

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 2

We have been going verse by verse through the gospel of John

Last week, we looked at Jesus' first recorded miracle last week as He transformed water into wine.

And this occurred after He was invited to the wedding –

And in the life of a believer, we find that when we invite Jesus into our lives, there is a transformation that occurs in us.

In our study this morning, we are going to see something else that occurs in the life of the believer and that is Jesus coming into our lives and He begins to clean house.

Let's pray...

[Jhn 2:13-25 NKJV] 13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Every male Jew, 20 years and older, was required to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem.

We will see as we continue our study through John – that John uses this feast, Passover, as a way of letting us know how long Jesus' earthly ministry was.

We see Jesus celebrate the Passover here in ch2, we will see it again in chapter 6 and then in chapter 11-13 before His crucifixion and resurrection. That is how we know that His ministry lasted 3 years.

Now, just to remind you, Passover was a time of celebration – but it was also a time of remembrance and self-examination for the Jews.

They remembered the deliverance from Egypt and they would look for and remove all leaven from their homes as prescribed by God as a sign of holiness.

Keep the last part in mind as we continue with our study.

14 And He found **in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business.**

I had you make a note of the word temple –

Because the word that is used here for temple, is in reference to the entire temple complex.

You see, the temple complex was made up of different courtyards – one of those courtyards was accessible to all – men, women and Gentiles.

It was in this courtyard that this business practice was taking place.

Now, before we go on – I want to stress the point – the problem was not that these individuals were selling animals for sacrifices and offerings at the temple complex.

Turn your bibles with me Deut 14

Because in Deut 14, we find that the selling of animals for sacrifice was even recommended by the LORD,

[Deu 14:24-26 NKJV] 24 "But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry [the tithe, or] if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, 25 "then you shall exchange [it] for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. 26 "And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.

So, if I lived quite a distance away from Jerusalem – and I desired to bring an offering or a sacrifice to the LORD, I could go travel with the animal to Jerusalem or if I thought the route was too treacherous, the law allowed me to sell the animal back home and take then use the money to buy an animal closer to the temple.

You see, God made the sacrificial system where it wasn't a burden to the people.

The service of providing animals for sacrifice should have been a blessing for those pilgrims that were traveling long distances.

The problem that was going on at the temple was that the priests and the sellers of the animals were ripping the people off.

For those that would bring animals as an offering – the Law required that all sacrificial animals should be “without blemish” – the idea was that you didn’t want to give God your second best.

So the animals were inspected – and many times, the priest doing the inspection would reject the animal – and then they would tell the person that they could purchase an “unblemished” animal from them – and then they would direct them toward those that were selling animals on the temple complex, at a much higher price of course.

But that was not all, the individual would then have to change their Roman currency to Temple currency – because after all, in the priest mind’s it was inappropriate to use pagan coins –

So one couldn’t buy an “unblemished” animal from them unless they exchanged their money – for a fee.

And because the temple currency was only good at the temple – any leftover money, they would get charged again to change it back to Roman currency.

The priests were ripping people off –

Turn to 1 Sam 2

Here we find the same thing happening.

[1Sa 2:12-16 NKJV] 12 Now the sons of Eli [were] corrupt; they did not know the LORD. 13 And the priests' custom with the people [was that] when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust [it] into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw." 16 And [if] the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; [then] you may take [as much] as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "[No], but you must give [it] now; and if not, I will take [it] by force."

The sons of Eli – they were not satisfied with the provisions that God had provided for the priests.

Instead of taking the portion allotted for them, they wanted more.

They started taking bigger portion of meat –

The fat – was considered the best portion – that was God’s portion – God loves the smell of bacon.

But the sons of Eli were even taking that – it wasn’t that they were hungry – they wanted it raw because they would turn around and sell it.

The people during this time knew that – and they stopped bringing sacrifices – verse 17 in 1 Sam 12 says that men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

The same thing was happening during Jesus’ time at the temple.

Many sincere people who wanted to worship God had become so disillusioned, they had stopped going to Jerusalem because it was too painful to see what a mockery the worship of God had become.

Jesus had been to the temple every year since he was a kid.

He’d seen this travesty many times.

But now that He’s begun His ministry, it was time for Him to take action.

He decides to clean house.

And we see this at the start of verse 15 -

15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.

I had you make a note that Jesus made a whip of cords.

John 2 is one of the chapters in the bible where I find that people will come to and make excuses for their behavior.

For example, last week we saw Jesus turn water into wine – and some people will say, Jesus turned water into wine, He liked to party – so I can get drunk and do whatever I want.

Or here in verse 15, someone with an anger problem, someone who has a habit of throwing things, having outbursts of wrath – they will point to this section and say, “well Jesus flipped out at the temple - And if Jesus can flip out – well then, I can flip out” Church, Jesus isn’t flipping out here – like some do, in sin.

Jesus was sinless.

He is righteously angry. He is a man under control.

He didn’t walk in and start yelling, busting heads and throwing things – (show)

He walked in and made a whip of cords – that takes time.

It doesn’t say that He bought a whip

It doesn’t say that he asked their disciples for their whip

It says, He made one, He gathered the stuff, He weaved it all together

This is a very much controlled situation

One that in the perfect timing of God, Jesus will clean house.

Just like He does in our lives.

And once He made it – He drove them out of the temple complex

I love this story because it reminds us that Jesus, the One who turns water to wine to save a young couple from embarrassment, will also turn tables over & cracks the whip of righteous indignation when God is being misrepresented by those who are supposed to be His spokesmen

I don't think we enjoy the image of Jesus cleaning house.

Many people have paintings of Jesus holding sheep in His arms or carrying sheep on His shoulder – but I don't think I have ever walked in to a house and see a painting of Jesus flipping tables.

For those of us with anger issues – those who yell and try to control people with our anger - that is not of the Lord

The bible states that outbursts of wrath are a work of the flesh – but the fruit of the spirit is self-control.

God has power residing in you.

You don't have to be an angry person for the rest of your life.

There is joy available for you.

16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

I had you make a note of the phrase "house of merchandise" – in the NLT, they use the word marketplace.

A marketplace is all about barriers.

Think about it.

You go to Costco – you see they have a new flat screen TV –

What's the first barrier you encounter? Is Bridget going to allow me to buy it? Do I have enough money to buy it?

What's the second barrier you encounter? Do I really want to wait in that long line?

Jesus Christ didn't want there to be any barrier between God and the people who were seeking after Him.

Every time we see Jesus exercise righteous anger in the gospels – it was always directed at those who were putting barriers between man and God.

To those that would cause a child to stumble

To those that hindered little children to come to Him

To those that wanted to persecute Him for healing on the Sabbath

And here - to those that were trying to transform the temple to a marketplace.

That kind of transaction is unacceptable to the Lord concerning His house and His desire to draw all of mankind to Himself.

He does not want people to think that they can or have to earn His grace or buy His forgiveness.

The price of salvation has been paid.

So freely we receive, therefore freely we should give.

And when the Jesus saw people putting up barriers between men and God in order to profit financially, He was assuredly going to put a stop to it.

I also had you make a note of Jesus telling them to take these things away

Church,

The cleansing work of Christ is something we are to partner in.

We're to sweep the house clean.

We're to guard our hearts.

We're to get that stuff out as the Lord reveals it and as He drives it out as well.

You might remember when the Children of Israel were delivered from Egypt, the Lord told them “Listen, I’ve gone before you, I’ve sent hornets, I’ve sent fear to their hearts, one of you will chase a thousand, but YOU’VE got to conquer this land. YOU’VE got to drive out these enemies.”

There’s an ongoing partnership between us and the Lord in this regard.

That is why we need to invite the Lord regularly to inspect us.

To search us.

But also, it is why we need to be in God’s word regularly and inspect ourselves.

When we read in the scriptures – about leaving your first love or about outbursts of anger – our first thought is, “Thank can’t be me” – this is intended for the next guy.

But we have to stop and soften our hearts and humble ourselves and instead say, “Lord is it me???”

Have I allowed corruption into the outer court of my life?

Have I taken a wrong turn that what You want from me?

And the Lord is faithful to answer and to guide us but to also restore us.

Notice, Jesus didn’t destroy the temple because of the corruption that was going on

He cleansed it –

And He will do the same with you and me.

17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

The word that is used here for zeal – is the word for passion or jealousy.

It is a quote from Psalm 69 – referring to the passion that David had in wanting to build a house for God

Jesus had one passion – and that was to do the Father's will. To bring Him glory.

Jesus saw something that was not right, and He did something about it.

The priests on the other hand –their passion shifted to wealth and convenience and power, rather than the God who had revealed Himself to them.

Because despite this cleansing – they didn't deal with the leaven that they had let in.

Because 2 years later, Jesus had to do another cleansing of the temple – we find that cleansing in the three other gospels.

Here Jesus said, "You've made my Father's house a house of merchandise." But a few years later He said, "This is a den of thieves."

The corruption spread. It worsened. It decayed.

18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this **temple, and in three days I will raise it up."**

Notice that the Jews (the religious rulers, the priests) they are not arguing against the accusations that Jesus has made.

All they want to know is - By what authority are you doing this? And they want Jesus to give them a sign.

He gave them one:

The Resurrection when the temple of His body would rise from the dead on the 3rd day.

The word that is used here for temple is different than the one we saw earlier in verse 14 –

In verse 14, it was the entire complex – but the word that Jesus uses here is speaking about the holy of holies

20 Then the Jews 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 of the temple of His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, **His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.**

At Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, one of the accusations that they made against Him is that they accused Him of saying that He would destroy the temple and raise it up again.

And the gospel of Matthew and Mark tells us that they brought in false witnesses that said they heard Jesus say these things.

Even as He hung on the cross, there were individuals who blasphemed and mocked Jesus "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself!"

I want to draw your attention to the following, in verse 22

This is the third recorded instance in chapter 2 where the disciples "remembered" or "believed." In verse 11, the water changed to wine caused them to believe. In verse 17, the cleansing of the temple caused them to remember. But here in verse 22, the Resurrection caused them to both remember and believe.

23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. 24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all [men], 25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

When we first read verse 23, our first reaction is – this is a good thing.

After all, the reason that the Holy Spirit inspired John to write this gospel is so that we may believe.

And I mentioned last week that John provides us with a selected number of signs so that we may believe.

So signs were happening and people believed –

However, Jesus did not commit to them.

Here is the thing –

The only reason that the people believed was because they saw signs.

Their faith was a shallow faith.

And when one's faith is only based upon signs – then when signs don't happen anymore: prayer wasn't answered the way we wanted – whether it is healing never came, financial difficulties are still there – we get upset.

That is why our faith is not based upon signs – our faith is based upon who Jesus Christ is.

Jesus knew their hearts. He knew that He couldn't trust them.

There are going to be some people who only believe in Jesus because something good has happened to them.

The moment life gets a little difficult, they are out the door.

When Jesus was feeding the multitudes – guess what? Big crowds.

But when Jesus started to tell His followers about taking up your cross and following Him, many stopped following.

They were good & ready for the spectacular show of miracles, but they weren't ready for the humiliation & suffering that was yet to come

[Jhn 6:67-69 NKJV] 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

These are the words of a true believer.

Where else would we go?

We follow Jesus because He is the Messiah.

We follow Him because He is God.

We follow Him because it is absolutely the right thing to do.

We don't follow Him because He makes my life "easy".

Jesus promises a lot of good things for those who will follow Him.

He promises to take care of our needs.

He promises to hear our prayers.

He promises us eternal life in heaven.

But He does not promise to remove all difficulties out of your life.

In fact He promises that you will have difficulties.

(2 Tim 3:12 NKJV) Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

He promises to be with you in your difficulties.

He promises to use your difficulties to mature and strengthen you.

He promises to flip the tables of our lives of anything that is placing a barrier between us and Him.

Church, we must submit to the correction.

We must endure the scouring with the small cord of whip that He uses.

After all, He endured a greater scouring because of His love for you and me.

So that we can enjoy eternity in His presence.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

