

That You May Have Life In His Name - John 2:12-25

Pastor Matt Dean

John is writing this gospel with a clear goal in mind – that those who read and hear would know that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God – and that by believing this of Jesus, they would have life in His name.

We believe that – He is the Messiah - He is the Son of God - and we are pursuing Him because He is worthy and true, trustworthy and faithful. Today we see another glimpse into the life and ministry of Jesus.

At the wedding in Cana, where Jesus turned water to wine, we saw the power Jesus had to take water and transform it into excellent wine, that water ordinarily used for cleansing hands and feet, became a source of joy at a wedding, the abundant provision of wine spared the groom and his parents shame for not having enough. We saw Jesus do for a Galilean family what they could not do for themselves, and the disciples in this moment saw the glory of Jesus and believed. That moment of water turning to wine – they would well remember Jesus turning water that cleansed into wine for joy – and they would also remember that on the night of his betrayal – he would lift a cup of wine – and say “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” The water that cleansed hands and feet – would soon be remembered in a cup of wine, pointing to the cleansing blood of Christ.

The story resumes ...

[¹² After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.](#)

Capernaum is on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee and was about 20 miles away from Cana where the wedding took place. It would be here in this coastal village that Jesus, along with his mother, siblings, and disciples would visit.



It is estimated that 250,000 Jews would gather in Jerusalem for the Passover feast. All Jewish men who lived within 15 miles were expected, and even more Jews from outside the region would travel as well. Sometime in mid-April. Jesus, the once and for all sacrifice for sin – confronts a troubling scene in Jerusalem during the passover feast.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.

Jesus walks into the Temple and finds something deeply troubling — and here’s why. The Temple was intended to be a place of worship, a place of prayer. In terms of architecture — there were a series of courts where different groups of people were allowed to worship. The Temple complex included a court of the gentiles where non-Jewish people from other nations could worship God, a court for women to gather, a court for the Israelites, and a court for the priests and then the Holy Place.

From the outside, moving in, the court for Gentiles was on the exterior — the furthest place from the Holy Place in the Temple — so for any non-Jewish worshipper of God, you can imagine the chaos and corruption taking place.

The temple tax was to be paid during the Passover feast — this tax would cover the costs for the Temple and its operations, including all the sacrifices. Because people were traveling from afar, there would be various coins and currencies from Greece and Rome, Egypt and Palestine, but the temple tax would need to be paid in Galilean coins or from sanctuary coins. So — money changers were necessary to convert currencies...

The Temple tax was about 2 days wages — and the money changers were charging another day’s wage to convert the currency. William Barclay writes, *“What enraged Jesus was that pilgrims to the Passover feast who could ill afford it were being fleeced at an exorbitant rate by the money changers. It was a rampant and shameless social injustice — and what was worse, it was being done in the name of religion.”*

The same thing was happening with animals in this outer court — for an animal to be suitable for sacrifice, perfect and unblemished. Temple officials would be present to inspect these animals for a fee — but any animal bought outside the Temple courts would likely be rejected anyway. So, with a captive customer base, “acceptable” animals within the temple courts would be sold at highly inflated prices. Obvious extortion was happening — and of all places — where non-Jews were allowed to see God and worship.

¹⁵ And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.” ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

(Mt 21:12–13)

⁴⁵ And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”

(Lk 19:45–46)

¹⁵ And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶ And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. ¹⁷ And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”

(Mk 11:15–17)

A house of prayer - turned den of robbers.

A house of prayer for all the nations – turned den of robbers.

It’s clear – the anger of Jesus burned against religious corruption and for the extortion and difficulty that those seeking to worship God would experience.

Something more would soon be evident as well – Jesus knows the hour is on the horizon where only one sacrifice would be needed when He would give His very life as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The reality is that animal sacrifices had long missed the mark with God and Jesus knows this...

⁴ “Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. A spirit of prostitution is in their heart; they do not acknowledge the Lord. ⁵ Israel’s arrogance testifies against them; the Israelites, even Ephraim, stumble in their sin; Judah also stumbles with them. ⁶ When they go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord, they will not find him; he has withdrawn himself from them. (Hosea 5:4–6 NIV)

²² For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. ²³ But this command I gave them: ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ ²⁴ But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. ²⁵ From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. ²⁶ Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

(Je 7:22–26)

¹¹ “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. ¹² “When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? ¹³ Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. ¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. ¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.

(Is 1:11–17)

Real worship was a matter of the heart... not vain offerings.

David knew this... and when confronted with sin in his own life, he knew the heart of God.

¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Ps 51:15–17)

¹⁸ So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ²⁰ The Jews then 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 about the temple of his body. ²² When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Jesus cleanses the Temple – and this attracts the attention of Jewish onlookers – but the greater story in John’s gospel is that even in this moment, Jesus was pointing to his death and resurrection. John knew in this moment...

- Jesus the Messiah was confronting hearts far from God,
- Jesus the Messiah was clearing away the distracting chaos among the Gentiles there seeking God,
- Jesus the Messiah was pointing to a true and worthy sacrifice that He himself would pay at the very highest cost...

William Barclay says this beautifully, “*The threat of Jesus was “Your Temple worship, your elaborate ritual, your lavish animal sacrifices are at an end because I have come.” The promise of Jesus was “I will give you a way to come to God without all this elaboration and human ritual. I have come to destroy this Temple in Jerusalem and to make the whole earth the Temple where men can know the presence of the living God.”*

Jesus Knows What Is in Man

²³ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. (Jn 2:12–25)

Many would be caught up the moment with Jesus in this scene because they saw the signs but Jesus does not entrust himself to people caught up in the moment because he knew all people... because He knew what was in man. What does it mean to have life in His name? Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah? Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

Jesus knows you.

Jesus knows you need grace.

Jesus knows you need what only He can give.

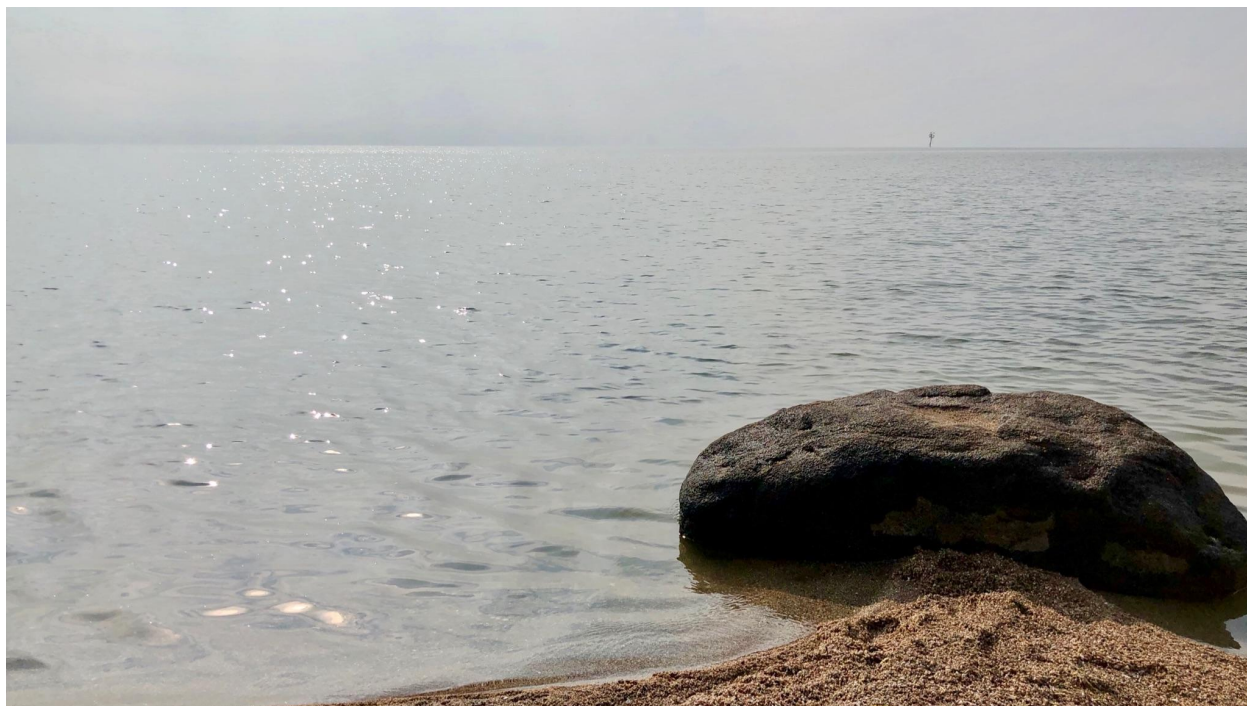
Do you know Him?

Have you entrusted your life to Him?

Do you lean wholeheartedly on what He has done for you?

Is your life marked by humility and faith in Christ?
 Have you forgotten the faithfulness of God to you – His specific and perfect faithfulness to you?

One of men that watched Jesus turn the tables in the Temple, was Simon, Son of John – and Jesus gave Simon Son of John a new name – Peter. If you know the story – Peter was a disciple of Jesus. Full of heart. Quick to act. But also human. Also flawed. Peter would betray Jesus – and yet on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, after His resurrection from the dead Jesus restores Peter. Peter, desperate to see Jesus throws himself into this water and swims to this shore from hundred yards out. Over breakfast cooked on coals, Jesus would restore Him. Peter experienced God's grace... and this is what Peter says...



³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

(1 Pe 1:3–9)

What does it mean to have life in His name?

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You believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

