

Exposition of John

Message #11

John 2:12-25

John is going to explain to us what he and the other disciples saw and learned of Jesus during this event. They saw that Jesus is powerful. He possesses power that only God can possess. John and the others also learned that Jesus is knowledgeable beyond human capacity. He knows what only God can know. John writes what he saw and what he learned so that we can see and learn the same as him. If I could summarize this text for you, I would word it this way:

AT THE FIRST PASSOVER OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY, HE REVEALED HIS DIVINE POWER AND KNOWLEDGE.

I want to break this text down into 4 displays of Jesus' divine power and knowledge.

DISPLAY #1 - JESUS KNEW TO RELOCATE TO CAPERNAUM, AND HIS POWER BROUGHT HIS FAMILY AND FOLLOWERS ALONG WITH HIM. 2:12

Somehow, Jesus knew that He needed to move from Nazareth to Capernaum. Jesus knew He needed to go where He could accomplish His task, and His family and followers joined Him. Evidently, Jesus' family sensed a power within Him that caused them to follow after Him. Jesus' brothers were not believing in Him until much later, but they had known what Jesus did at the wedding, they knew of His power, and they were willing to go with Him to Capernaum. The 5 disciples, John, Peter, Phillip, Andrew, and Nathaniel, also were willing to go with Jesus to Capernaum.

DISPLAY #2 - JESUS KNEW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUE WORSHIP AND PHONY WORSHIP, AND HIS POWER CLEANSED THE TEMPLE. 2:13-17

The Passover was a celebration of the Jews. The original Passover took place in Exodus 12. God told Israel to remember this occasion annually for all generations. It was a requirement of all men of Israel to attend this event at the temple in Jerusalem, so Jesus attended the Passover in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was about 65 miles south of Capernaum, but Jesus traveled up in elevation to get to Jerusalem.

By the wording, we get John's perspective of this festival. By this time, the festival was nothing more than a religious event. John calls it the "Passover of the Jews" instead of its proper term "the LORD's Passover" (Ex. 12:27).

Jesus looks around and notices 2 kinds of improper practice taking place.

(Improper Practice #1) Jesus sees people selling oxen, sheep, and pigeons (doves -NASB).

Each Jewish family had to bring a Passover sacrifice to the the temple during this festival (Deut. 16:2). The God-given command however, was that sacrifices were to be brought from a person's own flock (Duet. 12:6).

When people brought their own animal, the temple priests would inspect the animal and find some kind of flaw that would disqualify the animal for being an acceptable sacrifice. Then they would take the original sheep and exchange that sheep for a "better sheep," of course, for an overpriced cost.

(Improper Practice #2) Jesus sees money changers in the temple.

Not only were animal sacrifices required, but temple offerings were also required. Jews would come with their Roman currency and need to exchange it for Jewish currency. The money changers were happy to help people with that, especially since they set currency exchange fees that were ripping people off.

The priests and the religious leaders were getting rich off of scamming people. This made Jesus sick. Jesus saw right through the hustle and bustle of the Passover festival, and He saw heartless, phony, and

false worship. He was passionately angered over this corruption He saw. He did not see prayer. He did not hear singing. He did not see study of the Word of God. He saw prideful people going through religious motion in order to check something off their “to do” list, and He saw other people getting rich off of that practice. There are 6 actions Jesus takes to express His anger.

(Action #1) Jesus makes a whip.

(Action #2) Jesus uses the whip to drive out the animal sellers and money exchangers along with their animals.

(Action #3) Jesus emptied the money bags of the money exchangers.

(Action #4) Jesus flipped over the tables of the money exchangers.

(Action #5) Jesus commands the pigeon sellers to get the pigeons out of the temple.

(Action #6) Jesus told the people that His Father’s house was no place of trade.

There were legitimate reasons why some of this activity was going on. Yes, there needed to be an exchange of currency. Yes, some people who traveled in were unable to bring an animal and were needing to purchase an animal. The corruption was in the overpriced marketplace, and the anger came because this was all taking place in the temple. Anything like this should have been fair trade and should have been taking place out of the temple in the city, not in the actual temple courts.

This paragraph ends with what John and the other disciples remembered as they watched Jesus do and say all this. It was probably the Spirit of God that put it into their minds to remember Psalm 69 verse 9: “Zeal for your house will consume me.” John realized that David was writing of Jesus. John saw that Jesus had an enthusiastic passion for the house of His Father. Jesus had a strong zeal to see the house of God truly be a place that honors God. He even would be so passionate about holy, reverent worship of God that He would be consumed. He would pay a price. Jesus would eventually go to the cross for the glory of God the Father.

DISPLAY #3 - JESUS KNEW HIS PLAN OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION, AND HIS POWER BROUGHT HIM BACK FROM THE DEAD. 2:18-22

At this point, the people should’ve had done what Peter did that day on the Sea of Galilee. Peter saw himself a sinner and fell to his knees before Jesus, confessed his sin, and assumed Jesus should abandon him. That is not how these people respond. Instead, they question Jesus.

Jesus tells them they they will destroy “this temple,” but He will raise it up in three days. Clearly the Jews have no idea and even the disciples had no idea was He was saying. They respond with a proud answer. The temple sanctuary had just finished a major reconstruction phase that began back in about 20 B.C. under the direction of Herod. They respond without ever trying to understand Him. It appears also that Jesus doesn’t care if they don’t understand Him. He doesn’t correct them.

By what he said though, He is revealing His omniscience, because He is predicting His own death and resurrection. John clues us in as the readers in verse 21 by telling us that Jesus was talking about the temple of His body. John tells us in verse 22 that the disciples understood what Jesus was talking about after Jesus was raised from the dead. Jesus raised Himself back to life because He has the power to do what only God can do.

Notice too what John writes at the end of verse 22. The disciples had seen Jesus alive after the cross, then they remember what Jesus had said and analyzed the Scripture in order to confirm that their faith in Jesus’ words was rooted and consistent with the written Word of God, and they believed.

DISPLAY #4 - JESUS’ POWER WAS MANIFESTED BY SIGNS, AND HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ALL MEN PENETRATED BEYOND THE SURFACE. 2:23-25

While Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover, He did more than just cleanse the temple. He expressed power that proved His glory.

John writes that many people even believed in His name when they saw the signs. They saw that He was a miracle worker and believed in Him. At first, that sounds great! Jesus won souls to Himself!

But a closer look will show us that their belief was not proper belief. Verse 24 explains the difficulty. Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to those people who saw the signs and believed. In fact, the Greek will tell us that they believed in Jesus, but Jesus didn't believe them.

These people saw His signs and had a momentary and sensational belief in Him, but they were not entrusting themselves to Him. Jesus did not believe them because He knew they had a momentary excitement, but they were not placing their faith in Him to be their savior from their own personal sins. They may have believed that Jesus could be the Messiah to bring the Kingdom to Israel, but they were not receiving Him as their Savior from their sins. These people were not properly receiving Jesus. They were not properly believing in Jesus. I do think John transitions into the conversation with Nicodemus directly after these verses to give an example of a person who was fitting into this category. I think Nicodemus saw the signs and believed that Jesus had come from God, but Jesus made it very clear to Nicodemus that He was not saved unto eternal life based on what Nicodemus was believing.

Why was it that John says Jesus didn't believe these people? Well, John gives 3 answers.

(Answer #1) Jesus knew all people.

"because he knew all people"

Jesus revealed his divine knowledge by not entrusting himself to these people. He is all knowing. He already knew the thoughts and beliefs of these people.

(Answer #2) Jesus did not need anyone to prove anything to Him in order to convince Him of their belief.

"and needed no one to bear witness about man,"

Maybe Jesus didn't believe these people because they were not showing Him enough effort on their part, but John says here, "It's not that Jesus was waiting for people to show Him through their actions. He knew their beliefs completely apart from their actions."

(Answer #3) Jesus knew all people because He knows what is in the heart of all people.

"for he himself knew what was in man."

Jesus doesn't need to watch anyone in order to know all about a person. Jesus knows what is in each person's heart. Jesus knows those people who have literally placed their faith in Him for eternal life and forgiveness of sins. Jesus also knows those who claim to believe in Him but don't. Jesus knows the truth of all people regardless of the way they live their life in any given moment.

At the first Passover of Jesus' public ministry, He revealed His divine power and knowledge.

I want to leave us today with 4 practical lessons:

#1 - If you have sensed that God is working in your mind to move you somewhere new so that you can be more effective for Him, don't ignore God's leading.

#2 - If there is filth in your life of any sort, get rid of it. Go to God, confess the sin, confess the laziness, confess the selfishness, accept Jesus' cleansing power and move forward for the glory of God without that filth in your life.

#3 - Take the study of God's Word seriously. Live your life in God's Word. You carefully study God's Word and God will do great things in your life.

#4 - You can't prove anything to Jesus. He knows you through and through. If things aren't right between you and God right now, don't hide from Him. Come to Jesus. In a few weeks, we will see an example from Nicodemus. Things weren't right between him and God, but he did the right thing. He went to Jesus, and Jesus taught him. Jesus showed him the truth and Jesus did a great work in his life.