

3/17/24

**[Connect]** Good morning Cornerstone! It is good to be with you this morning. Thank you for joining us this morning. If this is your first time worshipping with us, I want to invite you to fill out our connection card. It just lets us get to know you a little more and be able to connect with you more. If Cornerstone is home for you, you can use our app to check in and let us know you are here. There you can also fill out a prayer request so we can be praying for you throughout the week.

**[TITLE]** We are going to be continuing our series called broken as we lead into the time of Easter. Many people call this season Lent. We pay special attention to the events in the life of Jesus that led to the day of great sorrow his suffering and death on the cross. But it completed with the great celebration of Easter where Jesus rose from the dead the grave is empty and death is defeated for all who believe.

In this series we are looking at the things that Jesus did for us in his life, ministry, death and resurrection. These things then give us a lens to look at our own brokenness and see our deep need and longing for Christ and the salvation only found in him.

Today our scripture is going to be found in **John 2:13-22**. If you have your bibles go ahead and turn there if you would like to follow along with us. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, lets read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of John 2:15-17. So, let us stand, as you are able, out of reverence for God's word as we proclaim the truth in His scripture.

**[1] SCRIPTURE John 2:15-17**

*"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. <sup>16</sup> And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." <sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."*

This is the Word of the Lord  
Thanks be to God

**INTRO**

**[2]** Last week we discussed the Spiritual rewards and the prophecy that was fulfilled in Christ's death. Both of these things helped us to see that Jesus death was not an unfortunate accident nor was it a mistake, but it was an intentional act of God's plan to bring salvation to the world and Jesus' obedient sacrifice was absolutely necessary for that to happen for the world.

Today we are going to be looking at one of the miracles of Jesus that helps us to worship him fully and truly because of the authority that he has, and demonstrated it in his death and resurrection.

Now some of you gave me a funny look when I say a miracle of Jesus and were talking about cleansing the temple. Yes, this is a miracle and I will explain how in a moment. What creates the confusion of recognizing this as a miracle, is when we compare it, almost all of the miraculous things that we see Jesus do are done out of a motivation of love and compassion. This is where we see Jesus heal the sick, raise the dead, feed the hungry and pay the taxes of the poor. These are miracles done out of

compassion and love. The miracle of cleansing the temple however is done out of anger, a pure and righteous anger not a human anger, but it is miracle none the less.

To set the stage for our passage today, this is really early in Jesus' ministry. He only has 5 of his disciples, John (the Author of this gospel), Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel. They have been following Jesus for about a week now. They saw his first miracle at the wedding at Cana, turning water into wine. They traveled from there to Capernaum, with Jesus' mother and brothers. Now they are arriving in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. So keep in mind they have been with Jesus a week and a couple of days.

### [3] John 2:13

*"The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."*

Passover is one of three pilgrimage festivals where Jews would have to travel to Jerusalem to celebrate and worship in the temple. This was the celebration of what happened when God brought them out of Egypt. The tenth plague that fell on Egypt was the death of the first born. Israel to protect themselves they were to sacrifice a lamb and sprinkle its blood on the door posts and the Lintel so that the angel of death would "pass-over" their household.

The celebration of Passover is outlined in Exodus 12, but the Jews as a way of remembering their salvation, from God from the nation of Egypt, were to every year come to the temple to offer sacrifices.

[4] This would have been a huge event. The best guess on Jerusalem's population outside of this celebration it guessed to be around 120-150k people. At the time of Passover Josephus, a roman historian, estimates that there would be about 2.7 million people in Jerusalem at the time of Passover. That would be like a town like Springfield an average population of about 113k and for about a week Springfield had the population of Chicago (2.4 million) just for a week.

You can imagine every hotel, every inn, every room for rent, every family member's couch, campsite and overpass would be just full of people. Now this was a celebration of worship for what God had done for the people of Israel. They were to come to the temple during this time to offer a sacrifice. This would have to be a lamb that was without blemish, spot or defect. Potentially a family would have to raise up a lamb knowing that it is the one that is perfect and to be used for a sacrifice. Travel however long they needed to travel with this lamb to Jerusalem in order to offer it as a sacrifice.

There was a possibility that the animal they brought could be rejected maybe the priests finds a defect they did not see or of the lambs they had this was the one with the least amount of defects. If their lamb was rejected they now had to go and buy another for the sacrifice. Or if they decided to travel without bringing one of their lambs they would go to the markets.

[5] Now typically this market for animals would have been held near the pool of Bethesda<sup>1</sup> near by what is called the sheep gate (The red arrow on the map). That is where farmers could bring livestock into the city to be sold then the animals would not have to navigate the city streets. Quick in and out. Which makes sense.

This market at the time of Passover was known for its extortion of travelers. They had people in a unique situation. What they had was in high demand and these traveler had no other options. These animals

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<sup>1</sup> John 5:2

were being sold at probably huge inflated rates. Think about it like buying food at a theme park. You're trapped and there's no other options so they charge you \$8.00 for a bottle of water.

Now this market was normal and it was always outside of the temple and the city at the time. Jesus knew about these markets. He grew up going to Jerusalem every year with his family for Passover. There were probably times where Joseph might have gotten ripped off by someone in the markets over purchase of a lamb or pigeon. This year was different.

## BODY

### [6] John 2:14

*"In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there."*

So the market of selling these animals were no longer outside of the city walls, outside of the temple. They were now IN the temple. According to Jewish writings this marketplace in the temple was called the Bazaar of Annas. Annas was the high priest over the temple from 6AD to 15. According to Jewish history was removed from the position but remained the most influential man socially and politically over the temple till 66 AD even though he remained out of the official office. He had 5 sons and sons-in-law serve in the position of High Priest including Caiaphas that would crucify Christ, that all reported to and looked to him for advice and direction.

This is important to note because they were called the Bazaar of Annas because it was said that the booths would be to the benefit of Annas and his family. This could mean that he was gaining some of the profits. They were collecting money for the booths to be set up in the temple. The merchants could have been paying the priest to verify that their animals were fit for sacrifice. Or the merchants actually just all worked for Annas. The point is that this marketplace could not be set up in the temple without the permission of the High Priest, at the time it would have been Caiaphas, Annas' son-in-law.

[7] This Market would have been set up in the Gentile courtyard in the temple. In the center you had the Holy place where the priest would go that contained the holy of holies and the veil. Outside of that was a courtyard for the Israelite men and the priests. Where you see the number 9 that is where the Israelite women were allowed to enter. Everything surrounding that was where the Gentiles could worship, because they were not allowed inside the other courtyards. The gentile court would have measured about 35-acres<sup>2</sup>. The sheep's gate was under the Northern Portico there on the far right. Below you see the pool of Israel that is where the Market was traditionally held outside of the temple.

[8] I don't know if any of you have been to markets especially eastern markets, but they are insane. Almost pure chaos. People are yelling at each other haggling prices, you have animals making noises, just the commotion of people walking around trying to navigate a crowd. If that is what is happening for these Jewish people to purchase their sacrifices it made it an impossible environment for gentiles to worship because the place of worship was now chaos, and they had no where else to go.

This would have made Jesus furious. Filled with a righteous anger he preforms this miracle.

### [9] John 2:15

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/judgment-temple#:~:text=In%20the%20first%20century%2C%20the,Yahweh%2C%20the%20God%20of%20Israel.>

*“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.”*

Jesus picks up just cords that would have been laying around. Things that would have been used to tie up these animals and he fashions this whip of sorts. Something that was not super intense menacing or really even meant to deal a great amount of damage. Something similar would have been used by the merchants to lead the animals through the market.

Jesus who is just one man with a couple piece of rope drives out 10s of thousands of people from the temple, including all of their animals. He did not have any help from his disciples. All it would have took was on person to grab Jesus and say, “hey buddy what are you doing?” but no one stops him. He is driving out all of these people, he is flipping tables, pouring out the bag of the money changers.

The pouring the money out on the ground was important. It showed Jesus’ distain for the money and the means by which they had obtained it. The people that came to offer sacrifices, not only would they have to purchase the animal to sacrifice but they would have to pay a temple tax in the Jewish currency. If you didn’t have that currency they you had to exchange it for an inflated rate of course. Jesus was flipping these tables to show his displeasure with the people using religion for this worldly gain. Not just the merchants but the priests as well. All the while the people did nothing about it. They did not fight to protect the temple, because they didn’t care. It didn’t really mean that much to them

Then there is this command that is unique to this account from John.

**[10] John 2:16**

*“And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.”*

Now the pigeons or doves would have been the sacrifice of the poor that could not afford a lamb or a goat<sup>3</sup>. Jesus does not release the pigeons, or break their cages. He instructs them to be taken out of here. The sheep and oxen that were driven out could be recovered, the money poured on the ground could be picked back up. Pigeons being released could not, Jesus would have denied the poor a sacrifice for Passover, and Jesus could have been charged with stealing, like when he cast the demons out into the pigs.

Jesus does all of this by himself, one man with a couple pieces of rope against perhaps more that 10-20,000 people. Not to mention the temple priests had guards a mini army if you will. With that many people in the temple they probably had 200-300 armed guards and they couldn’t stop a man with a rope?

Some scholars say that this miracle is meant to be a mirror to the passage in John 10 when the people wanted to stone Jesus. When they seized him, he somehow just walks away and escapes them, with no explanation how. In the temple, Jesus drives out man, soldier and beast a like outnumbered 20,000 to 1 and no one tries to stop him and no explanation how.

Jesus’ motivation is for the purity and holiness of his Father’s house. He saying do not make this place a common market. It is meant to be set apart. It took what was supposed to be a house of prayer,

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<sup>3</sup> Lev 5:7

reflection, reverence, humility and worship and turned it to a place of business. When Jesus does this again, before he is crucified in the other gospels, they record that Jesus says they turned the temple into a house of thieves. But Jesus is said to have quoted Isaiah 56:7 to justify his actions.

**[11] Isaiah 56:7**

*“these 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 peoples”*

The temple was created for a purpose. It was to be a place for all people to come and worship God. This market eliminated the place for the non-Jew to come and worship. The Jews who needed to buy their sacrifice. Suddenly it was all about them. They did not care that they hindered or stopped non-Jews from worshipping. They were lost in their tasks. Jesus was angered by the commercialization of the temple worship which created an obstacle of true worship.

Think of it like this. The convince of their worship became more important than the worship itself. They would already have to travel far distances, now to travel and carry an animal on those travels, it's easier to just buy one when we get there. Not to mention you don't have to spend all that effort raising the animal just for him to be a sacrifice. This city is so crowded. I have to go outside the city to go buy an animal and then bring it here into the temple so that it can be sacrificed. Oh, now I can just get the animal right here oh how convenient.

Were they doing the steps of offering sacrifices? Yeah absolutely. Did they think it was probably not right to have the market in the Gentiles court? It had to run across someone's mind, but no one did anything about it. Because it was convenient for them to do what they needed to do and get on with the rest of their Passover celebrations.

This commercialization made the worship of God more convenient. As if the burden was unintentional when God gave them the instructions. What it also did was remove the intentionality behind the sacrifice. The time and devotion it took to choose from your flock or harvest the best and first fruits in order to intentionally set them aside for the glory of God. The reflection that is called for by the shedding of the blood of the lamb that reminds them of the salvation they received from God in Egypt.

They completed a task but they were missing the point. Jesus was tired of the false worship. These people going through the motions to say they checked the box, fulfilled their obligation instead of spending the time in reverent prayer to their heavenly father. We see this happen several times in the Old Testament. Both of these passages could explain Jesus' actions because I am sure he felt the same. Both of these passages are God addressing the people of Israel about their worship.

**[12] Isaiah 1:11-13**

*“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.*

*“When you come to appear before me,  
who has required of you this trampling of my courts?  
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”*

God was tired of empty worship from the Israelites that went through the motions but did not believe, they lacked reverence.

**[13] Amos 5:21-24**

*“I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”*

Jesus was passionate about worship of his father. This place of worship, set apart created with a purpose for the prayer and worship of all people to God was desecrated and defiled to fulfill convenience and greed. So, He drove them out to reclaim the holiness and reverence that we should have when we are worshiping God. Coming to the temple should put people in awe at the presence of God and inspire worship.

We see John include almost a commentary on the events from the disciples in verse 17

**[14] John 2:17**

*“His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”*

Which is one of the Psalms of David in Psalm 69:9. Which is a Psalm where David is called the righteous sufferer. At the time he is writing this he is being ridiculed and rejected because he is calling the nation of Israel back to true worship and no one accepting David’s call to repentance.

Jesus is the righteous sufferer, the disciples seeing this apply to Jesus showed the messianic properties of the passage. Jesus is consumed with passion for the temple of God. Some at the time assumed that the Messiah would come to purge the temple of unbelievers. But Jesus bring judgement on the Jews that were shallow in their belief. As much as he is concerned about the temple, he is more concerned about the worship. He is concerned about their hearts before God. The Jew and the Gentile.

With the cleansing of the temple Jesus shows the temple has fallen short of God’s intention for it when construction began with King David. Worship of God was impeded by commerce. It was no longer worship it was consumerism. Instead of wondering the best way to honor God it was what is the most efficient way to wrap this up? The priest and the merchants saw an opportunities to make a small fortune, and the people allowed the moral compromise because it was convenient.

**GOSPEL**

**[15] John 2:18**

*“So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?”*

The Jews that John is referencing here are the religious leaders. These leaders were 1 probably so angry but they were probably in disbelief. They just saw this one dude drive out all these people and they have to go and figure out How? And Why?

When they ask Jesus for a sign part of it was to ask him to justify himself. But based on the things that he said when he was driving people out, something Jesus would have stated loud and clear probably more than once. They knew why Jesus did it. They knew what they did was wrong by allowing the merchants into the temple. What they were asking Jesus is by whose authority is he did this. Essentially they are asking him what gives you the right to demonstrate authority in the temple over the priests?

The sign of Jesus' authority was something that had not happened yet.

**[16] John 2:19**

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

The sign of Jesus' authority was going to be his death and resurrection. He proclaims the prophecy of his death as the sign of his authority. As a prophet if the things that they say come true then you know that it is from God<sup>4</sup>. This demonstration of authority would prove that he is the Son of God the most high and is the prophesized Messiah. The only one with authority over the temple. Now Jesus presents this authority figuratively the temple that he is referring to is his body which John reveals later. Jesus says that they are going to kill him, probably Jesus revealing what he could see in their heart and his foreknowledge. However, it will be by his authority and his own power that he will bring himself back to life.

The religious leaders obviously don't understand.

**[17] John 2:20-21**

*"The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"<sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body."*

This 46 years that they mention is the amount of time that the temple currently has been under construction. It would have started at the end of the first century BC and wasn't actually completed until about 62 AD. About 30 years after Jesus died. Only to be destroyed in the Roman Zealot war in 70 AD. Even then Jesus told his disciples after he cleansed the temple the second time, he says that not a single stone will be left standing<sup>5</sup>.

**[18] John 2:22**

*"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."*

**APPLICATION**

That's significant because after Jesus there was no more need for a temple. He told the woman at the well that a time was coming where they will not worship on this mountain or that but they will worship the father in spirit and truth<sup>6</sup>. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit according to 1 Corinthians 6:19.

**[19]** Do you remember back in the 90 or the early 2000's those WWJD bracelets? It was a Christian fad that a lot of people had it would stand for What Would Jesus Do. WWJD. It was meant to be a reminder if you wanted to act like the world what would Jesus do. If you saw a homeless person on the street,

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<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 18:21

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 24:2

<sup>6</sup> John 4:23-24

what would Jesus do. In the early 2000's when I was wearing this no one told me flipping tables was an option because there were some people that need a whip of cords to drive them in the right direction.

When we look at this idea of what Jesus did in the temple. Is it something that we are just to simply apply it to our churches? Like it's the same thing?

**[20] 1 Peter 4:17**

*"For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"*

Judgement that came first for the Jews in the temple is the same that awaits us in eternity and should be the way that we judge our own lives because it begins with the household of God.

**[21] Ephesians 2:19**

*"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,"*

We are his temple and God judgement is going to start with us are we ready? Think of it this way.

**[22]** The temple was sanctified for the purpose of worship. It was set a part for that specific purpose. If it is no longer a house of worship it is no longer serving that purpose. Jesus by cleansing the temple protected that purpose. What the merchants were doing wasn't bad. People needed sacrifices to worship for Passover, if they couldn't bring them they had to buy them. Their pricing is a different issue, but the selling of the animals wasn't wrong.

What they were doing though was not serving the purpose of the temple. It only distracted away from it. It commercialized worship. It made worship mundane and less sacred as it is supposed to be.

**[23] 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

*"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."*

**[24]** We are a temple of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are not our own. We were bought with a price. We are justified and sanctified for the purpose of worship. We are set a part for that specific purpose. If we are no longer worshiping God, then we are no longer serving our purpose. Jesus wants to protect that purpose. Judgement has to begin with those in the House of God.

If Jesus were to enter the temple of your life what things would he drive out?

These things might not be bad things in your life, but they might be things that distract you, corrupt you, make your life mundane and pull you away from your purpose of true and deep worship.

We maybe be cheering thinking, 'yeah Jesus get that stuff out of my life!', but you're the priest that let it into your life in the temple in the first place. It has to start with us.

Think about it with the Jewish people they were still going through the motions. They were still offering the sacrifices but it didn't nearly bare the significance or meaning that it was meant to. The traveled



fought crowds bought their sacrifice offered it and went home to life on another day. It was not the reverent remembrance of salvation it is supposed to be.

That is not worship. Whatever they were doing was not enough. It wasn't even the bare minimum. It was just for the sake of appearances and obligation, not even touching the water of worship. We do this all the time. We show up to church just to say that we did. Which is the bare minimum. We are distracted we don't read our bibles or spend time devoted to just prayer because that is inconvenient, but that is worship!

What things in your life have you put in for convenience that prevent you from deeper worship. Maybe during the songs we sing on Sunday morning you choose not to sing and choose to focus on the position of your heart? That might be how it started out, but now its just convenient not to sing isn't it? Or maybe you had a long week let just sleep in the church has a live stream so were still getting the same content. But everyone knows that from the phone you maybe engage 50% of the time that you would if you were in person. But the online service is awfully convenient.

It all the same if someone were to show up drop off a tithe and walk out the door. Hey I showed up and did my duty I'm leaving. That not worship. That's checking off a box a getting back to whatever else you would rather be doing.

**[25]** Barry Jones explains the significance of Lent when he says, "In Lent we are invited to stop playing and to take our faith seriously, to enter into a focused time of spiritual reflection and renewal, asking God to help us uncover the junk in our lives that chokes our souls, that weighs us down and trips us up"<sup>7</sup>

The key discovering the truth of the things that make our worship not enough, is a heart open and even broken to hear the call of Jesus to trust in him alone. He must be the center of all our worship.

Worship should be fueled by passion for Christ. We worship what we love. So what is it that is filling your temple. The things that prevents your passion to overflow in worship. Maybe the things the distract you or cloud the reverence you have for God.

**[26]** I'll end with this quote from Shane fuller, "Lent is a time for detoxification from the personal and cultural influences that may be out of balance. It is a time to corporately lament the things in our world that are out of sync with God's eternal plan and purposes. It is a time for self-examination, for learning what areas of sin still seem to hold sway in your life. It is an opportunity to know yourself anew—your strengths, your weaknesses, your propensities. Lent offers a chance to examine what areas of your life need healing so that, as you approach the time of Christ's death and glorious resurrection, you can understand and experience the way that the light of Christ penetrates all areas of the darkness"<sup>8</sup>

**[27]** For the Lenten season to really confront us, we need to examine the heart of our worship. We must be willing to ask God if our worship is true and right. We must accept that if Jesus was serious enough twenty-one centuries ago to go into the temple courtyard and turn over tables because of unfaithful worship, then he will continue to do so in the courtyards of our souls today.

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<sup>7</sup> quoted in Gail Seidel, "Ash Wednesday" [blog], *Bible.org*, March 6, 2019, <https://blogs.bible.org/ash-wednesday-2/>

<sup>8</sup> Shane Fuller, "Lent—A Time of Detoxification," *The Dwelling Place*, March 5, 2018, <https://www.dwellingplaceindy.org/lent-a-time-of-detoxification/>

**PRAYER AND REFLECTION**

**COMMUNION**