

13 Cleansing The Temple - John 2:13-22

REVIEW / INTRODUCTION

Last week we covered the miracle of Jesus turning water into wine. Jesus took jars of water that symbolized the Old Testament rules that people had added to the bible. These rules did nothing to give people faith or increase the love in their hearts. So Jesus turned the water used for extra non-biblical ritual hand-washing into wine. The wine represented the living water of the Spirit that Jesus gives to transform hearts and minds.

We also saw Mary trying to control the timing of Jesus by hurrying Him. And then after being corrected by Jesus she calmed down and said to the servants; ***“do whatever he tells you.”*** She put the timing and the action in the hands of Jesus. And that set the stage for God to work. That is a word for us, in every situation; ***“do whatever He tells you.”*** Trust His timing and His ability and His love and concern to do what is right. And do whatever He tells you.

This week we will see Jesus driving out animals and money changers that were set up inside the temple. This goes to the zeal of Jesus for whole-hearted worship and prayer.

READING THE TEXT (Please Stand)

John 2:13-22

13 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15 And

making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

18 So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" 21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

PREACHING THE TEXT

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.

THE PASSOVER OF THE JEWS AT HAND

The Passover was a national gathering of God's people in Jerusalem to celebrate their deliverance from slavery in Egypt and their birth as a nation. It was a huge, noisy affair. The primary focus of Passover were animal sacrifices that harken back to the promise God gave Israel while in

captivity. While in Egypt those who had the blood of a lamb on their door jam would see the death angel pass over. That is where we get the term “Passover.”

Those without the blood of the lamb would see death come to their family. This blood on the door jam looked forward to the blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ who covers our sin and saves us from death. Receiving the death of Jesus Christ The Lamb of God as the payment for your sin will cause death to passover you. When you die you will go straight to heaven.

Every adult male within a fifteen-mile radius of Jerusalem was required by law to come, and thousands of Jews scattered through the world also made the pilgrimage at great personal cost.

Worshippers would come to the temple and offer for themselves and their family a lamb or a dove as a sacrifice. The priest in the temple would lay his hands on the animal, the sins of the person giving the offering would symbolically transfer to the animal. Then the animal was sacrificed to cover the sins of that person and His family.

In a powerful way this points to Jesus as the Lamb of God who took on our guilt and died for our sins. Our sins are transferred to Him as we are given the faith to believe Him for salvation and forgiveness of sins. We get the good end of that transaction. Our sins are transferred to Jesus. And Jesus transfers to us holiness and new desires and spiritual power through the Holy Spirit. Now let's talk about the dynamics of selling animals for the sacrifice.

THE PASSOVER SETTING IN THE TEMPLE

A few weeks ago we went to the fair in Chippewa. We decided to eat lunch there. How can those food stands charge 2 dollars for water and about 8 to 10 dollars for a single taco or corn dog? But we were willing to pay. After all, it would have been very inconvenient to walk a mile to the car and drive somewhere to eat only to have to pay for parking again and walk a long way back to the fair grounds. The customers are stuck with the vendors and the vendors can charge whatever they want.

That same dynamic occurred inside the temple of God. Everyone who came to the temple had to purchase an animal for a sin sacrifice. It was too inconvenient to bring your own animals many miles to Jerusalem. The worshippers were stuck with the vendors at the temple and had to pay a huge mark up. The temple ran this market and made millions from its operation. And the temple was as chaotic as the Chippewa Fair.

To purchase an animal at the Temple one must exchange his money for special temple money. The exchange rate was terrible. The animals were overpriced. It was a huge money making operation. In 54 B.C. someone stole 10 million dollars from the temple and there was still a lot of money left.

This market was set up inside the temple in the court of the Gentiles. This was the only place in the temple that non-Jews could go to worship God. The religious leaders would rather set up a market to enrich the temple and religious leaders than to make it easy for the gentiles to worship

God. Why would we put obstacles in the way of any seeker?! In cleansing the temple Jesus fulfilled the following prophecy;

Zechariah 14: 21 'And on that day there will no longer be a merchant in the house of the LORD Almighty.'

The beliefs of Jesus turn into action.

¹⁵ And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."

Worship and prayer were an important focus of the temple. Worship and prayer is a great passion of Jesus for His people. So when something competes with worship and prayer Jesus will not put up with it.

ANGER IS NOT ALWAYS SINFUL

Anger is not always sin. Jesus expressed righteous anger. Jesus drives out that which is standing in the way of people worshipping and praying. The whip is primarily for the animals. Many of you know that some animals need to be persuaded before they will move an inch. So Jesus persuades them. Then He tosses the tables and takes apart the market so that Gentiles again have a place to worship.

CHARGING FOR EVERYTHING

Fund raising is often a necessity. But a good analogy between what was going on at the temple in our context would be if we began charging

for bulletins and communion. You have to go into the lobby and purchase your bulletins and communion juice and communion wafer for 25. dollars a piece. If you need a bible we have one for sale. We could charge 100. a piece when we can get the bibles for 2 dollars. That is the mindset of the temple leaders. Never pass up an opportunity to make money on things God requires and people need.

The word of God is not for sale. Communion is not for sale. Compassion is not for sale. It is a privilege and a joy to offer these things at no cost. The ministry is not for sale. Even seminary is free here at Faith Free.

At some point His disciples were looking back at this event, perhaps even as they were writing the gospels and they could see how His actions fulfilled scriptures.

¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

ZEAL FOR GOD’S HOUSE

Psalm 69:9 (ESV)

⁹ For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

Zeal is a strong passion. Jesus was consumed with passion for the glory of God. The presence of and glory of our holy God must be honored. People are called to God’s presence to be awestruck with His glory. And the temple was the dwelling place of the glory of God.

Rather than coming to the temple and experiencing the glory and majesty of God's presence, people came to the temple and experienced something like a state fair or a zoo.

It must be our passion to seek the glory of God in the presence of Jesus Christ and His Spirit. When we worship with our whole heart we are seeking and honoring the glory and presence of our holy God. When we meditate on the work of God and seek to understand God we experience His glory and His presence as He fills us and quickens our mind to know Him more. In our relationships as we serve others we can do so to the glory of God. When we use our spiritual gifts we can do so not to draw the focus on ourselves but to honor the presence and glory of God that moves into the church as we use our spiritual gift in His power and to His glory. The glory of God is worth fighting for. The glory of God must be our primary focus.

Jesus stands up for the glory of God placing it above the love of money. And those who love money and rituals more than God eventually turn on Jesus and will crucify Him. They want nothing to interrupt their money making venture, their power base or their extra biblical rituals which glorify people rather than God. And it works the same way today. Those who are doing the God thing or the church thing in their own power for their own glory will persecute those who are in it for the glory of God alone.

Out of zeal for His own glory and the glory of His Father Jesus chases away that which dares to compete with the focus on God's glory.

The money changers and the Jew who witnessed this temple cleansing do not know who He is and by what authority he has done this.

After all Jesus has acted in opposition to the Temple Authorities who ran the market.

¹⁸ So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?”

It is somewhat surprising that the Jews do not attack Jesus or drive Him out in the face of His bold act. Many of them may have felt there was a great need for a cleansing of the sacred temple. As to the demand for a sign;

LET ME SEE YOUR CREDENTIALS

There have always been false prophets. The credentials of a prophet are miraculous signs such as raising someone from the dead. So this is a legitimate question. What sign will you do in order to show that you speak for God?

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

Jesus is telling them that He will authenticate all of His words and ministry when He dies on the cross and rises from the dead three days later. That is the greatest authenticating miracle in human history.

A NEW TEMPLE IS RAISED - GLORY THRU JESUS

In the Old Testament system people went to the physical temple in Jerusalem to find the presence of God. They offered a sacrifice to call attention to the holiness of God and to the cost of our sin. The temple was the place people came to dwell in the presence of God.

The resurrected, glorified Christ became the new temple in whom God will dwell among His people. If you want to go to the presence of God you go to Jesus. He is the fulfillment of the temple. That is why we can worship in a park, a parking lot, in a house church or anywhere. Together we can seek Jesus and find the presence of God through Him.

The Jews to whom He spoke did not understand that He was speaking of His body that would be raised from the dead. They took His words literally about destroying and rebuilding the temple. Out of their ignorance and spiritual blindness their words were mocking.

²⁰ The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

Herod the Great began constructing the temple around 20BC. Apparently, it was now at a finished state in one phase of its construction. The Jews were so impressed with physical structures they could not grasp the deeper spiritual reality pointed to by Jesus. It was impossible for them to see beyond the physical buildings to the fulfillment of the temple. The followers of Jesus did not really understand the statement of Jesus until after His resurrection.

²² When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

During His ministry, Jesus had spoken of His resurrection often, both directly and in hidden ways. But His disciples had not understood. Then, when Jesus rose from the dead, they believed both the word of Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. Sometimes we see a passage dozens of times and then the Holy Spirit does something to our hearts and minds and we see for the first time the truth that has been written.

STORY: OPENING THE SCRIPTURES

It was an ordinary Sunday until the end of the service. After the benediction a man raced to the front and begged me to pray with him immediately to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior. He had read John 1:12 dozens of times before. But this time while that passage was preached God opened His ears and heart. He understood for the first time that he needed to receive Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior.

John 1:12 (ESV)

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

At the hearing of the word of God this dear man was given the faith and understanding so that He could cry out and receive Jesus Christ by faith. This man cried out to God in faith and His countenance changed. His life became holy and his heart was filled with praises for God.

After the resurrection of Jesus and the giving of the Spirit the eyes of the disciples were opened so they truly understand the scriptures and the things that Jesus taught them while He was with them.

My prayer is that The Holy Spirit would quicken our hearts and minds so that we understand scripture and hear what God is saying to us.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Has God given you a holy Zeal for His glory.
2. If so, are you powering up your ministries by Spirit of God to the glory of God? Are you focusing your discussions on things the glorify God?
3. Are you getting angry about the right things?
4. Do you see the difference between religious activity and the presence of God that is now found only through Jesus Christ.