

Teaching Letter



A HOUSE OF PRAYER / TEACHING BY REV. SUZETTE HATTINGH

“MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS”

Isaiah 56:7

Imagine with me the scene in the courts of the temple as Jesus, with an authority beyond their understanding, started turning the money changers' tables over and chasing the animals out. He cried out with passion and yet also with holy anger, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" (Matt 21:13, NKJV) What an amazing statement when in reality those money changers HAD to be there for the people that travelled from far to be able to buy the temple coins. The doves and animals HAD to be available for those that wished to sacrifice but could not bring their own animals along! What were then the 'thieves' that Jesus referred to? Today in our day and age we don't have a physical temple but the message has not changed, nor has the spiritual circumstance surrounding those words!

The Thieves:

The love of money, that which made what should be for the blessings of the people into personal gain. Money itself is not the problem but "the love of money". To provide for our families is surely not wrong. But when the need of money stands between us and our personal relationship with the Lord, then it is time to take stock and change our priorities.

The lack of the fear of the Lord. They were right next to the holy of holies, yet they still used dishonest scales to lie and steal from the people, as if God would not



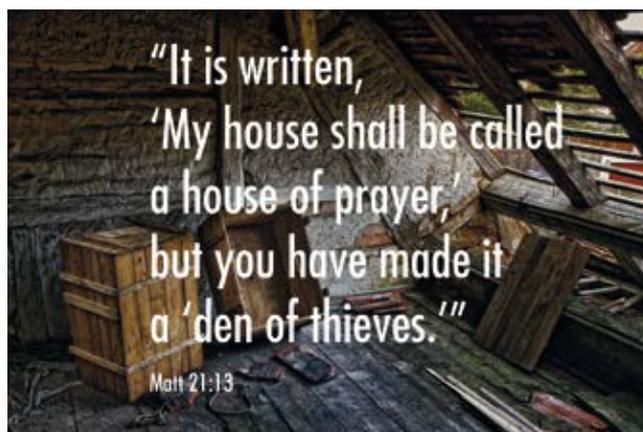
Rev. Suzette Hattingh

see or judge anymore. I am amazed how often some believers lose the fear of the Lord and live in the grey zones of sin, reading and watching unclean books and movies, having wrong relationships, being untruthful with their declarations or even taking God's money; living in violence, unforgiveness and untruthfulness and yet sitting in the house of the Lord and calling themselves 'Christians'.

The shifting of focus.

The greatest command remains: Love the Lord with all our hearts and our neighbour as ourselves! Oh but how often 'ministry' has changed into 'business' which was really to be a service unto the people! Often we hear, "You lost your first love." Did you know that "having lost your first

love" (Rev 2:4) in the Greek language really means "having shifted focus", not falling away from God but shifting focus! What is your focus? Revival, breakthrough, your family, new dimensions? What fills your prayer more than simply worshipping the Father because you love Him and because He saved your soul from eternal hell and set you free? Beware: whatever fills your prayers, that is your focus!



The lack of prayer. They were at the most holy place – the temple. So close, yet so far! It was not about God anymore but about them! Often it is still the same “what we want, who we want to impress, what we need” instead of as unto the Lord for what is on His heart, what He desires or even simply just to give thanks!

So what is it then that the Lord wants?

That we, HIS TEMPLE (1 Cor 6:19) be “a house of prayer for all nations” (Is 56:7, NKJV). It is indeed not about our physical buildings, prayer rooms or any location, wonderful as they are. (Acts 7:48) No, it is about you and me! Our intimacy with Him on a daily basis! We concern ourselves about so many things. Did He not say, “Do not worry about what you will eat, drink or wear for your Heavenly Father KNOWS what you need!”? Yet we do it all the time. We fill our prayers with the needs, the wants, the battles, and the changes we want and sometimes make that our only focus. I am not making light of our pain and need but when that is almost all we pray about, that in itself can almost become an “idol” (Matt 6:25-32). Is it wrong to ask?

Certainly not. But may I ask, “What do you spend the most time praying about when you pray?” Reset the focus. Is it maybe time to start giving thanks although you don’t see the answer yet, telling God you trust Him and start worshipping Him for being in control?

“It is written, ‘My house shall be called the house of prayer’...” (Matt 21:13, KJV). Not a house of teaching, preaching, seminars, conferences or even worship services, but it shall be called ... A HOUSE OF PRAYER, EVEN FOR THE NATIONS!

Right after Jesus cleaned the temple the sick and lame came to Him, right there in the temple! Miracles happened! (Matt 21:14) Can we thus dare to say, “Clean up the house and get the priorities right and the miracles will flow?” I think “YES” for nothing has changed, HE IS STILL THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER (Hebr 13:8).

Together for the harvest!

Rev. Suzette Hattingh

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