



SHADOW MOUNTAIN LEADER

Packet

Getting Started

1. When have you been really angry?

2. How comfortable were you with your anger?

Going Deeper

1. As a group, read John 2:12-22. Describe this scene as you might imagine it. If you had observed this display of anger and strength from Jesus, what would your reaction have been? *Here's an interesting note: As Jesus was doing this, nobody said a word. There was no resistance. The temple guard didn't do anything, and they would have been stationed all around in the courtyard because oftentimes they had to deal with uprisings. The Roman soldiers didn't do anything. The writer Jerome states, "The very sight of Jesus made the whip unnecessary. One man single-handedly drove all of those mercenaries out. Jesus did this all by Himself. That's a strong man... and people experienced His strength.*

2. Read the following verses and discuss Jesus' strength as recorded in the Bible. What does this say about Jesus? His character? His power?

Luke 4:24-30 Pay special attention to verse 29. Picture the scene: There is Jesus, and He is being taken out to the hill and all of these angry, hostile people are about to throw Him over, and then something happens. And He just turns around with all of these hostile people looking at Him, and He walks right back through the middle of the crowd, and goes on His way, and does His own thing, and they never laid a hand on Him.

John 7:32, 45-46 The Pharisees sent the temple guard to get Jesus and arrest Him. They were sick and tired of His preaching, and they wanted to do away with it. And they sent the temple guard out to get Him. When they came back without Him, they were asked why they didn't arrest him. When these powerful, armed guards went to arrest Him, they heard Him speaking, and it so overwhelmed them they went back without Him because of the power that was resident in Him and the overwhelming sense of strength and bearing that was in His voice.

John 18:4-6 When He was about to be arrested, we see this curious courage and power all over again. The Jews come to arrest Jesus with weapons in their hands, and they meet Jesus, and they say they're looking for Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus said, "I am He." Now, watch what happens in verse six: "And as soon, then, as He had said unto them, 'I am He,' they went backward and fell to the ground." All he said was, "I am He," and the power of His words knocked them to the ground.

3. Yet, His closest followers were confused. Read John 2:17-22. If you saw a man do something like this today, in your neighborhood or place of work how might you interpret his actions? Confused? Excited? Bewildered? Some other response? **It seems peculiar that those who should have recognized the unmistakable evidence of Jesus' identity as His life unfolded before their eyes somehow overlooked it, but this was a more frequent phenomenon than an exception. Everybody who watched that whole thing misunderstood it. We often think that when the Lord walked upon this earth, and His glory was shone forth, and His words were spoken, that everybody understood what He said and understood what He did, but He had to have been the most misunderstood person who ever walked this earth.**

4. Read John 2:19-20. In this passage and many others, Jesus' teaching baffled His listeners. Think about your own journey of faith. Describe something from the Bible that was confusing to you at first. **It's easy to think it is the passage of time, physical distance, and cultural differences that make some of Jesus' words hard to grasp, and that for those who were sitting right in front of Him should have been plain as day. But it is simply not true. Transpose this to your own life. How many times have you been misunderstood? Describe the way it feels when what you say is interpreted differently than what you mean. Here are a couple of other examples from Scripture: 1) When Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, 2) When He was talking to the woman at the well, and 3) When the disciples heard Jesus say that He had food to eat that they didn't know about (John 4:32), they thought He was saying He'd brought lunch.**

5. Read John 2:23. What about this verse almost feels out of place to this story? At the same time, how might this verse point to a bigger message that Scripture is communicating? The court of the Gentiles—the huge, expansive area that surrounded the temple proper—was designed specifically to provide a place where the unbelieving Gentiles could come and hear about the God of the Jews and hear the Jewish people pray. They were not allowed in the temple proper or the Holy of Holies, but they were allowed freely to come to this area. And God designed it specifically so that there could be an outreach by the Jewish people to those who didn't know their God. But, ironically, the Jews didn't want any part of these people. In truth, they hated the Gentiles. The Jews wanted the court of the Gentiles for themselves, and so their own selfishness and unwillingness to cooperate with the missionary heart of the Lord filled up that place that belonged to those who were seeking God. Instead of a welcoming environment, it was filled with mercenaries, merchants, and rip-off artists.

Applying the Message

1. When you think of the sin in the world, what makes you feel angry? In what way do you identify with Jesus' anger at what happened at the temple?

2. How might you stand against sin and, at the same time, stand for the lost of this world (e.g., family, friends, workplace, school)? What might taking this stance look like?