

The Zeal of Jesus

John 2:12-17

In the last sermon we walked with Jesus to a wedding where He performed His first miracle. Today we'll walk with Jesus to Jerusalem to observe the Passover at the Temple.

One of the things I've learned about walking with Jesus is you never know exactly where He will go next. The disciples may have felt this way in John 2. Following Jesus as _____ they saw His gentleness. At Cana they saw His glory as He turned water to wine.

But now at the Temple they see "another side" of Jesus. The gentle Lamb of God becomes the roaring Lion of Judah. With eyes flashing and whip cracking... muscles bulging and tables overthrown, they see a zeal that reminded them of something David wrote in Psalm 69:8-9. [The disciples knew their Bible!]

At the wedding, Jesus sat at the table.

Here, He is throwing tables.

At the wedding, He worked quietly and privately.

Here, He acts overtly and publicly.

At the wedding, He manifested His glory

Here, He manifests His anger.

At the wedding, He brought joy.

Here, He brings judgment.

This event **took place in the spring**. The Passover was in the Jewish month Nisan, which corresponds with March-April on our calendar.

Spring is only a month away! (Do I hear an "amen?"). Soon families will begin **spring cleaning** at their house. In our text Jesus is doing some "spring cleaning" at His House!

I. **The VISIT to the TEMPLE** (v. 13).

- ➡ The Passover was an annual feast. John records three Passovers (2:13; 6:1; 11:55). This indicates Jesus' public ministry was about 3½ years long. This corresponds with Daniel's prophecy (9:27).

- A. A **FREQUENT** practice. Jesus attended the Temple regularly.
1. As an infant
 2. As a child
 3. For some people attending “God’s House” is only a matter of convenience.
 - If your relationship with God isn’t exciting enough to make you want to come to church to worship Him then something is very wrong with your relationship.
 - I wouldn’t trust something to get me into heaven that couldn’t get me to church.
- B. A **FULFILLMENT** of prophecy (vs.16-17 cf. Mal. 3:1).
- This prophecy applies to both His first and second coming. At His first coming, the Jews were expecting a leader to drive out the Romans from their land. They didn’t recognize Him as Messiah when He came **SUDDENLY** into the Temple and drove out the garbage.

II. **The VIOLATION of the TABLES.**

➤ When Jesus came suddenly into the Temple, He didn’t like what He saw! The outer court had become a stinking filthy barnyard.

- A. The **PURPOSE**—The Temple was supposed to be a place of prayer and worship. But, it had become a place of profit. The purpose of the Temple was polluted.

LOSS OF PURPOSE—The purpose of a garage is to house a car. Over time, things pile up and the car gets pushed outside. A cleansing is needed to restore it to its original purpose.

1. Jews came from many different nations for the Passover. They needed to purchase sacrifices. Their foreign currency needed to be exchanged for “Temple currency.” The money changers charged excessive exchange rates (price gouging).
2. The Temple was being exploited by greedy merchants—Extortion and religious racketeering made God’s House (Luke 19:46).

3. Resembled the New York Stock Exchange rather than a house of prayer.
4. Smelled more like a barnyard than the sweet fragrance burning on the altar of incense.

➔ **The purpose of the local church** is EXALTATION of the Savior... EDIFICATION of the saints... EXPOSITION of the Scriptures... EVANGELIZING of lost sinners.

B. The **PROBLEM**—

1. **Attitude**—Our attitude towards the house of God is a reflection of our attitude towards God.
2. **Aim**—God’s house is desecrated by wrong motives for attending. It is not a social club. We don’t come because of obligation.
 - Jesus knew the heart of those who were in the house of God for the wrong reason.
 - Why did you come to church today? To worship? To listen for God to speak to your heart through His Word? Or, did you come because your wife or parents made you? I can assure that Jesus knows why you are here.

III. The **VACATING of the THIEVES**.

- Jesus cleansed the Temple twice: Once here at the beginning of His ministry, and again at the end of His ministry (Mt. 21:12-13).
- The Jews resumed this same sinful practice later. People never learn and get progressively worse. The first time Jesus said they made _____ At the end of His ministry, He “upgraded” His rebuke saying they made His house _____ (Mt. 21:13).

A. His **AUTHORITY**—Jesus had the authority to set things right.

1. The Temple was HIS HOUSE (cf. v. 16; Mt. 21:12-13).
2. When Israel rejected Christ’s Messiahship, Jesus abandoned the Temple and it became *your* _____ (Mt. 23:37-38).

- B. His **ANGER** (zeal, fervor). He didn't ask them politely—"Would you mind taking your animals and business outside, please?"
1. Jesus cleaned house with great gusto! He literally **DROVE** them out. He physically tossed tables with coins flying everywhere. Oxen were groaning... sheep were bleating... people were running for cover! Jesus was **HOT!**
 2. **The zeal of Christ** is a rebuke to all of us. Not many people are "eaten up" by a zeal for God's house. Some are with making money... sports... sex/lust... hobbies... music... T.V.... drugs... politics... etc. but they barely "nibble" on spiritual matters like Bible study, prayer, witnessing, or service, much less get "eaten up" by them.

IV. The VOICE to us TODAY.

- ➡ There is no temple in Jerusalem today. **WE ARE GOD'S TEMPLE** today (1 Cor. 3:16-17). God resides in us!
- A. **PURPOSE** of the temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20). What is the reaction of Jesus as He looks at what is going on in your temple today?
 - B. **PURGING** of the temple (2 Cor. 6:14 - 7:1). We need to take inventory.

SUMMATION: Jesus wants to **CLEAN HOUSE**. There needs to be a spiritual spring-cleaning in us today. It's time to throw out the sinful trash.

How many of you took a shower and cleaned up before coming to church today? Raise your hand. (If you didn't, keep your arm down! Way down!) Why did you wash? You did so you could come here and present yourselves clean before others.

A little boy played out in dirt at school. After school he came home covered in dirt. He asked his mother, "Who am I?" Playing along she said, "I don't know, who are you?" "Wow!" the boy exclaimed. "My teacher was right! She said I was so dirty my own mother wouldn't recognize me."

Some Christians are so dirty, people don't recognize them as Christians. It's time to clean up so we can look like who we say we are.

If you are here today and you've never been born again, you need to realize that you can't clean yourself up. Only the blood of Jesus can only do that. You don't have to clean up to come to Jesus, you just come, and He'll do the cleaning.

➡ Christian, is there some trash in the closets of your Temple that needs cleansing?

- Lustful thoughts
- Anger / Bitterness
- Hatred towards another
- Worldliness
- Greedy spirit
- Filthy habits

➡ It's time to "take out the garbage!" How many are willing to say, "Lord start that spring cleaning in my heart today?" Psalm 51:10—

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