

Message Discussion Guide A FAST FOR THE NATIONS

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

November 7, 2010

Mark 11:15-19

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to discuss a few of the motivations in our culture of "going to church." Ask the following question: What do those motivations indicate about our relationship with God and our concern with God's mission? Explain that today we will discuss how our worship of God is a part of His mission.

Option 2

Invite willing learners to share a time when they were reluctant to be involved in mission work, but got involved anyway. Ask the following questions: How did you overcome the reluctance? How were you blessed? Would you do it again?

Explain that today we will discuss having a hunger for being a part of God's mission for the sake of His Glory among nations.

Review the Message . . .

- We hunger for the _____ praise _____ of God in the _____ church _____.

Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read Mark 11:15-19.
- If possible, show learners an illustration of the Temple in the time of the New Testament. Many Bibles feature one in the section with the maps. The ESV Study Bible contains an illustration on pages 1924-1925 (Closer views of the main Temple complex can be found on 1943 and 1950-1951). Explain that within the Temple, there were sections of courts. In the outside court area, Gentiles could enter. At the very center was the Holy of Holies, where only the high priest could enter. The progression of the courts from the Court of the Gentiles to the center Holy of Holies allowed less and less people in them.
- Note that the events of this passage occurred in the Court of the Gentiles—the only place in the Temple where non-Jews were allowed.
- Describe the scene that Jesus saw when He entered the Temple. Explain that verse 16 references the way that many merchants and others used the Temple as a shortcut to get from one side of the city to the other instead of walking around it.

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- How was this scene not representative of the worship of the presence of God, which resided in the Temple in the Holy of Holies?
- What did their actions reflect about the way that they approached their worship of God?
- What replaced their worship of God? How did their apparent religious activity rob themselves and others from worshipping God?
- How was Jesus' concern for God's Glory evident in this passage, and not His concern for a building?

Application . . .

- How can we discern if we have become casual in our relationship with God?
- What does a passionate relationship with God look like in our daily lives?
- What are the biggest distractions in our lives that hinder us from praising God the way that He deserves?
- How can the activities that we do in the name of God keep us from actually worshipping Him? How do keep that from happening?
- What criteria can we use to determine if our activities are God-driven or simply a way to remain busy?

*Three in One, One in Three, God of Our Salvation,
Heavenly Father, blessed Son, eternal Spirit, we adore You as one Being, one Essence,
one God in three distinct Persons. O Father, You have loved us and sent Jesus to redeem
us. O Jesus, You have loved us and assumed our nature; You have shed Your blood to
wash away our sins. O Holy Spirit, You have loved us and entered our hearts; You have
implanted there eternal life, and You have revealed to us the glories of Jesus. Three
Persons and one God, we bless and praise You, for love so unmerited, so unspeakable, so
wonderful, so mighty to save the lost and raise them to glory. O Father, we thank You that
in fullness of grace You have given us to Jesus to be His sheep. O Jesus, we thank You
that in fullness of grace You have accepted us and become our advocate. O Holy Spirit, we
thank You that in fullness of grace You have implanted faith within us, You have subdued
our stubborn hearts, and You have made us to be one with Christ forever. O Father, You
are enthroned to hear our prayers. O Jesus, Your hand is outstretched to take our petitions.
O Holy Spirit, You are willing to help our weaknesses, to supply us with prayers, and to
strengthen us to praise. O Triune God, You command the universe, and we pray today,
"Hallowed be Your Name. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven."
Amen*

- We hunger for the holiness of God in our lives.

Discussion

- Remind learners that the Temple was the presence and glory of God in a place.

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- Enlist a learner to read John 2:19-21. How did Jesus redefine the Temple with His life?
- Read Mark 15:37-38. What was the significance of the curtain being torn open from top to bottom? How did Jesus' death reconcile sinful man to holy God?
- Enlist a learner to read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. How did followers of Christ become the temple of God?
- Why is holiness important in the life of a Christ-follower? Why should it define us according to our place in the world as the temple of God?

Application . . .

- Read Jeremiah 7:8-11. How do we often use religious activity as a cover-up for sin in our own lives like the people in Jeremiah?
- As representatives of God's presence in the world, why must we place priority on holiness in our lives?
- What activities do we often let take the place of holiness in our hearts?
- How could we use cultural relevance, tolerance, and political correctness as an excuse for a lack of personal holiness?
- What things might Christ-followers allow into our heart's affection in the place of worshipping and serving God?
- What needs to be cleansed from our lives, as the new temple of God?

Heavenly Father,

Save us entirely from our sin. We know we are righteous through the righteousness of another, but we long for likeness to You. We are Your children and should bear Your image; help us to recognize our death to sin. When it tempts us, help us to be deaf to its voice. Deliver us from the invasion and dominion of sin. Grant us to walk as Christ walked, to live in the newness of His life, the life of love, the life of faith, and the life of holiness. We abhor our bodies of death, their envy, meanness, and pride. Forgive, and kill these vices in us. Have mercy on our unbelief, on our corrupt and wandering hearts. When Your blessings come we begin to idolize them, and we set our affections upon them instead of You – our children, our friends, our wealth, and our honor. Cleanse this spiritual adultery and give us purity; close our hearts to everything but You. Sin is our greatest curse. Let Your victory be displayed in our lives. Help us to be devoted, confident, obedient, resigned, childlike in our faith, to love You with soul, body, mind, and strength, to love others as we love ourselves, to be saved from raging tempers, hard thoughts, slanderous words, and unkind manners. Fill us with Your grace daily, that our lives may be pleasing to You.

Amen.

- We hunger for the _____ glory _____ of God in the _____ nations _____.

Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read Isaiah 56:6-7. Who did God indicate that He would bring to worship Him?

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- Knowing that the events of Mark 11:15-19 happened in the Court of Gentiles, how were these Jews distracting and preventing the Gentiles from seeing the glory of God? —In the way they treated the Gentiles? In the way that they treated each other? In the way they treated the worship of God?
- What message did their lack of concern for the spiritual needs of the Gentiles send?

Application . . .

- How do our actions toward non-believers, fellow believers, and toward God reveal something about our desires to see the nations know God?
- Can sin in our lives keep us from reaching the nations? How?
- What do Jesus' actions reveal to us about God's attitude toward the nations?
- What do Jesus' actions reveal to us about God's attitude toward our sin that keeps the nations from hearing about His Glory?
- How do we sometimes set limits on how we will be a part of God's mission to the nations? What do those limits reveal about sin in our lives?
- How can we align our heart for the nations to align with God's Heart?
- How can we develop a greater heart for the over 1 billion people in 6,000 people groups who do not have access to the gospel? What will we do to be a part of taking the gospel to them?

Sovereign God,

Your cause, not our own, engages our hearts, and we appeal to You to set up Your kingdom in every place where Satan reigns. Glorify Yourself and we will rejoice, for to bring honor to Your name is our sole desire. We adore You, and we long that others might know and delight in You. O that all men might love and praise You, that You might have all glory from all the world! Let sinners be brought to You for Your name's sake! To the eye of reason everything respecting the conversion of others is as dark as midnight, but You can accomplish great things. This is Your cause, and You alone can save men for Your glory. Oh Lord, use us however You will, and do with us whatever You want. Oh, promote Your cause, let Your kingdom come, and let Your interests be advanced in this world! Oh, bring in great numbers to Jesus! Let us see that glorious day, and let us be willing to die for that glorious end. It is Your cause and Your kingdom that we long for, not our own. Oh, answer our request, and make Your praise known among all the peoples!

Amen.