

March 3, 2024

Third Sunday of Lent

John 2:13-22

Many scholars have said that this event was the beginning of the end for Jesus. This one act of clearing the temple is what set Him on His way to Golgotha. This probably the only recorded act of violence committed by Our Lord. I suspect that there may have been more which were not recorded or omitted.

This act of clearing the Temple had a very deep significance in understanding who Jesus was and the purpose of His ministry. Jesus had a very deep and complex understanding of how to worship God. Much more so than the: Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and His own disciples. Temple worship in His day had become a financial

transaction. There was the buying and selling of animals for temple worship and sacrifice. This was only so that the blood of the animal would cover the sins of the person offering the sacrifice. The sin was not removed but only covered so God could not see it. The purchase of animals was big business as was the making of the proper change.

Jesus's understanding of worshipping God did not involve so many middle men. Like the person selling the animals, the change makers and finally the priests. Jesus understand that worshipping God was much more direct. It was just you and God. This was very personal and intimate. There was no real need for all the processing and financial dealings that occurred at the Temple. Jesus felt and understood that worshipping God was more direct and personal.

I would turn our attention to the story of the Samaritan woman at the well to further make this point. We all know the story, but the answer is in the conversation with Jesus. She claims that the Jews say God must be worshipped in the Jerusalem Temple. She claims her people

worship God at their temple on Mount Gerizim. She asks Jesus which place is the proper to worship God? Jesus stuns her with His answer. He says the time has come to worship God at neither place. John 4:23-24," But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth." Jesus is telling her and us that the worship of God has evolved beyond the temples. We can worship God directly in Spirit and Truth with our hearts and minds. There is no longer a need for an animal, money changers or priests. This is very radical and revolutionary for His day. Most will not understand His concepts about worshipping God.

Jesus is saying that we have evolved past animal sacrifice. We no longer need them. The animal sacrifice has been replaced by ourselves. To properly sacrifice ourselves to God we should continually dedicate ourselves to Him and worshipping Him personally and intimately. This

is a far more committed and personal worship of God. Jesus said that we are temples of the Holy Spirit. God should be worshipped from within ourselves by using our hearts and minds when we worship and pray to Him.

Jesus's actions today go deeper than clearing the Temple. He is challenging us to worship God in a deeply personal new way. One that requires our whole self when we commit to worshipping God. We are the sacrifice that we make to God on a daily basis. Offering our life to live in the ways that Jesus taught us. That is a sacrifice far greater than the blood of an animal. It occurs every day of our life and requires great commitment. Jesus's concept of worship was very wild from the norm of His day. I can understand His great frustration with the whole Temple set up and process. The blood of an animal does not remove your sin. Only the blood of Jesus did that on the Cross. His blood has greater power than that of an animal. I am so grateful that Jesus's actions today lead to the Cross. Without it our sins would not be

forgiven and removed from us. We are made clean and pure because of the blood of Jesus. We have been made heirs and children of God because of that sacrifice on the Cross. No animal sacrificed in the Temple could do that. Jesus is calling us into a deeper relationship with God in how we should worship. God bless and have a great week,
Pastor D.