

My Father's House

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Date: 23 February 2020

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bible with you, please open it up to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John, we're in chapter 2 this morning. We're continuing on through the story of Jesus as told by John the Apostle.

Last Sunday, we saw how Jesus did an amazing miracle behind the scenes at the wedding in Cana. Turning water, and a lot of it, into not just wine, but better wine than the good stuff that they had already been drinking.

And it was a gracious miracle and a wonderful display of power that he did there. Well, this morning we continue the story, and we're picking it up in verse 12 of chapter 2.

After this, after the wedding, he went down, Jesus did, to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

Verse 13. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. So not too long, they stayed in Capernaum, another town.

[1 : 22] And then the sense of the text here is that very soon after this, the Passover was near. And so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now, Passover was a really big deal.

And so it's a little bit tricky for us to maybe get our heads into that mindset. I'm not going to go into explaining the whole significance of the Passover. But basically, it was the time of the year where they commemorated how the Lord had delivered them from slavery in Egypt.

And led them out. And the Lord actually commanded that they remember this every year on a specific day.

And so they did this. They celebrated the Passover. And not only that, but there was a whole week of festival that followed the Passover called the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

And it was very common for many of the people to go up to Jerusalem and to celebrate and commemorate both of these things there in Jerusalem.

[2 : 30] So imagine Jerusalem, this city. They estimate about 2 million people at the time. Good-sized city.

Imagine the roads coming into Jerusalem jammed with people from all over Israel. They've packed their bags up. They've got their animals saddled, whatever they had, carts.

And they're all making the trek up to Jerusalem to celebrate and to commemorate the Passover and the festival which followed.

Well, Jesus was among those who went up. And to put this a little bit into perspective, too, this was not just the local people in Israel that were coming to this. It was common that Jews would travel from all over the Mediterranean world to be there for Passover.

This was like one of the big holy days, holy festivals of the year. And so just picture those entrances, those streets, those main roads coming into Jerusalem full of people.

[3 : 37] And the city of about 2 million just swelling with the influx of visitors, people from all over who had come to take part in the festival and to celebrate the Passover.

Well, Jesus was one of those people who went up to Jerusalem and his disciples went with him.

And we'll get to that in a moment. At some point in his time there, Jesus goes to the temple.

And I want us to try to imagine a little bit of what this looked like. It's hard for us because it's hard to envision what does the temple even look like.

I mean, it's not even there today. It's been destroyed and the temple mount has got other things on it right now. But to give us a little bit of a visual and just help us, we're going to watch just a short video clip here.

Some guys have put together a bit of a 3D rendering just to kind of give you a sense of what it looked like or may have looked like on the temple mount. And in this clip, you'll see that the courts,

the temple courts are empty.

[4 : 48] There's almost nobody in them. I want you to imagine them just jammed full of people. This is the Passover. People were there. So let's watch that. Verse 14.

In the temple courts, Jesus found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.

So these people were there. And of course, they were offering a service to those who came, especially at this time for the Passover. Those people who were selling cattle, sheep and doves, they were offering these for sale for sacrifices to the Lord.

That was kind of the main purpose of those specific animals. And those exchanging money, sitting at tables. At the temple, there was a very specific currency that they accepted there.

And of course, the Roman Empire was made up of all kinds of different nations that had been conquered, each with their different kinds of currencies and stuff. And they only accepted one at the temple.

[5 : 59] And so that's what the exchangers were there to do, was to change their money into the kind accepted at the temple for offerings, as well as for purchasing these animals.

So this is what Jesus, it says Jesus saw and found as he entered into the temple.

People selling and people exchanging money. Verse 15. So Jesus made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle.

He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves, he said, Get these out of here.

Stop turning my father's house into a market. Stop turning my father's house into a market. His disciples remembered that it is written, Zeal for your house will consume me.

[7 : 09] So Jesus comes into the temple courts, and it's full of people, and his attention rests, comes to rest, on those who are selling animals and those who are exchanging currencies.

And then he does what probably nobody was expecting. He makes a whip, and he begins to untie the animals, set them loose, and drive them right out the temple gates.

In fact, it says he drove all from the temple courts, and probably the sense of that, depending on your translation, is that he drove the sellers out as well. I don't think he used the whip on them.

I think that was for the animals. All out from the temple courts, including the sheep and the cattle.

He sends the coins of the money changers flying and flips their tables and tells them to get out.

Get these animals out of here. Can you imagine what this might have looked like in that moment?

[8 : 26] I mean, this place is packed full of people. What are Jesus' disciples thinking as they watch this? What are the rest of the people that are just there, you know, for whatever reason, thinking?

Last Sunday, we saw Jesus working a miracle behind the scenes in a way that didn't draw attention to himself.

Here, what Jesus is doing is drawing the attention of everyone. You can just see the expression on their faces, wide-eyed.

Look at him. What is he doing? Look at him. This would have been something to see.

But of course, the big question is, why is he doing this? Why is he doing this? We get one line from Jesus' mouth that really captures the whole thing.

[9 : 38] the whole reason. John tells us that he said this, get these out of here with reference to the doves or the animals. Stop turning my father's house into a market.

Now we'll pass over the fact that Jesus has just referred to the Lord God as his father. It doesn't seem that the people really reacted to that in this moment.

They're going to react to it in a few chapters. We'll get to that. We'll talk about it then. But the main reason that we see has to do with this place.

This is my father's house. This place is holy. This place is holy. And you guys, in what you've done here, are profaning it.

What you're doing is dishonoring to him. This is hard for us to get our minds around. We don't have a temple that we go to. But think about it.

[10 : 56] I was trying to think, how can I really capture this, the significance of the temple in just a couple minutes. I mean, it all started back in the Old Testament with the tabernacle.

This was the arrangement that God had made, this tabernacle, so that he could be among his people. They traveled around with this.

They set the tent up. The presence of the Lord would come down upon this tabernacle in a thick cloud and glory. And God lived among his people and his people among him.

This was the place where they could have relationship with him, where they could come near to him. The place that they offered sacrifices, which God said were required because of their sin in order to be close to him as a people.

This is what is required. Blood sacrifices. God gave all kinds of commands as to how this was all to work.

[12 : 04] There was kind of different parts of the tabernacle that they could go into. And if you wanted to be in the most holy place, you had to be the high priest.

go through all these cleansing rituals that God prescribed and all of this to illustrate his holiness. I am holy and you, my people, are not.

And so there is, there are things required and we can only get so close. But the whole purpose of this tabernacle is relationship. For God to be with and among his people.

And later on, the stuff of the tabernacle got transferred into the temple. A more permanent house. David was the one who came up with the idea to build a permanent dwelling place for the Lord among his people.

And the Lord put his presence upon the temple just as he had with the tabernacle. And, and they saw his glory descending upon it saying, yes, my name is here.

[13 : 24] This is the place on earth where I will dwell among you. And so just think of the significance of this place.

It's not the same temple. There's been a destruction and a rebuild. But the significance is the most important part. What is this place all about?

Jesus says, this is my father's house. This is the place where God, Yahweh, the Lord Almighty, has chosen to dwell on earth where people may come close and approach and be near.

This is a special place. This is a sacred place. And how should we feel as we walk up through the gates into the temple courts?

the closest analogy I could think of was Moses in the burning bush. Hopefully you've heard that story before. Moses saw a bush that was on fire, but it was not being burnt up by the fire.

[14 : 38] The fire was actually the Lord's presence being made manifest in that bush. And the Lord spoke out of the bush to Moses and said, don't come any closer.

Take off your sandals. The very ground where you're standing is holy. Why was it holy?

Not because the ground was somehow special, but because of its closeness to the Lord's presence. That's what made it holy. And Moses in that story, it says, he was afraid and he hid his face.

There was a deep reverence and awe. I am close to God himself, to his presence right here in this bush. This is the kind of feeling that we're meant to have as we come to the temple of the Lord, the place where his presence is made manifest.

We're meant to be filled with awe, not just at the size of the pillars and at the expensiveness of the gold overlay, at the glory and wonder of this structure.

[15 : 55] It was built like that to reflect that the Lord, whose temple it is, is great and glorious and worthy and beautiful.

this is the place where he has chosen to put his presence on earth. And so we ought to come into this place with a deep reverence and respect.

What does Jesus find when he comes into the courts of the temple? One commentator said it really well. this place of solemn dignity, this place where the murmur of prayers should be heard, of holy adoration, the place where people are pouring out their hearts to the Lord in brokenness and out of a contrite heart had been turned into a marketplace, a place of business.

instead of the sound of prayers being heard, you could hear the sound of people heckling over prices and exchange rates, the bellowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, people doing business. Jesus says, stop turning my father's house into a marketplace. You've turned this holy place into a common place.

[17 : 41] You've profaned it. Get out. Stop it. And he chases him right out the front gates.

I can just imagine that righteous anger that he had in that moment.

Flipping tables. This is such a contrast to the picture that we often have of Jesus the gentle man holding the sheep in his arms.

But it's beautiful. It's glorious. He has this love for God like no one else does.

I mean, here's one man going around this huge area doing all this. And he doesn't seem to care about what anybody else thinks there.

[18 : 49] Not the crowds, not the people in line to purchase things or exchange money, not the people doing the selling. He doesn't seem to care about the temple guards or the religious leaders or the Roman garrison that's probably overlooking the temple courts.

He only cares about what one thinks, God, his father. God, how dare you do this in his sacred holy place?

It's beautiful. one person remarked that Jesus was alone as he did this.

It was just him, but that he likely had an ally in the consciences of the people. That even as he said this, you know, people are thinking, yeah, you're right.

this isn't right, what we're doing here, yet no one else would have done it. Jesus, God's son, he came and cleaned house.

[20 : 13] His disciples, verse 17, remembered that it is written, zeal for your house will consume me. Now, I'm not going to go into detail about that, but it's the words from a psalm.

David had said a similar thing in a song. He was passionate for the Lord's house. It hadn't been built yet, but he wanted it to be. And perhaps he took criticism for it.

We don't know exactly the situation in the psalm in which he wrote those words, but his disciples kind of drew the connection, whether they remembered it right there in that moment or sometime after.

Look at the passion, look at the zeal that he has. For the house of the Lord. Just like David did. He is the son of David.

He is the Messiah, the one who will take up the throne of David. The Jews then responded to him. Verse 18.

[21 : 18] What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this? the Jews are probably a reference to the religious leaders rather than to the whole lot of people there.

But they challenged Jesus. Like, who gave you the right to do this? Who put you in charge here? That's what Jesus has done. He's basically taken charge here at the temple of the Lord.

Lord. So, if you're going to do this, who are you? Are you some kind of prophet? Show us a sign to prove that you have the authority to do this.

This is what Jesus answered. Verse 19. Destroy 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, John tells us, the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

[22 : 38] So, the Jews, the Jewish leaders, they challenge Jesus and they demand a sign. Show us your authority to be doing this stuff here. Last we checked, we were in charge here at the temple.

And Jesus gives them a sign. But what a sign to give them. I kind of would have loved to just see Jesus' expression as he said it. Destroy this temple.

I don't know whether he gestured to his body or not. We don't know. Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days. That's the sign. And John tells us that all along he meant his body when he said temple.

That's what he meant. And so it seems as though even as he said it, he's intentionally concealing the sign with some kind of cryptic language.

This temple which it referenced to his body. You could think of it as almost like a riddle or a micro parable. They didn't understand it.

[23 : 47] They thought he was talking about the building. The first thing their minds go to though is not and this is interesting. I mean think of this.

If he's promising to give us a sign, what do we have to do to see it? We have to tear the temple down. Destroy it. And then I'll show you that I can rebuild it in three days.

That's what they're thinking. Like even that sounds crazy. Like who's going to tear this down so that we can see the proof? All along though he was referring to his body.

Their minds go immediately to the length of time. Not to the destruction part but to the length of time that he could raise it back up. 46 years it's taken to build this temple.

I mean you saw it in the video. Look at it. You're telling me that you can raise that back up in three days? It's not even really a question.

[24 : 51] It's a statement. You're out of your mind. That's ridiculous. That's absurd. word. But that's not what he meant.

He was referring to his body all along. It was intentionally concealed in that language so that when the sign was fulfilled and he was raised from the dead three days after being destroyed on that cross they would see.

They would realize yes he does have the authority to do what he did here at the temple. It wasn't until after that even his disciples realized that that's what he meant.

After he was raised from the dead his disciples recalled what he had said. then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

And we might wonder for a moment which is harder to raise this whole temple building back up again in three days or for a body that's been absolutely destroyed and has died from suffocation and loss of blood with a spear piercing through into the heart and then lying dead in a tomb for three days to be raised back to life which is harder.

[26 : 33] I think that kind of gets to the point of what Jesus is saying. It's impossible. Only an act of God could do this.

God will be offering them the ultimate sign. But will they remember it when he's raised from the dead?

John sums up this whole section of Jesus being there in verses 23 to 25. Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name.

But Jesus would not entrust himself to them for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind for he knew what was in each person.

So the week continued, the Passover festival. Notice that it says many people saw the signs, plural. This wasn't the only one, this cleansing of the temple.

[27 : 42] There was more things that he did and many people saw them and believed in his name. And there's all kinds of questions here. Did they believe genuinely or just superficially?

How come he didn't entrust himself to them? What does that even mean? In what sense does Jesus know all men and know what is in man?

I don't have the answer to all those questions. But I think one thing is clear. We do see that somehow Jesus knows things that only God can know.

I mean, he's just predicted his own death and three days later resurrection from the dead. He knows things about people that nobody except God could know.

he saw and knew that about Nathaniel sitting under the fig tree and we're going to see more of this kind of thing throughout the gospel of John. What's the significance of all this?

[28 : 47] John is giving us signs. He's showing us the things that confirm that Jesus is who they're all discovering him to be through this story.

He knows these things because he is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the Son of God. He is God.

And the cleansing of the temple is another sign. It's another pointer that he is as well.

Back in the Old Testament times, the glory of the Lord came down upon the temple. In a very real sense, that day as Jesus walked into the temple, the glory of the Lord could be seen shining out.

Do you see it? As he flips the tables and cleans house and gets this stuff out of there. Do you see that love, that passion for God burning brightly in that moment and for God's glory?

[30 : 05] I think if John the apostle who wrote this was here today, his main question to us would be, do you see the signs? Do you see what he did that day at the temple?

Do you hear what he said about his death and resurrection? Do you see these things about how he knew things that no one, no ordinary human being could know?

Do you see the signs? Do you believe? Do you believe that he is the one? That's what this is all coming back to.

His disciples saw it. They saw it when he was raised from the dead, ultimately confirmed. It says, then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Do you see it? Do you believe? the last thing I want to touch on here, something that just really struck me yesterday as I was thinking about this, is just this whole idea of reverence.

[31 : 21] Jesus comes into there and he cleans house and what were the people guilty of? they were guilty of turning the holy into a common place, a marketplace.

They were guilty of irreverence at the place where God's presence dwells. Irreverence. It got me thinking, how often do I come to the Lord and approach him, even in prayer, with a lack of that deep reverence, that he is the holy one.

I'm coming into his presence to speak with him. I started to feel convicted. That's probably just the tip of the iceberg. There's probably all kinds of habits and things that I do in my life in which I don't show a deep reverence for God.

Jesus shows it beautifully how we should think what our attitude should be towards the Lord.

And praise the Lord that Jesus is the lamb who takes away our sins, who cleanses us, who forgives us of those things, those ways in which we have been irreverent.

[32 : 49] But may the Lord show us as his people more and more how we ought to respect him and revere him and treat him as holy in our everyday lives.

Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for this little glimpse into what happened that day that you've given us in your word.

And we pray and ask that you would come and search our hearts and know us. Know our anxious thoughts, know our irreverent habits.

We ask that you would forgive us for the ways in which we have not revered you, not feared you as you deserve. Teach us to live the way that we ought to.

Help us to see your glory so that we might be gripped with a sense of awe for who you are.

[34 : 04] A sense that really does lead us to live different, Lord. Do this work in our hearts, we pray, and we ask this for the glory of your name.

Amen.