

The Gospel of John

2:13-25

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of John.
This week we read of Jesus cleaning house.

John 2:13-17 ¹³ *Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* ¹⁴ *And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business.* 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.* ¹⁶ *And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"* ¹⁷ *Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."*

The first thing you may be thinking of when you read this is, "Isn't John kind of backwards here with this portion of what Jesus did. In the other gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke) they record this happening at the end of Jesus' ministry?"

If you have read though the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) you may have noticed this and wonder what is going on. I also would have to commend you on your observation.

But if you read them carefully you will discover that Jesus did this twice. Here in the gospel of John, where John records Jesus cleansing the temple at the start of His ministry, then in the other three where they record Jesus doing it at the end of His ministry. There are two different things that Jesus does. The first is in verses 14 & 15

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

Compared to the other three gospels.

Matt 21:12 *Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.*

Mark 11:15 *So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.*

Luke 19:45 *Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it,*

We notice in John's account of the first cleansing of the temple by Jesus that He drove out the moneychangers only as well as all the livestock.

In the other three speaking of Jesus' final cleansing of the temple, we read that Jesus drove out the moneychangers and those who bought from them, but not the animals.

So why did Jesus do this differently in the first and second cleansing of the temple?

In the first account Jesus was angry with those who cheated God's people and He drove out those who were doing the cheating as well as what they were selling.

But in the second account Jesus drove them both out, because even though it was three years later, all the same people were there and knew what Jesus did and said, but they were still robbing the people and even worse is that the people were still allowing themselves to be robbed by these moneychangers.

You also have to understand how this all worked and what was going on.

If you read Exodus through Deuteronomy you read of how God instructed the people to bring certain sacrifices for sin and various other offerings to God. The job of some of those who worked in the temple was to inspect the offering to make sure it was clean (no blemish on the animal such as a sore, broken bone(s), lame, blind, etc.) and fit for offering to God according to His commandment.

Well what they discovered is that a person would bring in a good animal, but they would make something up saying that the animal was unclean or unfit to be sacrificed and that they would take the animal and charge them for one that they had and had deemed ok for sacrifice. So you would pay a high price for this animal but you were willing because you were offering it to God.

The next person would come along and they would tell them the same thing, the only thing is, the animal they just told you was not acceptable for sacrifice, they would turn around and sell to the next person saying that it was acceptable as a sacrifice, therefore they were making a pretty hefty profit off of the ignorant people who just wanted to obey God.

There was also another thing that was done. You see you had to use temple money because other money was considered unclean and could not be used in the purchase of these sacrifices. So what could you do? You guessed it, they had an exchange where you would bring your roman coins, or what other form of unclean money you had and they would exchange it for you, but a rate that was very high. It would be like exchanging \$1.00 and only getting \$0.25 out of the deal.

So you could see how shrewd these men were; and they did it all for personal gain, not to help the people worship God as He commanded.

Kind of makes you mad as you think about it; doesn't it?

The sad thing is, we have the same thing today and we all fall for it. It's called so affectionately, "The Bible Book Store". We all have them in our towns or at least close by.

In these stores you can buy any bible from small to large, in different languages and any version you could think about and even those you may not have thought about. You can buy commentaries and bible dictionaries. Fiction and non-fiction Christian novels. And my favorite part is any kind of Christian music from rock to pop, country to rap, classical to heavy metal, contemporary to traditional. You name it they got it, including pictures with scriptures, coffee cups (or mugs), statues, toys for your kids and videos too; they got it all. Now there is nothing wrong with any of these things, but the problem is the prices. This is not an advertisement to sell you something but is a warning for those who run these stores. If people can go to a secular store and can buy the same item for a few dollars less, are you fleecing the flock of God? Are you trying to make a hefty profit off of those who want to learn God's word, or praise him with music?

"But I have to make a living" and I agree, you do, but I would encourage you to ask God if what you are doing is right or not, or what you are charging is right. People will have to answer to God for how they spend their money, but you will have to answer to God for what you charged them.

We should support our local bible bookstore, but we shouldn't support their families family and their friends also.

Enough about bible bookstores. What about Christian TV, where they beg you for money saying they are going broke or will be off the air if you don't give to them? All ministries are supported by God and not by man; and if God wants to shut it down He will. But if God wants it to keep going He will supply for them and God won't have to beg you for your last dollar to do it. So remember that God doesn't beg or offer you love gifts in order for you to give. He just asks, period!

13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

This was also a high time for these moneychangers. During Passover, all the Jews would have to come to Jerusalem to offer their Passover sacrifice to God. That's a lot of lambs and a lot of money for these guys. But Jesus stopped them dead in their tracks. I have to wonder that if for thirty years as Jesus would go to Jerusalem with His family for the Passover how much control He had not to do this years ago. They may have very well had taken advantage of Jesus' family in the past.

And the second thing different in the two accounts is:

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

But in the others Jesus says:

Matt 21:13 *And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*

Mark 11:17 *Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*

Luke 19:46 *saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*

Notice two things here, in the first account Jesus says, *"Take these things away!"* And in the second account Jesus quotes scripture *"It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer'"*.

Also Jesus says in the first account *"Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"*

But the second Jesus says *"but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*

So why the differences? In the first account you could say that Jesus was being a little more lenient with them, letting them know that what they are doing is not right. Also Jesus was proclaiming that God was His Father and reminding them whose house this really was.

But they didn't seem to have listened to Jesus, because three years later there they are, doing the same thing and the only way to get it into their heads is to remind them of what God's word says quoting from:

Isaiah 56:7 *Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,
And make them joyful in My house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
Will be accepted on My altar;
For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."*

And

Jer 7:11 *"Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the LORD.*

Sometimes people are drawn away from church because of all the things that go on there, they just want to go and worship the Lord, pray, learn God's word and be there for others. But instead they get stuck with special programs, useless talk, seeing others go there just because their friends are there being stuck in their little clicks or groups never reaching out to others outside of this group of theirs.

Even the pastors have become some sort of god to some people, where they went go to church on that Sunday if the pastor isn't speaking.

Some will go there and be judged for their appearance and looked down upon because of the way they dress or look.

No, people usually won't say something to them, but they sense others snickering and talking about them even during worship time in the church.

When we drive people out of the church we are going against God's word, which says,

Heb 10:24-25 ²⁴ *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,* ²⁵ *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Special programs and events are fine if they bring glory to the Lord in His house, but there is also a time for all things.

Suppose you went to a fancy restaurant to eat a good meal and when you got there you sat down and instead of given a menu, you were given a program of the show that was going to be happening. As you ask your waiter what is going on, he explains to you that you will be watching a show of someone else eating, but not to worry, because they would be serving crackers and water to everyone.

If you had any sense you would get up and leave, or never go to that restaurant again. That's what people do when they are hungry for the word and they are given a show instead. Sure it may be entertaining but it doesn't fulfill what they really need.

Think of Easter and how different the church is on Easter Sunday. The music is different, the decorations are different, there are more flowers in the church, people dress nicer, and the same message is taught each Easter Sunday.

I believe we should as Christians celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus, but maybe have a different service or an early morning service or even an evening service to do this. And on Easter Sunday morning, show people what your church is really like the rest of the year, pastors continue on with the teaching from the bible as you have been doing. Maybe God will use your message to reach more people because they are getting a fresh new message not a replay from last years. Give the altar call, because the message of salvation is throughout the bible.

Worship leaders; the music should be special and your best each Sunday because of who it's for, and it's not for the people.

The church should always look good because it's God's house.

So what was the Jews response to all of this?

John 2:18-22 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.**"* 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.*

Basically the Jews wanted to know why Jesus was allowed to do this in their temple; after all they were the teachers in the temple and kept its upkeep.

You could think of it as someone coming into your church and causing a commotion; the pastors and elders would ask this person why they did it and who gave him or her the authority to do it. If it's not God, then you're out-a-here.

Jesus answered with:

19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

And their reply was:

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.

You may be thinking, "How could they have known that Jesus was speaking of His body and not the temple. After all they were just talking about the temple?"

Actually if you read their question again, ***18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"*** you will see that Jesus was answering their question and it wasn't about the temple, but who Jesus was.

So Jesus was talking about his body as God's temple.

1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

And speaking of His death and resurrection.

Luke 24:6-7 6 "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' "

Jesus was telling them that He was the Messiah who God had sent to die for their sins and that He would rise from the dead on the third day and that's why He had the authority to do this.

Jesus gave a prophecy about Himself and he fulfilled that prophecy and the results we read in verse 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.***

There are hundreds of Prophecy's about Jesus in the Old Testament and even in the New Testament. People don't believe the bible but you will not find God lying at any time in the bible and everything He has said has come true up to this point has.

There are only a few major things left,

Jesus rapture (taking away) of the church,
the 7 year tribulation,
satan bound for a thousand years and Jesus ruling on the earth for the thousand years,
satan let loose for a season,
the final battle and destruction of the heavens and the earth,
and the new heaven and earth.

After all that, we will have eternity to see what God is going to do, at least if you are a believer. If not you wont see any of it, but will have pain for all eternity. And will have all of eternity to think about why you rejected Jesus and His love for you.

But you don't have to; you can be a part of eternity with God right now. Just pray this prayer from your heart and you too will spend eternity in heaven.

Jesus, I admit I am a sinner and I ask You to please forgive me for my sins. I believe that You died on the cross and rose from the dead three days later. I believe that You are God come in the flesh for me because You love me enough and that You want me to spend eternity in heaven. Thank You Jesus. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit and may I tell others about You so they can be in heaven too. I ask this in Your name Jesus. AMEN!

If you just prayed this prayer from your heart you are now a Christian. Welcome to the family of God. Maybe you don't want to pray this prayer and want to use your own words, that's fine also; this prayer is just to help guide you along.

John 2:23-25 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.*

There were a lot of people in Jerusalem during the Passover, and many saw Jesus and all that He did, but Jesus knew that they believed because of the signs and would stop believing after the signs stopped.

People ask for a sign from God and most times they don't get them because of this very reason. It's not signs and wonders that saves people but rather the word of God. Jesus didn't say that you will do signs and wonders and people will be saved but rather.

Mark 16:15-18 ¹⁵ *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.* ¹⁶ *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.* ¹⁷ *"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ *"they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."**

Jesus said to ***preach the gospel*** and that these are the things that are evidence of those who will believe (***And these signs will follow those who believe***), telling the disciples

that the ones they witness to and believe in him that they will be able to tell because of these things, not so the disciples could put on a sideshow to draw the crowd.

God knows your heart and why you believe or don't believe. He also knows if you are just putting on a show.

A friend of mine at church told us one time that he would go to church and home groups for a few years and he wasn't a believer. He knew all the right words and Christian lingo and even hung out with Christians. People were shocked to find out he wasn't a Christian after he did accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

Maybe you have been putting on a show, where will that show get you when you die? Will God be impressed? I don't think so!

That's it for this week. Next week we start on chapter three and read where the term Born Again came from and what it means.

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy!
I pray I will see you all in heaven when the time comes!