

=THE CHRISTIAN LIFE=

Lesson 12

Indignation

AIM: to teach my pupils the proper place of indignation in the Christian's life.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the pupils to recall times in the life of Christ when He was patient and longsuffering. For example, note how tender He was to Mary Magdalene, though she was possessed with seven devils. Note how tender He was with Peter when he was weak. Note how tender He was with the woman at the well, though she had had five husbands. Then ask the class to list times when our Lord was indignant.

INTRODUCTION: Indignation does not mean "flying off the handle," displaying publicly a fit of temper, or expressing an irrational displeasure. It means a "holy" displeasure, a kind of a disposition which will act with displeasure every time it is affected by the same stimulus. Jesus certainly was no "pushover," and indignation is absolutely not a vice. Let us notice the times in His life on earth when He was possessed with indignation.

I. JESUS WAS INDIGNANT TOWARD THE SCRIBES, PHARISEES, AND HYPOCRITES. Read Matthew 23. Some scribes were public writers used to draw up legal documents; other scribes were secretaries for the government; still others were copiers of the law. The Pharisees were a sect of outwardly strict and religious people who looked down on others. The word "hypocrite" means "actor"—someone who is acting a part, but does not really possess the attributes. Notice in verse 26 that Jesus admonished them that the inside should be clean as well as the outside. He was indignant toward those who had the outside clean and the inside dirty. (TEACHER: Bring a cup to class. Polish the outside to a high gloss. Make the inside very dirty. Then fill it with water and ask the class members to take a drink. When they refuse, tell them they have learned the lesson.) It is important, not only to have the outside clean, but also to have the inside clean. Jesus is not teaching here that the outside does not matter, for it does. He is teaching that the inside also matters!

In verse 27 Jesus called them "whited sepulchres." He likened them to tombstones that were whitewashed but contained dead men's bodies on the inside. He likened their hearts to dirty, decaying, rotting, dead flesh. In verse 33 He called them "vipers" or snakes.

II. JESUS WAS INDIGNANT TO THE MONEY CHANGERS. This is mentioned three times in the Bible—Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15; and John 2:15. There are those who think these are three different occasions, not simply references to one event. In John 2:15 we find He became so indignant that He "poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables." He also got cords, tied them together, made whips, and drove the money changers from the temple. He was indignant over those who misused the temple. Now, lest someone think this has to do with the church of our day, let us be very careful to note that the temple of our day is the body of the believer. We are not to misuse the "temple."

The interesting thing about this story is that each time a similar story is mentioned Jesus reacted the same way! In other words, in His heart there was an indignation toward making the "house of prayer" a "den of thieves." This was no fit of temper. The Saviour had the same personality, had the same likes and dislikes, and reacted the same way each time He was confronted with the same stimulus.

III. JESUS WAS INDIGNANT TOWARD THOSE WHO REFUSED LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME TO HIM. See Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; and Luke 18:15, 16. Perhaps no story in all the Bible shows the two sides of Jesus as does this one. When the disciples kept the little children from being brought to Jesus because they thought He was too busy, He was indignant. Jesus always took time for little children and was indignant with those who would not. He rebuked the disciples sternly in one breath; and in the next, He spoke kindly to the little ones. Here are the two sides of the Christian personality. We are told to love the good and hate the evil. We are taught to love the sinner and hate the sin. The Christian personality is no namby-pamby, effeminate, sissy kind of wishy-washy existence. Rather, it is stern and indignant toward wrong, but loving and compassionate toward the wrongdoer. Jesus showed both sides.

IV. JESUS WAS INDIGNANT WHEN JOSEPH WAS CALLED HIS FATHER. See Luke 2:48, 49. When Jesus had been in the temple at the age of twelve, Mary and Joseph returned to look for Him. They had missed Him for one day. It took three days to find Him. This is always the case. It is infinitely easier to lose the presence of Christ than to regain it. It took three times as long to find Him as it did to lose Him. However, when they found Him, He was in the temple asking questions of the learned scholars. When Mary said, "Your father and I have sought thee," Jesus was indignant, even at the age of twelve. He told her, "...wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business." What He was saying was, "Joseph is not My Father; the Heavenly Father is My Father." There is no doubt that He was indignant about the virgin birth. He was indignant about the perversion and misunderstanding of Joseph's relationship to Him. God was His Father and He must be about His Father's business.

This means we are to be indignant toward liberals and liberalism. We are to be indignant toward those who do not believe the virgin birth, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, etc.

V. JESUS WAS INDIGNANT TO THOSE WHO DID NOT LOVE SINNERS. Notice Luke 7:36-40. He was at the home of a Pharisee when suddenly, a sinful lady burst forth, took an alabaster box of ointment, broke it, and anointed Him. Some were immediately critical, and Jesus showed indignation toward them. In a similar story in John 12:1-11 Judas rebuked Jesus and the lady, reminding them that the ointment could have been sold and the money could have been used to feed the poor. Jesus was indignant! He told Judas that the poor he would have with him always, but soon the Son of Man would go back to Heaven. Jesus is always indignant toward those who do not love sinners. There are churches by the thousands who believe the Bible but do not love sinners. They teach the Scriptures but do not love sinners. Our Lord came, lived, died, and rose for sinners. His heartbeat is for sinners. He is indignant toward those who have no compassion for the sinner.

VI. JESUS WAS INDIGNANT TO THOSE WHO LOVED THE HIGH PLACES. See Luke 11:43 and Matthew 23:1-12. Several times in His life He manifested this. Here He scathed, scolded, and rebuked the Pharisees who loved the high places. Notice especially Matthew 23:7-10. Our Lord was indignant toward those who wanted to be called by religious titles such as, "Father," "Rabbi," and "Master." He rebuked them. He was indignant toward people wanting titles which should be given only to God. When the mother of James and John came and sought the high places in the kingdom for her sons, Jesus was indignant. See Matthew 20:20-28. Jesus has always loved the humble, the "little fellow," the servant. He has always reminded us that the way up is to go down; the way to go forward is to go backward; the way to get big is to be little. He is indignant toward prestige seekers in religious service, "big shots," and those who want to have the high places.

VII. JESUS IS INDIGNANT AT THE PRESENT CONDITIONS. Read Revelation 14:10. Notice "the cup of his indignation." The cup is being filled, and in the end-time our Lord's cup will become filled. Actually, what it means is this: He is getting more and more fed up with the conditions of these days until one day He will be fed up! The cup of His anger and indignation will be filled. God is not pleased with sin. God is not pleased with our generation. One day His indignation will be poured out!

CONCLUSION: We must bear in mind in teaching a lesson like this that we are not advocating anger, temper tantrums, temper fits, etc. We are not advocating Pharisaism. We are teaching the fact that it is not wrong for God's people to have holy displeasure toward sin. Let us be careful not to teach a false piety.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is a scribe?
2. What is a Pharisee?
3. What is another word for hypocrite?
4. What type of dish did Jesus mention when He described the Pharisees?
5. Name something in the graveyard that describes the Pharisees.
6. Name some kind of an animal which describes the Pharisees.
7. How many times did Jesus overturn the tables in the temple and throw out the money changers?

8. Whom did the disciples keep from coming to Jesus and what did He say about it?
9. Whom did Mary say was Jesus' father?
10. What was Jesus' answer?
11. With what did the lady anoint Jesus?
12. What did Judas think?
13. What was Jesus' response?
14. Name three titles with which our Lord is displeased when they are attributed to religious offices.