**SERIES TITLE:** **Being Gospel-Ready (3 of 4)**

**TITLE: How to stand tall** (Equipping Message)

**TEXT**: Matthew 12:12-13

**OBJECTIVE**: To consider how true love enables great boldness in Christian efforts. For application you will show a simple drawing that will help many to remember the gospel message, so they can explain it in a simple way.

Revision: Can anyone remember the basic content of the Christian message (in point form) we discussed last week? (Creation - Fall - Redemption through Jesus - Restoration). This week we’re doing to flesh that out into something more usable – but we’re going to consider the motives of the heart again first.

Testimony (encouragement): Did anyone get to encourage a person toward faith in Christ through a conversation this week?

**Matthew 21:12-13**

**1. Introduction:**

A very bold act. Done at least twice (compare Matt 21/Mark 11 with John 2:12-18). Jesus was passionate about things that deserved passion. Something was bugging Him a lot. What? (We will come to this - because it wasn’t just the selling).

**2. Four questions:**

Q1. Why were people selling cattle, sheep and doves / money changers?

* They were used in the sacrificial system, as required by the OT law.
* Money-changers were there because Jewish leaders did not allow the Roman currencies in the Temple (they had pictures of idols on them, including of Emperors who sometimes called themselves god).

Q2. Where were these people selling?

* Mark 11:17 “...My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. But you have made it a den of robbers.”

[Note Matt 21:13 doesn’t include the words ‘for all nations’. Why? Target audience for Matthew was Jewish. They’d have known it was a quote from Isaiah 56.7. The meaning would have been implicit / automatic. Mark wrote for Greeks also – so used the fuller quote is given so as to communicate the meaning of Jesus’ words]

* The words make it clear they were *inside the temple* – but obviously not inside the more inner parts. Instead *in the court of the Gentiles – the only area for them to worship!*

Q3. So why was Jesus so mad?

* Yes, making profit in the temple (corruption).
* But the bigger issue was the exclusion of Gentiles from being able to worship God! God’s vision has ALWAYS been the salvation of all of humanity / every race. God made culture / human diversity, and loves our diversity!

*[Possible extra comment, if needed: Was it wrong for Jesus to be angry?Anger is a right response to something that is wrong. Anger isn’t a sin. Uncontrolled, or wrongly motivated / unjustified anger is a sin. Note, Jesus was controlled. E.g. In the John account He sat to make a whip].*

Q4. What can we learn?

A. Seeing people of all races come to faith in Jesus really is the most important thing.

E.g. See how passionate Jesus as about it!

B. Great passion is the result of great love.

To grow in passion and boldness we need to first grow in love.

C. Knowing God’s love is the key to our own sense of security amidst conflict/tension.

Jesus wasn’t afraid of what everyone there would think of Him. We often are afraid of what others will think. His confidence was in who God saw Him to be. When ours is the same, we’ll be freed from this fear! (But this can be a bit of a journey in real-life experience).

**3. Application: The greatest message on earth needs sharing.**

The greatest hindrance to evangelism is often said to be fear of what other people might think or say / how they might react. However, great love overcomes fear.

If we can see as God sees - and His love can grow in us for others - fears will be overcome.

It is then a case of wisdom, to communicate in a way that will win people over (not unnecessarily put them off)

I.e. We are all capable of initiating and guiding two-way spiritual conversations, and of communicating our story or God’s story when opportunities come about within those conversations.

And even if we each had just one additional opportunity per year to share the gospel - because we are all now equipped, what difference could that make?

1 Peter 3:15: *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...”*

**Video**: ‘How to share the gospel’ - from <http://alltogether.co.nz/equipping-videos/> (4.30mins long)

**Closing story and encouragement**

Tell the story of someone who came to faith.

Encourage all that God can use us if we’re willing.

Next week we will conclude this series with a message titled ‘How we can stand tall together’.

**- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION -**

**Hope Project Equipping series: Making Christ known**

**How to stand tall**

**Week three**

**Leaders note:**

The goals of this session are (a) to reinforce learning about the gospel from last week, (b) to reinforce learning from the weekend’s message about how love motivated Jesus to radical boldness, (c) to revise the simple gospel drawing, because it is easy to remember and use (and can help us share the gospel clearly even when not drawing it by simply remember it).

**INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)**

* Testimony: Did anyone have an opportunity to talk about faith / encourage someone toward faith this week?
* Discussion openers: What is one of the boldest things you have ever done?
* On a scale of 1-10, how bold would you consider yourself, and why?

**DISCUSSION**

**1. Revision: (15 minutes)**

* a. Revise the content of the gospel:

*Creation - Fall - Redemption (through Jesus) - Restoration.* (1min)

* b. Could someone explain this message in fuller sentences to help us understand the points? (If so they would have just demonstrated how the message could be explained) (4mins) Thanks!

**2. Discussion on boldness (10 minutes – keep this section brief)**

**Read: Mark 11:15-18** (Possibly the text of the sermon on Sunday).

a. At what point in Jesus’ ministry did this take place.
*(The start of the last week / ‘passion week’, immediately following the triumphant entry.)*

b. What were the people buying and selling in the temple, and for what purpose? *(See Matthew 21:12 and John 2:14.)*

c. To revise, where exactly was this taking place? (Note v17 quoted from Is 56:7).

d. So, for what reasons might Jesus have been angry? *(1. Money making in the temple, with a dishonest or manipulative gain taking place in the name of ‘worship’. 2. The use of the court of the Gentiles for this, thus leaving no place for the Gentiles to come and worship God).*

e. Do you think that dishonest gain in the temple courts would anger Jesus the most – OR the exclusion of the Gentiles from being able to worship God at His temple? / What was it that made Jesus so outrageously bold on this occasion – creating havoc in the temple?

**To apply the lessons:**

* Each share about a time when you were bold in confronting another person on something you felt they did wrong (do not share specific details, so others are not criticized/maligned).

What caused you to overcome any fear of their reactions? *(The point we note is that we are all capable of being bold if we have reason to do so)*

**3. APPLICATION: Would you be willing to learn how to share the gospel?**

**3a. Watch a video together (4.30mins):**

‘How to share the gospel’ at [www.alltogether.co.nz/equipping-videos](http://www.hopeproject.co.nz/) (Some may have watched this at Church on Sunday also).

**3b. Demonstration. (5mins)**

 Have someone demonstrate how to share the gospel message clearly and concisely using the gospel drawing (or whatever ‘method’/tool your pastors prefers).

**3c. Practice in pairs - with a 3 minute time-limit for the ‘gospel explanation’ (10 minutes)**

**Comment:** In conversation the ‘gospel’ part need only be brief (2-3 minutes) - because other things will be discussed and said also - possibly including our own stories about what convinced us of this message etc.

**4. Wrap up.**

Read 1 Peter 3.15 together.

* If we are prepared God could use us, correct?
* Over the next 6 months we’re going to revise this a few times.
* Hopefully we could all become equipped to be able to share the Christian message clearly at any point in time.

**Challenge:** This week, would you intentionally initiate a conversation by asking other people their views about something spiritual - taking an interest; and then - if and when you see an opportunity, be bold enough to ask if you could share briefly what Christians think - and share the gospel?

* (To note it: the gospel would usually be shared in the context of a conversation. So, we need to engage conversations. Only then will we find the opportunities).

**Close in prayer.**

…including for those you love who you such in small group two weeks ago.

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**NOTE TO LEADER:**

Please plan 3 or 4 times in the rest of the year during which you will give 15 minutes of your group time to repeat the above revision as at 3a, b and c.

- By doing this, you could put this teaching into *long-term memory*. That would be a significant accomplishment - and especially so if even just one member went on to share the gospel as a result, and saw one more person come to faith in Jesus!