

Island Group Discussion Guide

Abide • Connect • Share



Week of July 20, 2025

BOOK OF MARK • WEEK 35

CLEANING HOUSE • (MARK 11:15-19)

OPENING PRAYER TIME

Begin your meeting with 10-15 minutes of prayer using these prompts:

- Thank God for His presence with us today and His desire to work in our hearts
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and open our minds to His truth
- Pray for clean hearts and pure motives as we study God's Word together
- Invite Jesus to speak to each person about areas that need His touch
- Ask for courage to be honest about our spiritual condition
- Pray for our church to be a place where God's presence is evident

DISCUSSION

- **Ice breaker:** Have you ever been cleaning house and discovered you were just moving piles from one location to another? What did you do about it?
- **Read Mark 11:15-19.** What is your initial impression of Jesus' actions in the temple?
- This wasn't Jesus' first temple cleansing. In John 2, He called it "**My Father's house,**" but here He says "**My house.**" What significance do you see in this change?
- The Court of the Gentiles (where the buying and selling occurred) was a new addition that wasn't part of the original temple design. The priests justified it as being "*for your shopping convenience.*" How do we sometimes try to make following Jesus more convenient rather than sacrificial?
- Pastor Steve compared the dishonest priests to a shady car dealer whose slogan was "*I'd give them away, but my wife won't let me.*" Things "*looked really good, but were rotten to the core.*" Where in your life might things look good on the outside but need Jesus' cleansing on the inside?
- **Read 1 Samuel 15:22.** Pastor Steve emphasized that "*God doesn't want just activity — He desires purity and obedience.*" How does this challenge our tendency to focus on religious activity rather than heart transformation?
- Pastor Steve asked: "*What keeps people from seeing God working in you?*" How would you answer this question?

- **Read Mark 11:17.** Jesus declares His house should be "**a house of prayer for all the nations.**" The Temple of God had become the Temple of the Jews. How do we sometimes make the church about "us" rather than about God's mission to reach others?
- **Read Isaiah 56:6-7.** How does this passage help us understand what Jesus was restoring?
Application question: Have you made prayer central or optional in your life? What would it look like to make your life more of a "house of prayer"?
- After the cleansing, Jesus healed people and taught them (Matthew 21). What amazing things might God do when our hearts are truly cleansed and purified?
- **Read Mark 11:18.** Why did the religious leaders want to destroy Jesus? Pastor Steve said "*everything they had built their life around - prestige, influence, and power - was threatened by the presence of Jesus.*" What areas of your life might feel threatened when Jesus wants to bring change?
- Pastor Steve referenced John 3:19-20, Romans 8:7, and Galatians 5:17, noting that "*the flesh resists God's authority*" and "*the flesh and Spirit are in conflict.*" How do you experience this conflict in your own spiritual life?
- Pastor Steve asked: "*Am I willing to let Jesus challenge even my long-held routines and preferences?*" He admitted, "*I don't like these questions... I don't like some vegetables either. But that doesn't mean I need to ignore them.*" What honest admission do you need to make about areas where you resist Jesus' work?
- Pastor Steve emphasized that "*It's not about cleaning you out. It's about purifying so that He can do a greater work.*" **Application question:** What is in your temple that you know stands between you and the Heavenly Father? What specific step will you take this week to let Jesus address it?
- Pastor Steve prayed: "*Let him flip some tables, Lord. Flip any table in my life you want to turn over.*" **Application question:** What "table" in your life might Jesus want to overturn? Are you willing to pray this prayer?
- The good news: "*Jesus doesn't just cleanse temples - He restores them.*" How have you experienced God's restoration in broken areas of your life?

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Share prayer requests and concerns with the group. Be sure to write these down and send them to all group members so everyone can pray throughout the week, including those who were absent today.