

Worship@Home 03rd March 2024



Call to Worship

"Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe." Hebrews 12:28

Opening Prayer

God of Grace and mercy we acknowledge your presence in our midst today as we praise and share your words through this media. Guide us through the power of your Holy Spirit to understand your word better. In Jesus name we pray! Amen

Hymn: Help us, O Lord, to learn (StF 501)

1. Help us, O Lord, to learn
the truths your word imparts:
to study that your laws may be
inscribed upon our hearts.

2. Help us, O Lord, to live
the faith which we proclaim,
that all our thoughts and words and deeds
may glorify your name.

3. Help us, O Lord, to teach
the beauty of your ways,
that all who seek may find the Christ
and sing aloud his praise.

Words: William Reid

Let us pray

Speak O Lord as we come to you to receive your word to equip us better to go and make disciples to know you more and be blessed. Amen

Time to Reflect- JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE



Before we focus exclusively on our passage, I want to consider the wedding at Cana and the temple cleansing together, and why they might have been placed side by side in chapter 2. The gospel writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, placed these two accounts next to one another on purpose, as we know in this fourth gospel the writer takes a thematic approach over a strictly chronological approach. So let us consider these two events side by side.

In the wedding at Cana, Jesus displays the riches of his grace and happiness. In the temple cleansing Jesus displays His zeal and judgment. He gives grace to one and judgment to the other. The wedding did not have what it needed – wine – and Jesus supplied their need. The temple was filled with things that did not belong there – and Jesus drove them out. In contrast to the wedding, Jesus is overflowing with an abundance of wine – which is grace and happiness; and also, in contrast to the temple Jesus is perfectly holy and pure as the true temple and meeting place between God and man that is not defiled with sin. The temptation or struggle that people often have is an overemphasis on one or the other. I believe part of the problem with that is a belief that the wrath and grace of God are somehow in conflict with each other. It's a false dichotomy. The joy and celebration of the wedding that Jesus displays is not at all in contradiction to His righteous anger at the temple.

As Christians, we also ought to have the best parties and celebration; and we also ought to take sin and holiness with complete seriousness.

Back to the contrast between the two events: one was a sign of His authority in the world, the other a sign of authority in God's House. Jesus' authority is not just for inside the Church among Christians. There is nowhere in all of existence that Jesus does not have authority. It's also not that Jesus has authority to tell the world to repent and how to act; but He also has authority in His church to tell her how to worship. We can't just do whatever we want in the worship of God. His authority is here, there, and everywhere.

One final contrast of the two events: one shows that now is the time of outpouring of grace and salvation in the world, the other was a sign of judgment on 1st century Jews. Of course the wedding was a Jewish wedding, but I see it as representative of the world, as it is outside of the temple, and placed in contrast with the Jewish temple events. So up to the 1st century, nearly everything of God's revelation belonged to the Jews – the promises, the covenants, the prophets, the temple, the Scripture, etc. But after the time of Jesus the gospel now goes to the nations – salvation belongs to the world. The nations will flow to the mountain of God as Isaiah 2 says. The Matthew 28 "Great Commission" – go and make disciples of all nations. As gospel blessing advances throughout the world, so will judgment and destruction on everything that is not of Christ. 1st century Judaism had become a carnal outward religion devoid of the Spirit of God, and they set themselves up against God's anointed, and had to come down. They killed the Messiah. And it isn't just them. Everything in the world that is not of Christ will be judged and brought down, as the gospel advances. Even in your life, and my life, as the gospel advances in us, everything that is not of Christ will be driven out. These two aspects of these events go together: our joy and celebration in Christ, and our cleansing and purification. Let's now move specifically into our passage at hand.

Let us first notice the sin taking place. Jesus comes to the temple and finds that it is filled with busy commerce – buying, selling, trading, currency exchange. All of this was going on in the temple – that's the real issue. Certainly there were those

participating in shady dealing, dishonest weights, and theft, as the other accounts bring those things out. But I believe that John's main purpose here, is to emphasize, that they shouldn't even be there. It's not simply that they should be more ethical in their commerce, though they should, but it's that this should not be going on in the temple of God during Passover!

The Passover commemorated the night the angel passed over the homes with the blood of the lamb's on the doorposts while the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. Through that Israel made their Exodus out of Egypt. This was to be a time of commemoration and thankfulness to God for what He did for them. Instead it became about them. What was to be a sacred place of worship had become commercialized. D. A. Carson says that, *"Instead of solemn dignity and the murmur of prayer, there is the bellowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep."*

The problem is that their hearts were dead hearts of stone, and it showed by what had become of their worship. Instead of being a house of sacrifice and prayer, it had become carnal. Consider your own heart. Is there true spiritual worship? Or are you dead inside? Are the outward forms of worship in church just outward, or is your heart zealous for God? You see, because they were carnal they brought things into the place of worship that did not belong in the place of worship. Obviously there is nothing wrong with trade, commerce, and profit, but it doesn't belong in the worship of God. We can definitely see a case for the Regulative Principle of Worship here, which I believe in. When it comes to the worship of God we are to do just as God has commanded. We don't bring something in to the worship of God that God has not authorized us to bring. But even when we follow the Regulative Principle of Worship, our worship can still be defiled, because of what's on the inside. So examine your heart. Go to Christ Jesus for cleansing and washing, that He would renew us and purify us.

Judgment/Cleansing

Let's consider now the judgement, or cleansing, that Jesus brings here. The sales were likely taking place all throughout the outer court of the temple,

which had an area of 14 acres. That is a lot of space for Jesus to go through overturning tables with a whip, and driving out the animals and such. This shows that this was not some little temper tantrum or outburst of anger from Christ; but a hot, holy, righteous anger that was sustained, methodical, and divinely purposeful. It's really too bad that there weren't any "church growth experts" there to tell Jesus that this was not a good church growth strategy. You know that's exactly what they would say. They would applaud the commercialization because it worked to bring in so many people to the temple, and now Jesus comes along and drives them all out! What's Jesus doing?

Jesus drove out what did not belong in the temple. Jesus' issue is first and foremost not that they were being shady (though certainly many were), but that they shouldn't have been in the temple at all! His first concern is not what people will think of Him, but what God thinks of His worship.

What Jesus does here is a denunciation of worship that was not pure. The temple was to be about sacrifice to God, not about trade to man. Forgiveness from God is not something that can be bought or sold. It is something that is received as a gift.

"Zeal for your house has consumed me" is a direct quote from [Psalm 69:9](#). I find it absolutely fascinating that the disciples witnessed Jesus cleansing the temple and thought of Psalm 69. They were watching Psalm 69 play out right in front of their eyes. In Psalm 69 David is surrounded by his enemies. Those enemies who hate God, hate him, because of his zeal for the Lord's house. Is that not the situation here with Jesus in many ways?

Sometimes this is how Jesus has to cleanse our hearts and lives. The cleansing of the Lord can be painful; but we will be cleansed. It might feel like we are being whipped and our lives are being turned over. But sometimes that's what it takes.

Jesus drives out sin. He drives out our sin and overturns our lives; because our bodies are temples ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#)).

The truth is, you and I deserve to be driven out from the presence of God. We are defiled and impure in every way. Yet, it was Christ who was driven out, for us, in our place, so that we could be

brought in with God. That's the gospel. That's good news for people like us who are plagued with defilement and worship that is impure. Instead of being driven out with a whip by God, Christ was whipped for us. He bore the lashes. By His stripes we are healed.

In Mark and Luke's account of the temple cleansing it says that after Jesus did this, they were looking for a way to destroy Him. Here we see Jesus say, *"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again."* He knew what they were thinking.

Jesus is saying here that the resurrection is proof of His authority in the temple. His resurrection is the sign. The old Jewish temple was but a temporary shadow of the true temple that is Jesus Christ Himself. Since Jesus Christ has authority and power to raise up the true temple from the dead, so He has authority over the shadow of Himself. Similarly, if the resurrection is not true, we don't have authority to preach or teach, or call the world to repent and believe the gospel. But Jesus did raise Himself from the grave and so we do.

There is no sin or impurity or defilement in "this temple" – Jesus Himself, the true, final, and ultimate temple – yet sins will be put on Him and ultimate sacrifice will be made, as God judges Christ for us, and we are forgiven and free to dwell with God and He with us, through Christ His Son. The temple was the meeting place of God man. Where God dwelt among men. But in the New Heavens and New Earth there will be no building temple – because it is Christ. We have union with Christ, we are one with Him, and in Him does God dwell with us and us with Him.

The Disciples Faith

I find verse 22 incredible and strengthening to my faith in so many ways, yet I feel that I lack the ability to communicate the significance of this verse. When Jesus gave the ultimate sign of His authority in rising again, what did the disciples believe? The Scripture...and the word that Jesus had spoken. There are some today who say that we have the resurrection and that's all we need, we don't need all of the Scripture. How foolish and ignorant. The disciples witnessed the resurrection and it strengthened their belief in the Scripture!

If you remember, at the end of last week's passage after the miracle at Cana, in verse 11 it says, *"This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And his disciples believed in Him."* Then here, at the end of this account, the disciples believed Him. You see, for the Christian, it is His beautiful outpourings of grace and His righteous judgments that strengthen our belief in Jesus. I pray that that is true for you all today, or even that you believe for the first time.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Your words to me are life and health (StF 164)

Your words to me are life and health;
put strength into my soul;
Enable, guide, and teach my heart
To reach its perfect goal!

Your words to me are light and truth;
From day to day I know
Their wisdom, passing human thought,
As in their truth I grow.

Your words to me are full of joy
Of beauty, peace, and grace;
From them I learn your perfect will
Through them I see your face.

Verse 4

Your words are perfected in one,
Yourself, the living Word;
print Your own image in my heart
In clearest lines, my Lord.

Words: George Currie Martin

A prayer of blessing

Guide us o Lord to be the Salt and Light in the area
in which we serve. Thank you for the good health
and friendships. Amen

John 2:13-22

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After 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.

Materials provided by Rev. Manoa Ratubalavu

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