

John Ch 2:13-22

13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; 16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME." 18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority 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 took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Passover - Passover was a once/year memorial that all Jewish people were instructed to observe. As most know this was when God's destroying angel went through Egypt and killed all of the first born males in the land unless he spotted the blood of a lamb on the door posts. If the blood was on the door posts they were passed over. They were instructed to observe and follow this Holy Feast:

Numbers 9:1-4 (NASB) 1 Thus the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. 3 "On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances." 4 So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover.

It's a little bit of a mind bender to think that here's a man in Jesus that knew everything about Passover, **He was around** when the first Passover happened. He knew why the blood was being applied, He knew that all of this was a picture of Him.

He knew the purpose behind this Passover was a **grand plan that His Father had put into place** and He was going to **honor Him** by observing Passover.

We see that Jesus is a son that obeys the Father. His obedience to the Father went as far as His own death:

Philippians 2:8 (NASB) 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.

We need to understand historically what was going on here so that we can fully comprehend and understand why Jesus responds the way that He does here:

"The Maccabean Revolt began with a priest and the resulting government came under the leadership of his sons. By AD 6, the office of high priest had become a royal post, for all

intents and purposes. By that time, Israel had ceded most of its independence to Rome in exchange for protection. Quirinius, the Rome-appointed governor of Syria, selected a wily young aristocrat named Annas to rule as Israel's priest-king. But within a few years, the political winds had shifted and a new procurator favored someone else. He deposed Annas, but, by then, Annas had established himself as the patriarch of what could only be described as a Jewish crime family, not unlike an ancient mafia.

Annas retreated from public view but continued to control every Jewish political office in Jerusalem, including that of high priest. After his removal from office, no fewer than five sons and a grandson succeeded him, and at the time of Jesus, his son-in-law, Caiaphas, ran the temple."

"The Annas Bazaar kept money flowing into the family's pockets and funded their corrupt hold on power. The chief priests refused to accept any currency except shekels minted in Israel. Money changers within the temple precincts gladly exchanged any currency for Jewish shekels at an inflated rate and then pocketed the difference. Furthermore, the law of Moses stated that any animal offered to God had to be flawless; only the best would do. So the men running the temple would inspect the animals brought for sacrifice, ostensibly to verify that the offerings were worthy. However, this was nothing more than a ruse. They arbitrarily rejected animals so that they could offer a suitable replacement in exchange . . . plus a fee. Ironically, the "suitable" animal offered for exchange had, only moments before, been the unsuitable sacrifice of a previous worshiper!"

Excerpt From: Charles R. Swindoll. "Jesus."

So what we must understand is that the Religious leaders of that time were corrupt. They were using an institution that God had set up (Temple Sacrifices) and they had found a way to make money themselves off of this institution. A filthy situation. They were truly running a racket.

15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;

Think about this scene for a minute. Jesus enters into the Temple and sees what's going on. Essentially a fraudulent scheme hatched by the religious leaders of the day so that they could line their pockets. The people coming to this scene were put in a position of either accepting that their sacrificial animal *had these so called defects* and purchase a different one plus pay a fee on top of that so that they could have an animal that was suitable for sacrifice. An animal that had most likely been someone else's an hour earlier that had also been deemed unworthy but now was acceptable. Or you could try to press the situation and claim that you knew there was nothing wrong with your animal and at best get into a bad situation with this group (this was not a group that you wanted to do that to, they were incredible at ruining someone's reputation), or worse you would offer an unclean animal to a Holy God.

They were some of the worst kinds of people. The kind that takes their power and authority to take advantage of people. It's bad enough to have leaders who take advantage of people, it's even more heinous when you have people that are doing it in God's name.

Matthew 18:6 (NASB) 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

As you think about this scene, does the anger start to creep into your gut? Do you find yourself upset and desiring that justice be done here?

Jesus does. But notice what His next action is. **Verse 15 And He made a scourge of cords.**

He made a scourge of cords - in other words He made a whip.

How long does it take to make a scourge of cords? At the very least it would take several minutes to collect the materials and fasten it effectively. Jesus is **angry** but notice His anger doesn't control Him.

Proverbs 14:29 (NASB) 29 He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.

Ephesians 4:26-27 (NASB) 26 BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.

16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."

Notice that Jesus has been using the whip to drive the four legged, more rugged animals out of the temple area but when He gets to the more delicate doves, that are most likely in cages He tells the sellers to Take these things away.

There is some **significance that is directly related to the doves that Jesus protects here.** We will revisit this at the end of our study today.

stop making My Father's house a place of business." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."

Psalms 69:9 (NASB) For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.

Zeal - zēlos the root word of zēlos is zeō (ze'-ō) –

- to boil with heat, be hot, used of water
- metaph. used of boiling anger, love, zeal, for what is good or bad etc.

Christ was angry, with a boiling hot anger, because of what they were doing to His Father's house.

What were they doing? They had taken His Father's house and made it a place of business a filthy one, a business of extortion.

There's a question that I feel is worth asking here. How does a group of people, an entire group of religious leaders come to a place where they feel that this type of corrupt behavior is acceptable?

It would be wrong to simply generalize it and say that these men were just evil and they knew they were. The fact is they didn't view themselves as evil at all:

Luke 18:10-14 (NASB) 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The Pharisee has placed value on his actions, the things he has done that he thinks God is happy with him for. The tax collector's prayer is much deeper than that.

David gives us enlightenment to the difference:

Psalms 51:16-17,19 (NASB) 16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise...19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

David is making an important point. It's not the sacrifices and works that God desires from us, it's that we understand why we are doing them. Jesus echoes this very same idea:

Matthew 9:13 (NASB) "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

When the heart is not engaged in our actions we move from the “why” behind the actions and we simply focus on the “what” we are doing. When “what” becomes more important than “why” priority has moved from the *heart* being the focus to the *actions* being the focus.

Here is what becomes **dangerous** for us then, *we begin to equate our spirituality with actions.* Spirituality was never intended to be about actions. Spirituality is heart engaged actions. “**19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices,**”

These men's hearts had long ago gotten disengaged, assuming that they had ever been engaged.

Matthew 15:7-8 (NASB) 7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.'

When the heart is not engaged, when a person doesn't know why they are doing what they are doing one can easily wind up in the place these religious leaders are. If I am simply going through the *motions* and I'm not even sure why I'm doing them then what kind of conviction will I have to stop me from engaging in activities like this?

Rationalizing bad decisions becomes much easier when my heart is not engaged.

MODERN DAY EXAMPLE

Let's see how this could play out today in a common scene. A growing church needs space. Week after week it's more and more evident that people are squeezed.

- A decision is made
- A dollar amount is decided on that's needed
- A building campaign is put in place
- The church body is encouraged to be a part of this

If, at every step of the way this church body & the leadership of this body maintain a consistent wholehearted attitude through prayer of what He wants then regardless of the outcome this experience will be a success.

Lets's take that same example and think of it in this way.

- A decision is made - **But what He wants is never sought it's assumed.**
- A dollar amount is decided on that's needed - **But He's never asked what it ought to be.**
- A building campaign is put in place - **Without direction on whether He wants you to have one.**
- The church body is encouraged to give - **Without consulting Him if that's what He wants the body to do.**

In this scene **success** really only has one **measure** and that's **whether a building gets built or not.**

So the sermons about giving start to increase, more and more updates happen on where the building fund is, and the focus in the body moves to this goal until the new building is built and God is given all the glory for what He did.

Something doesn't quite feel right though. Most in the church body know that man had his hands on it almost the entire time.

In this second scene the prodominate mindset ends up becoming "the ends justify the means" in the first scene "the means justify the end" the why and how justify where one winds up.

QUESTION - How much of a leap is it from where the second church body and leadership and the things that they had to do to hit their number and where these men have arrived at in our Temple Scene from our passage today? Too close for comfort.

THESE MEN HAD DISENGAGED HEARTS SPIRITUALLY. THEY HAD COMPLETELY LOST THE REASON FOR **WHY THESE SACRIFICES WERE EVEN TAKING PLACE!**

We need to be a people that never lose the why behind what this scene stands for. Therefore we ought to review the "why" for the temple/tabernacle.

The Tabernacle is a projection of God's redemptive plan

We don't have time this morning to go over all that took place during Passover as it relates to sacrifices but we will take a minute and look at briefly what the book of Hebrews has to say of the tabernacle and it's purpose as it relates to these sacrifices.

God told Moses to make the Tabernacle "exactly the way He described".

Why?

Because He wanted to make sure that **everything, everything was completely accurate and true.** That for those wanting to trust in His redemptive plan they could know that nothing in that plan was inaccurate, false or loose ends had been left. Everything was taken care of.

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

THERE'S GREATER PURPOSE BEHIND THE PASSOVER THAN WHAT MEETS THE EYE

Hebrews 9:11-12,14,24-25 (NASB) 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption... 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God... 24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own.

At it's core meaning, the **Tabernacle** or **Temple** is about **redemption**. What God was going to do through Jesus Christ to redeem us.

What did God want from His people then...simply their trust in His plan.

Psalms 34:8 (NASB) 8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

He values your faith in Him, He values your trust. He has no desire to trample on it.

So what have these men done? Men that were representatives of God for these people were bringing something into God's plan of salvation that did not belong...***distrust, doubt.***

The religious leaders in the temple are casting doubt on whether or not each person's sacrifice they were bringing to atone for their sin was worthy.

This is not a new trick by Satan. Fast forward to today.

How many different teachings do we have about whether or not:

1. Christ's blood is enough?
2. Enough for our salvation?
3. Enough for our eternal security?
4. The sacrifice we are trusting in is enough?

What is the enemy of Trust? Doubt! Satan has been using this tool since the Garden of Eden. He just needs you to doubt.

Are these people tasting and seeing that the Lord is good or are they doubting that He's good because men that they are supposed to trust for spiritual things are misleading them?

This is a direct affront to Christ and His Father and to the purist showing of love that any man was ever going to make that walked on this planet:

1 John 4:10 (NLT) This is real love--not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

In addition, God's plan has another incredible aspect to it that caused Christ to burn with a boiling anger towards these men.

DOVES

Mark 1:10 (NASB) Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him;

All four gospel accounts have this scene in them and all four gospel accounts say that the Spirit was "like a dove". Doves in scripture can be symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

There is only one group of people that have ever walked on this planet that once they have put their trust in Jesus Christ have the Holy Spirit come and permanently reside inside of them. That group of people is the church, the Bride of Christ...you and I!

Scripture has this to say then about what the church **has become**:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NASB) 16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

Did you see it? This is also a picture of Christ's love and His desire for His bride. You and I are His church, His bride. **The new temple for the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus is our groom. Notice the intense and incredible zealotness Christ defends His church...His Bride with. You and I are intensely valuable to Him.

To only picture Jesus as a mild mannered individual who wasn't willing **to fight to gain and maintain our trust** is to paint an incomplete picture of Him. He fights intensely for it!

Jesus knew why He was doing what He was in this scene. It was to honor His Father. Protect His Father's Plan of Redemption & Protect The Trust of His Bride, His church.

Jesus knew what this temple always was intended to be about:

Hebrews 9:12 (NASB) 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.