

The Stories of Easter

Temple Cleansing

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: John 2:13-22

Speaker: Josh Duran

March 17, 2024

Good morning. My name is Josh Duran. I'm the Director of High School Ministries. I almost forgot my title. I'm the Director of High School Ministries here at the church, and I just want to say welcome and thank you for being here this morning. I do want to ask for some grace. I did go to the Trine basketball game last night and watched the men win the national championship. And so I've yep yep.

I promised my wife I wouldn't yell through the game and I lasted till about halftime. So my vocal cords are feeling it this morning. So after last night and preaching this morning and now my vocal cords might give out and I just might have to drink some water. So be patient with me. But I'm just so excited to be here with you this morning. Again, my name is Josh Ram, the director of high school. And what I love about our church is maybe something I'm pretty poor at is I come downstairs from teaching at the 9:00 a.m.

and I go, "Boy, there's a lot of faces I don't know. There's a lot of people in here I don't know, which is good." But I also just I wanted to take this opportunity for you to get to know me a little bit more. So that's what I just want to spend some time doing. This is my family here in the top left. The taller one, no, that's not my wife. That's my daughter, Riley. My wife is the one hiding in the back, and her name's Cassie. And then my son, if you've met him, you'll know he's exactly like me.

He looks exactly like me. He's my mini-me. His name is Cohen. And if you've had to deal with him in class, I'm sorry. It's my fault. Okay? And then, obviously, others me. But what I love to do is I love to watch my kids compete. Whether it's on the basketball court or on the baseball field or even in the classroom, whatever they're doing, I just love to watch them give 110% and try to get better and just really compete.

It's a joy that comes to me. I love to coach a couple of summers ago, coaching my son's baseball team, and we were fortunate enough to win the championship there. And that was just a lot of fun. I also coached the Angola Girls Softball JV team here, and I just really enjoy investing in students and just watching them give their all and really compete and just have fun while doing that.

Something else you may want to know about me is why Pastor Joel hired me is I'm a huge Michigan fan. So yes, go blue. So yes, we've had a pretty awesome start to the year with you know our football team winning the national championship and then Trying winning the national championship. It's just been a really good start to the year so far. But as much as I love my family and Michigan football and all that sort of stuff, I love my job.

I love what God has called me to do. I'm so happy that God has called me here, and I just love the students that I get to invest in every single week. This is a group of our students there at Discover Conference, which you heard about in Lena's testimony. She's in that picture somewhere. But I just love that I get to invest in our students in the next generation. It's just an amazing thing that God's called me to.

The other day, I was talking to someone and you know it was kind of later at night and my schedule was all messed up, and I was like, "Yeah, I got to go back to work for a few hours." And they're like, "I'm sorry. That stinks." And I'm like, "For some people, I love my job. I get to go back to work." So I'm really excited about that. But more importantly, you need to know about me for just a setup this morning. This is my family here, my dad, and my mom, my brother, and my sister. What you need to know about that picture?

It was definitely taken in the '90s. Am I right? That was definitely a '90s picture. I was a '90s kid. I grew up in the '90s, which I love doing. And we had all sorts of good times. But what I really loved about the '90s is the Wow CDs. Who

remembers the Wow CDs? Anybody? Okay. Probably no one under the age of 25. They're like, "What is a WOW CD? What's a CD in general?" Right? But the Wild CDs were awesome.

They had some of the best Christian songs from that year. And 1999 was one of my favorites. It's one of my favorite years that the Wow CD came out. And one of my favorite songs, which has just been a challenge to me through my whole life, is by a band called The Big Tent Revival. And the song is called "What Would Jesus Do?" Has anybody heard this song before? There's probably only a few of us. That's okay. But it was one of my favorite songs. This is actually how the chorus went.

Said, "What would Jesus do walking in my shoes, working at my job, and going to my school?" And I hear people say, "Jesus is the way I believe," and that is why I'm asking you, "What would Jesus do?" It was such a great song. I just liked the music, but I liked the message behind it. It was a very impactful message to me as a kid at the time. And it came with a fashion accessory. How many of you ever seen the "What Would Jesus Do" bracelets?

Yeah, so those were a good time. And me being a kid, obviously, you want to try and collect all the different colored bracelets. But me, I only wore the blue ones because I was a Michigan fan. So we collected all these bracelets, and it was a really cool thing to do in the '90s as a kid or whatever. But the message behind it was just so much more, right?

For me, if I'm driving down the highway and that one slow person gets in my lane and I was backing everyone up, I might just be tempted to you know hit their bumper a little bit and edge them back to the slow people lane, right? And then I have to ask myself, "What would Jesus do?" Right? And so it's an impactful message to me, or you know a good thing about my job, or sometimes it's a hard part about my job, is we have late-night events.

And so I'll be going home you know at like 9:00 or 10:00 at night, and I'm hungry, and I'm going down the main strip, and right there is beautiful Taco Bell. Oh, everything in me is screaming, "Don't stop. Keep going. Your digestive system will thank me later." Right? And so I go, "What would Jesus do?" He would definitely buy a taco. So I go in and buy a taco or seven. You know And I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding.

I'm a work in progress, all right? But also, like I said, I grew up in Ohio, so I had to rely on this bracelet a lot. I had to say, "What would Jesus do anytime I came across an Ohio State fan?" It was unbelievably hard. So I had to wear the bracelet. But believe it or not, this phrase was actually coined in 1896, in 1896 by Reverend Charles Sheldon, who wrote a book called "In His Steps," and he's talking about Jesus and Jesus' step on earth.

And so he came up with this phrase of, "What would Jesus do and how can we apply that to our lives?" And so the bigger thing you need to know about what would Jesus do, though? It was the ultimate argument stopper at home and at Sunday school, right? I get in an argument because I do that a lot. I get in an argument, and my parents be like, "What would Jesus do?" He'd be perfect. You know Or he'd be at Sunday school, and what would Jesus do?

All right. Fine. I'll give in, right? That was until I heard a story out of John chapter two, which we'll be reading later. So if you want to turn with me to that, you can. If not, it's a free country. But John chapter two, I heard this story of how Jesus made a whip. And if you don't know, that's like a graphic from the '90s. But Jesus made a whip, and he intimidated people.

That was perfect for me. You know, the Bible didn't say he actually whipped people, but he intimidated people, and that was good enough for me. So I was like, "You know what? I'm going to wait until my parents say that phrase, and then I have a comeback for them." So because I often heard this, I heard, "Joshua Edwin, what would Jesus do?" Right? Edwin's my middle name. In case you're going to catch it. And that's how I knew I was in trouble, right? And so I didn't have to wait long because I get in trouble a lot.

So I didn't have to wait very long. So it was still fresh in my brain. And I heard it. Joshua, what would Jesus do? He would make a whip and drive people out of the temple. That's what I would do. I want to be like Jesus, right? Now, I don't exactly remember what happened after that, but I probably got spanked and I deserved it. So there's that. So I say that jokingly, but there is an awesome context behind this story.

And that's what we're going to dive in today, is the context of Jesus making this whip. And how can that apply to our lives? All right? So let me pray, and then we're going to dive right into that context. Dearly, Father, God, I just thank you for this morning. God, I thank you for my church family. God, they gave up their Sunday morning. They could be doing anything else with God. They decided to be here. God, I pray that you would just bless us for that. And God, I humbly come before you. And God, I pray that you would just use me as a vessel.

God, my words are empty, but God, your words bring us life. So God, I pray you would use me in a way that we can each hear an individual message that would change us just a little bit or a loud bit, and God, that we would walk out of this

building different people. God, we thank you for who you are and what you do in our lives. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen. So if you weren't here with us last week, we started a new series called I Believe.

Pastor Joel kicked us off last week talking about John the Baptist and how he prepared the way for Jesus. And I just thought that was awesome. Pastor Joel blew my mind again. And throughout these two questions is just really profound in my opinion. The first question being, what are we doing right now to prepare for the way of Jesus' return? And are we ready for the return of Jesus? And I just thought that was really cool.

And if you missed that message, I would challenge you to either get on our app or go to our YouTube page and watch that message that kicked off this series because this is what's going to lead us all the way up to Easter. And it was a very, very good message. He put the bar so high that I can only lower it, so I'm sorry. But it was a great message, and I'm looking forward to how this series ends. But we're going to just go ahead this week. We're going to jump right into John chapter two, talking about this story that we've been talking about this morning.

And it goes like this. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts, he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords and drove all the people from the temple courts, both sheep and kettle. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

Now, I don't know about you, but I can't wait to get to heaven and talk to Jesus about this story. It's going to be an awesome experience. But the thing is, the question that really comes up out of this story that you know I kind of face as a youth pastor was, you know did Jesus react out of rage? Was he angry? More importantly, was that sin? Was that sin how he reacted? Or maybe even more importantly, is that a green light for me to act how Jesus acted in this story?

You see, the problem is that many people use this story to justify their own anger or their own rage, and they use it inappropriately towards other people in the name of Jesus. And that's an issue. And so I don't see it that way. I don't believe it happened that way. You know I want to kind of give you context of how I feel this story went. And you can agree with me or disagree with me. It's a free country.

But I do believe that the disciples walked in through the main gate and they were bothered what they saw. They were very bothered what they saw. And I believe Jesus calmly took those chords and went to the corner and started to make his whip. I believe some of the disciples were like, "What in the world is he doing over there? What is he making?" But I really believe that there was this guy by the name of Peter. If you don't know Peter, you should really read about him.

He was a mess. He loved to fight, right? He's about to put the boxing gloves on. And I believe Peter realized what was going on. And he was like, "Oh, yeah. Here we go. We're going to kick some butt." I firmly believe that Peter went over and took some pre-workout, and he was getting ready to go kick some butt with Jesus. But I think Jesus didn't react out of rage. I do not believe it. I believe that Jesus was acting or displaying his authority.

I believe, yes, Jesus was excited. Yes, Jesus was angry, and yes, Jesus was emotional, but I do not believe he was acting out of rage. I believe he was showing us his authority. You know Sometimes it's not always what you do, but how you do it, right? And I can say this firmly because I have a lot of experience being disciplined by my parents. I have a lot of experience in this, right?

And so I do not believe my parents ever disciplined me and said, "I hate you." They hated what I was doing. Absolutely. They hated my actions. But I 100% firmly believe that my parents disciplined me out of authority of being my parents. They wanted what was best for me. They wanted to teach me hard lessons. I firmly believe that. I knew every time that I was disciplined that I was loved.

And I believe that is what Jesus is doing in this story because there's a huge difference of hating the person or between hating the person and hating the thing that they're doing, right? And so I think Jesus is showing his authority here saying, "This isn't going to work. This is not going to work for God's house." The story goes on in verse 16. It says, "To those who sold doves," he said, "Get these out of here.

Stop turning my father's house into a market." His disciples remembered that it is written zeal for your house will consume me. And what they're doing is they're quoting Psalm 69:9 when King David is wanting to build this temple and, more importantly, protect God's temple. And so I'm a visual learner, so if you're like me, this is kind of what the temple would look like. And as you can see, they're right in the middle.

That's where they would go to do their business and do their offerings. But as you can see, right outside the center there is the Gentiles Courtyard. Now, the Gentiles couldn't just walk right into the gates. They had to be invited in. And they were invited by the priests to set up their tables right around the main part of the temple there. And so according to historians, around 2 million Jews would come to the temple to do their business with God, to do their offerings.

Now, many of those are traveling from really far away, really far away. And so they couldn't bring their offering with them. And so they would have to get it there. And so what do the priests do? They set up shop. They set their tables up. They invite the Gentiles in, right, and say, "Hey, bring the animals in. We'll offer the offerings right in here." And then when the Jews get there and they try to use their money, they'll go, "Nah, nah, nah."

Your money doesn't work." You have to go to the money exchanger, and you have to get the money exchanged. The issue was that the priests were marking everything up by a minimum of 20%, a minimum. So now they're making money off the offerings and they're making money off the coin exchangers. So now the priests are looking at all these Jewish people saying, "We're holier than you, and now we're richer than you." That was a problem.

That was a big problem. And so the issue here is that the priests were keeping people from worshiping God. The priests were keeping people from worshiping God. And so I was thinking about this, and I was like, "God, are we? Are we keeping people away from worshiping you, our God? Are our expectations keeping people away from the worship of the true living God?"

Are our expectations of how people dress, how people act? Should they speak a specific way? Do they have to be living a specific way for them to walk in our doors and worship our God?" That was a hard truth for me to swallow because, again, I think the priests were making a mockery of God's temple. And Jesus said, "No more. I'm going to step up and do the right thing." So then I go back to God and say, "Will we?"

Will we step up and do the right thing? Will we protect those people who just want to come and worship God our Father?" Again, I believe Jesus was completely acting out of authority. But again, it's not what you do, it's how you do, right? Ephesians 4 says this. It says, "In your anger, do not sin." Now, notice that it does not say that anger is sin.

It says, "In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold." Jesus was not going to give the devil a foothold by sinning in his anger. He, again, was displaying his authority. Thankfully, the story keeps going on back to John chapter 2.

And it says, "The Jew has then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all of this?" So again, Jesus is saying, "I have authority over what's going on in this temple." And they're saying, "Well, what sign do you have to prove that?" Like Jesus hadn't done signs, right? Jesus answered them, "Destore this temple and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has taken 46 years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days, but the temple he had spoken of was his body.

After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said." Now, I think there's so much irony in this story, and the irony just makes me laugh. It's so funny to me that these priests are saying, "It's taken us 46 years." It would be impossible to raise this temple back up in three days. And even if it was possible, we're not going to destroy the temple. The irony is they did destroy God's temple.

The priest destroyed God's temple when they had Jesus' body beaten, broken, murdered, and hung on a cross. But the funny part there is Jesus, through that process, paid for their sins, paid for our sins so that they could be redeemed by God and so that we could be redeemed by God and be in this family together. Jesus, again, is not acting out of rage. He's acting out of authority.

These priests are saying, "You can't use your temple. You know We can't rebuild this temple." But Jesus is saying, "You can kill me, but I'm going to come back, and I'm going to be the king, and I'm going to show my real authority, and people are going to know that I was here to save you and everyone else." That was the ultimate authority that Jesus was speaking of.

And I love when I'm speaking to students, and you start to tell these truths, and you start to explain these stories, and they start bringing these puzzle pieces together. And you can see it in their face. They're like, "Oh, that makes sense." Right? You see these light bulbs going off, right? I can't imagine what the disciples' faces look like when they're like, "Oh, Jesus was talking about his body, not these temple walls," right?

Now, I would assume that there's probably someone out here going, "Well, that was you know a good lesson for the disciples to learn." you know That's a good lesson you know to hear in children's story. But what does that mean for us? What does that mean for us sitting in this room in 2024? Because I don't know about you, but I came in on 8:27 and I didn't see anyone setting up shop with their doves and you know their offerings for us to bring in here and sacrifice, all right? I don't know about you. I didn't see that.

So what could this possibly mean for us? And I want to answer that with the Bible verse. Oop, sorry, I missed that point. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God, you are not your own. You are bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies. We are the temples.

We are the temples of the Holy Spirit. So just like the priests, we're trying to destroy the temple through Jesus' body, Satan is coming after us through our temples, the body that contains the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit that has the power to point people to Jesus. God is asking us to protect that, to honor that. And it's our duty to do that.

So my question, as I wrap up this morning, my challenging question that I have is this, where is God asking you to make a whip? You see, Jesus used a whip to protect God's house, to protect what was supposed to be happening in God's temple. So where is he asking us to do that in our own lives? Maybe it's with our finances. Maybe God is asking us to use our finances in a more God-honoring way.

And He's asking us to use a whip to get rid of those other temptations of using our money, a.k.a. Taco Bell, right? Maybe we need to use our finances in a better way. Or maybe you know back in January, we started these new habits or these spiritual disciplines, and we were doing so good. And it kind of tapered off here in March. And now God's like, "I want you to keep going. I want you to start that thing back up.

I want you to whip away all those excuses that you've given me and start back up." Maybe God's asking you to whip something within the church. I'm not talking about these walls. I'm talking about the body of Christ. You see, we have this thing coming up called the election, and I believe Satan likes to use it to cause disunity.

Maybe God's calling some of us to stand up and say, "That's not going to happen on my watch." God has called us to be one body of Christ, to be united, and I'm going to use my whip to make sure we stay united that maybe, that maybe we can pray just as much as we criticize. Maybe God's asking us to use our whip because he's asking us to go in a new direction. And he's saying, "Hey, I need you to leave that old life.

Whatever you've been doing, and I want you to go this way because I have a greater calling on your life." Maybe God's using you to use your whip to stand up at work or to stand up at school. I don't know about you guys, but I have lots of teachers in my life group, and we hear about all the crazy things that are going on at the schools. I mean, it's utterly chaos all the way down even in the elementary schools.

Maybe God's asking us to stand up and take a stance for our faith in the school systems. Or maybe it's at work. Maybe God is asking you to use your whip and step into somebody else's battle. Maybe you have a friend or a neighbor or a coworker, and you know that they need to do something to take their next step towards Jesus. And so maybe God needs you to use your whip to fight the battle that they don't even know they may need to fight.

Or maybe God is asking you to use your whip to repent and confront your own sin in your own life. That way you can take your next step towards Jesus. You see, Pastor Joel concluded his message last week asking, "What if we are in the generation that Jesus returned?

What if we are in the generation that Jesus returned?" That was so heart-shattering to me because then he asked, "Are we ready?" And I began to think in my own life going, "I don't know if I'm ready. I don't know if my kids are ready. I don't know if I've had enough conversations." And so I asked that same question. Are we ready? Have we been taken the steps that God has asked us to take so that we can be called home?

Will Jesus look at us when He returns? Will He look at us? And we may have a whip in our hand, but more importantly, hopefully, we have more love in our hearts. And he'll say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." You see, my prayer this Easter season is that people would be just more than churchgoers. That Fairview Missionary Church would be more than just church doers, but that we would really, honestly, authentically live out those words.

I believe. I believe in God the Father. I believe that God gave us His Word and that His Word is true. I believe that Jesus really took my place upon the cross. And I'm not just going to say it. I'm not just going to teach it, but I'm going to live it

out. I'm going to let those words authentically change how I think, how I act, the conversations that I have, how I'll use my boldness, my courage, whether it's at school, at work, or maybe even at home, and say, "You know what?"

I'm going to take a stand because I know there are more people that need to take bigger steps towards Jesus. And I want to use my life to do that. Even if we have a short amount of time before Jesus returns, I want to use every second of that. That God can look at me and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." That's my prayer, is that we would look for those ways that we can use the whip in our own lives, but we can ultimately use that to point people back to Jesus.

As always, the altars are going to be open as our band comes off to play their last song. I'm going to pray and then we'll be dismissed after our closing song. Dear Heavenly Father, God, I just thank you for this morning. God, I thank you for who you are. God, that you are our loving Father who just wants the best for each and every single one of us.

God, I pray that if there's anyone sitting here this morning that just says, "I need to use that whip." God, I pray that you would just give them the boldness, the courage, but God, I pray that they would do it out of love. God, that you would give them the words to say. God, that you would show them the actions they need to use. God, I pray that if there's anyone sitting here this morning that just says, "I need to use that whip just to accept Jesus as my Savior." God, I pray right now in their hearts, God, that they would accept you as their Father, God, that they would accept Jesus for what He did on the cross for them.

God, I pray for the rest of us as we leave this building, God, that we would remember that we are the church, not this building. And so, God, I pray that we would go out and just live an authentic life for you. God, we love you and we thank you. God, I pray that you would protect our eyes, protect our ears, protect our mouths as they will all lead straight to our hearts. And I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.