the glory of God.

[20:02] They're part of our worship, part of our offering. That's not what's happening here. These are men who are sinning and essentially blaspheming the name of God.

That's why he comes and turns the tables. And as he comes and turns these tables, we see, we see that these men of God are scared.

Why are they scared? Not because of his physical strength. We don't see any mention of that. But they're scared because they feel threatened. Jesus of Nazareth, this carpenter, he's come into their lives, into their world.

And what's he going to do? He's going to expose them for who they are. That's why often we're scared of Jesus. That's maybe why you're scared of being a Christian. Because there's an element of being exposed.

Things in a way have to get worse before they'll get better. How? By us, I suppose, coming to terms with who we are by nature. We are sinners. When the light of the gospel shines into our heart, what happens?

[ 21 : 11 ] We see the darkness that's in. It's not pleasant. That's where conviction of sin comes in. And that's where we find ourselves uncomfortable as we find ourselves reminded of the sinfulness of our hearts by nature.

These chief priests, these scribes, they were scared of being exposed. exposed. And not only were they scared of being exposed, but they were proud men.

They were men of authority. They were those who were ruling the roost. And you know, it's amazing how power can go to people's heads. And they don't want to lose power. At all costs, they want to keep that power.

They want to lord it over everyone else. That's what we see here. Verse 18, they feared him because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.

They were scared. They were scared that somehow Jesus would usurp their authority and that the people would turn to Jesus and neglect them.

[ 22 : 14 ] These people would listen to this carpenter from Nazareth so that perhaps even the fraudulence of their own false teaching, they tried to dress up in all kinds of godly piety up until this point, that somehow this would be exposed.

And so because of this, and of course, remember, this is the week of the cross, the journey, the pathway to the cross.

Because of this, we read in verse 18, and the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him.

You know, what's astonishing about, whenever I'm studying the chief priests and the scribes, I was astonished by the fact that these were men who knew the scriptures. They were brought up, they had to know the scriptures for the positions that they were in.

It was essential. But yet, although they knew the scriptures in their heads, somehow they hadn't made their way to their hearts. They weren't willing to apply the scriptures to their lives.

[ 23 : 21 ] It was almost what you would call a pick-and-mix theology. They would take the bits that suited their lifestyles as those who were leaders, no doubt, with comfortable lives in terms of finances and position.

But those bits that might expose them, they left to one side. We see that. Because, had they been honest students of the Word of God, rightly dividing the Word of God as we're all asked to do, had they done that?

Had they not imposed their own sinful agenda upon what should have been a God-glorifying place of worship, they would have known. They would have seen exactly what was going on here.

What do we see in Malachi 3? Well, we see a prophecy that speaks of what's going on here.

Behold, I send my messenger, we read there, and he will prepare the way before me.

And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. Behold, I send my messenger, this is the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

[ 24 : 44 ] But who can endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord.

They should have seen that this is what was happening. Had they been tuned into the word of God, they would have stopped and remembered this and thought to themselves, hang on a minute.

This is the Lord who has been prophesied coming and purging the temple. This is what the scriptures told us would happen. And in doing that, had they been in the right spirit, they would have said, okay, we're doing wrong.

Now make no mistake, we're all guilty of sinning. No matter who we are, we're all guilty of erring and going astray. We don't condone that, but it's a reality.

But what happens, friends, Christian friend, when we go astray? What do we do? We might have gone astray for a short time, maybe a more prolonged time, but what do we, what do we find ourselves doing?

[ 26 : 05 ] Do we not find ourselves after a while being uncomfortable in our sin and coming back to the Lord, repenting, praying for forgiveness, coming with a humble and a contrite heart, like Psalm 51 says.

That is the offering that is most pleasing to the Lord when we come with that brokenness of spirit and acknowledge, I have sinned against you, you only, in your sight, done this ill. And we're forgiven and we're able to move on. But we don't see that. We don't see that here at all. These people, their hearts are so far from God.

This is a Christless religion. And as we see them so far from God, we see that what's going on here is far deeper than what the eye can see.

What do I mean? Well, what we see here, friends, is a window into the heart of these religious people. And we see this especially as Jesus returns to the fig tree.

[ 27 : 16 ] Verse 20. These are all connected. That's why we see this incident. The cleansing of the temple sandwiched in between the cursing of the fig tree and then the lesson from the withered fig tree.

Verse 20. As they passed by in the morning, they saw, this is the next morning, they saw the fig tree withered away at its roots.

And Peter remembered and said to him, Rabbi Luke, the fig tree that you cursed has withered. And Jesus answered them, have faith in God.

Now, who was this speaking of? This withered fig tree, of course, was a picture of Israel. This is just what they had witnessed in the temple.

Corruption and decay right there at the root. And because there was corruption and decay right at the root, there was no fruit. There was no fruit because there was no root.

[ 28 : 27 ] The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart. And of course, because of this, we see that although there's been all kinds of religious activity going on, none of it has been rooted in the water of life, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you know, there is such a warning here to us. A Christless religion, as I said, is a dead religion. It doesn't matter what outward appearances of religion we have.

We need to be so careful about this. Never be content with the outward. You might not be a Christian here tonight, and you might think that this is what Christianity is. We come to church, and we sit, and we listen, and we go home.

That's part of it. But it's a fruit of it. It's a fruit of the root that we want to come. We want to worship. We want to hear God's Word broken down.

We want to do this. Why? Because Christ in us is our hope of glory. A Christless religion is a dead religion.

[ 29 : 39 ] But not only is it a dead religion, it's a deadly religion. I hope you don't, friends, feel, and I don't know you all, but I hope you don't feel that coming to church is enough.

It's good. It's very important, but it's not enough. I hope you don't feel that paying the church is enough. I hope you don't feel that keeping the Sabbath in your own way is enough.

These are all good things, but they have to be a fruit of the root. And so ask yourself the question, you might be really diligent in the means of grace, and that's good, but where is Christ in your life? Is all that you do and seek to do, is it rooted in Him? Or is it rooted in a desire to please your fellow man or even to salve your conscience?

It's a challenging question, but it's a question that's helpful for us to ask ourselves, that our fruit comes from being rooted in Him.

[ 30 : 53 ] A Christless religion is a deadly religion, and it will lead us to a lost eternity, no matter how diligent we are in the means of grace.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Seek first Christ, friends. That's your duty. That's your, that's the most important thing for you to do.

Seek Him, and you will find Him. And when we do, there will be fruit. And we see that fruit here in verse 22, as Jesus shares, if you like, this lesson from the withered fig tree.

Verse 22, And Jesus answered them, Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and thrown into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes what he says, will come to pass.

It will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

[ 32 : 08 ] The fruit here is faith. Have faith in God. That's what the scribes, the Pharisees, the chief priests, that's what many of them lacked.

They had faith in themselves. They had faith in their own routines and rituals, but they didn't have faith in God through Christ. In fact, they wanted Christ dead.

What we see here is faith. Now, Jesus isn't literally talking about moving a mountain, but what he is doing is he's referring or drawing from Jewish imagery, a Jewish imagery that saw a mountain.

I suppose we ourselves have this imagery in our own context. Seeing a mountain as something that is an obstacle, something that's mighty and immovable. You might have mountains in your experience just now.

Things in your life that you look at and you just think you can never overcome them. They're overwhelming. They seem impossible to pass by.

[ 33 : 18 ] You think you'll never get there. But what God is saying is this, what God is saying is this, what the Lord Jesus Christ is saying to us is this, that in our following of God we need to have the root of the matter and when we have the root of the matter what will happen is that that root will result in the fruit of faith.

That whatever we ask according to his will we will receive. Of course, this doesn't mean that we go to the Lord with our wish list and he gives us everything that we want.

Again, we can misinterpret scripture and not rightly divide it, be dishonest as we come to scripture. But when we're in the right spirit, the spirit of faith, we come and we say thy will be done.

We come with our petitions and our prayers and you might have many, no doubt you do, but yet, although you have your petitions and your prayers and your desires and me with you, we always come and we always punctuate these petitions and desires and prayers with this, thy will be done. This is what I want, but I know you know better, Lord. And because you know better, I am reconciled to your will. That's the prayer of faith, so that when we come with that prayer of faith, it will happen, it will be answered.

[ 34 : 51 ] Will it be answered the way that we want? No, not always. Will it be answered in the way that's best for us? Yes, certainly. Thy will be done.

That's what faith is. That's what it is to be in a living relationship with a living God. That's what it is to know Jesus as our father and our friend.

What does a father want for his child? Nothing but the best. It's not always what the child wants, but what the child needs. That's the way our father is.

And so we come to him and we trust him by faith. So we make our prayers and petitions that no matter what mountain is before us, there is a way past it.

Or if there's not a way past it, there's certainly a way through it. And that is by leaning upon our beloved. There was no faith in the temple.

[ 35 : 46 ] It's as simple as that. It didn't matter how godly they looked. It didn't matter what garb they wore. There was no faith. They distorted the worship of God to suit their own gains.

This is what we call will worship. Worship that meets our needs rather than worship that seeks to humbly glorify the name of God.

they had become the gods of the temple themselves. And in the process the Messiah was left out in the cold. That should never be the case. Worship is not about us.

We benefit from worship friends. But always remember it's not about us. There's always a danger, I suppose, especially in the day and age we live in, that we treat it almost in a consumeristic way.

We're consumers. And we pick what's best for us. And we go round the houses in terms of sermons on YouTube or wherever else. And we go for what's best for us.

[ 36 : 52 ] That's not what true worship is. Of course it's good to hear different people, I'm not saying that. But in terms of being united as a fellowship of believers, as a family of the Lord, we come together, whether it's in Barvis or in Gravor or wherever else it is, we come together with that spirit, of worship and praise and adoration.

And what does Psalm 133 tell us? That the Lord delights in that. That's where unity is found. Where we're there for the right reasons, with the right spirit.

That's not what we see here. It was all about themselves. And of course those who truly seek after the Lord, they're not content with leaves.

We seek after fruit. I know we cannot see fruit in ourselves, but we have to strive after it. That's a challenge for you and me with you. We can all say, well, I'm not what I would like to be.

And we're not. But what are we doing about it? What are we doing about it? We cannot use these as almost a get-out clause just to have a stunted growth as Christians.

[ 38 : 05 ] What are we doing about it to cultivate fruit in our own lives? Well, what we can do is to be rooted all the more in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Time has gone. I began by stating that the late Bertrand Russell, who wrote that book, *Why I'm Not a Christian*, he uses this passage as one of his reasons.

We've also seen that the religious leaders of the day here, they couldn't call themselves Christians because they quite simply hated Christ.

The world over, there are many reasons tonight for why people aren't Christians. But can I ask you, friends, tonight in love, are you a Christian? You answer that in your own heart.

And if the answer is no, why are you not a Christian? What is the reason? What exactly do you have against Jesus of Nazareth?

[ 39 : 12 ] You know, friends, tonight he's offering afresh to you the opportunity to be rooted not in things, not in ritual, but in him.

He's offering that to you tonight, if you want it, to be rooted in him and being rooted in him to bear forth much spiritual fruit.

Why don't you take him up on that offer and humble yourself in that spirit of repentance and come to him. Come to him. Don't be like that withered fig tree, the sad story of the withered fig tree that shows those who have been brought up in the church, who had gone through all the rituals and routines of worship, distorted as they were, but all for nothing.

a complete waste of time. Don't be like the withered fig tree. Strive by the grace of God to be a tree of righteousness that will never die.

We will never wither. We feel withered in this world, that is true. But as God's people, we will never die. We will just go from strength to strength, unwearied, still forward unto strength.

[ 40 : 27 ] That is our testimony. That is our future. That is our life. Life that will never end. Life that will bear eternal fruit.

Let us pray. We praise and we thank you for your word, a word that reveals to us the wickedness of our hearts by nature, hearts that seek to live lives running from you, lives that seek to perhaps even distort your truth to suit our own sinful desires.

Forgive us for that, we pray. We pray especially for any here tonight who are yet to have that fruit, that fruit that comes from being rooted in you, that your Holy Spirit may even this evening hour, come and speak to them, minister to their needs, reveal to them the need of Christ to be rooted in you, the one who promises life and life everlasting.

Bless your word, read and preached and sang this evening, that all that we have sought to do would be to the glory of your great name. And all we ask, we ask in the precious name of Christ and for his sake.

Amen. Well friends, before we come to our final singing, I don't think I gave a clue for our last question, so apologies for that. That's what happens with ministers, they get carried away.

[ 42 : 10 ] Question number one then, what was happening in Jerusalem that was really special? The Passover, excellent, well done, the Passover.

Number two, name two, there were three, things, but name two things that the people could offer for sacrifices. Goats and lambs, well done.

Anyone know the third, for those who didn't have so much money? It was pigeons, yeah, pigeons. And then question three, what had the religious leaders, this is maybe a trickier one, I didn't give you a clue, what had the religious leaders made the temple into?

It was a shop, it was like a shop, but it was called something of thieves. Any idea? a den of thieves, but it was, it was just like a shop with really high prices.

Well done, you listened so, so well this evening. And we're going to finish, friends, by singing to God's praise, Psalm 116 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 116.

[ 43 : 33 ] We're going to sing verses 4 to 6, and then we're going to jump down to verses 17 to 19. So verses 4 to 6, so that's two verses, and then 17 to 19.

Upon the name of God the Lord, then did I call and say, Deliver thou my soul, O Lord, I do thee humbly pray. Down to verse 19. Within the courts of God's own house, within the midst of thee, O city of Jerusalem, praise to the Lord give ye.

Standing to sing to the praise of God. upon the name of God the Lord, then did I call and say, deliver thou my soul, O Lord, I do thee humbly pray.

God merciful and righteous is in righteousness our Lord, God sit for me I was proud know, he did me help afford.

And God brings I to thee will give, and on God's name will come.

[ 45 : 35 ] God I give my mouth now to the Lord before his people are on within the course of the world so out within the midst of thee, O city of Jerusalem praise to the Lord give thee.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with you now and forever more.

Amen.