

Journey to the Cross: Passion Week – Monday

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[0 : 0 0] I do want to make mention we had an elders retreat this weekend and I want you to know it's congregation that our men broke up our just our congregation list and we spent a good deal of time praying over you as individuals and families and it was just a really sweet time to be able to labor for your families in that way and so these men they love this flock they love you they counted a high privilege and responsibility to serve as your shepherds and it's a delight staff and elders together in that way so go ahead and turn open to Luke chapter 19 we've got a short section of verses we'll be looking at here this morning verses 45 48 let me pray for us and then we will get into our study together as the psalmist writes I lift up my eyes to the hills from where does my help come my help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth Lord we acknowledge that we need help this morning in many different ways and so we ask for your provision for your activity for your presence in our lives Lord whatever needs are present here this morning Lord would you show yourself good and faithful and meet those and so

Lord if there are folks here that they need encouragement would you provide that if they need conviction that you would accomplish that Lord thank you that you provide everything that we need through the gift of your spirit in dwelling us and the gift of your word instructing us and Lord we delight to begin this week seeking your face gathering to worship might you delight in our worship this morning it's in your name we pray Lord Jesus amen well in our study as we've entitled it journey to the cross Jesus he has just entered into Jerusalem as we looked at last week we call that Palm Sunday and we are now in the final week of Jesus's life and we call that week passion week why do we refer to that as passion week this word this word passion it's often associated with this idea of desire or longing but actually in the Latin Paseo this word originally meant to endure suffering in the Latin there's a word for romantic love cupidose we get our word cupid from but this word passion has to do with enduring suffering and so we call this week passion week as Jesus walked the via del Rosa and that way of sorrows enduring the cross and he did that for the joy that was set before him this week passion week is the culmination of God's master plan to rescue mankind to crush the head of Satan that serpent prophesied all the way back in Genesis 3 and we find ourselves as we read Scripture that this book is actually one story God redeeming a people for himself and

Jesus being the apex of God's rescue story and I love what this word passion means that Jesus endured that Jesus he did this thing intentionally Jesus did not accidentally get himself executed it was purposeful it was his passion and so this word passion it's a wonderful word to describe Jesus final week emphasizing God's willingness to suffer but also his sovereignty this was his choice in order to heal well this morning we're gonna consider just one event that appears to have occurred on the Monday of this week and so let's read together Luke's account in Luke 19 beginning here in verse 45 and he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold saying to them it is written my house shall be a house of prayer but you have made it a den of robbers and he was teaching daily in the temple the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him but they did not find anything they could do for all the people were hanging on his words the first question or actually let me make a comment on this this event first this is not the first time that Jesus has done this has cleansed the temple in fact we have in

Luke chapter 2 it's recorded that at the beginning of his ministry he went in to cleanse the temple and then here in this in Luke in the synoptics Matthew Mark and Luke we have this second cleansing at the end of Jesus ministry and I don't think it's insignificant that this event occurs twice in his ministry really the book ends of Jesus earthly ministry Jesus cleansing the temple and I think it highlights for us two priorities that God has for his people of every age and so we're just going to work through this narrative and consider both of those priorities and then try to see how this fits perhaps in the in the in the week this final week of Jesus's life so let's begin here in verse 45 in the first part it just says and he entered the temple he entered the temple and the first question that I have is when did this actually occur because as you read Luke Luke is a bit ambiguous he doesn't actually give us the timing of this event Luke also has the most concise record of this event his description is very tight we have to actually go to the Gospel of Mark which shed lights for us on the on the how this event fits into passion week and Luke is the shortest of the Gospels he doesn't record all the teachings of Jesus but he's very tight on his organization of the events so let me get just a little nerdy here I promise to be concise and hopefully you'll find this you'll appreciate this but within Mark we learn that Jesus he enters Jerusalem in Mark chapter 11 Palm Sunday that evening Luke Mark records that Jesus went to the temple and I want us to think of that as sort of a reconnaissance trip that Jesus made there's no commotion and then it says in Mark that he then retires to Bethany with the Apostles and then Mark picks up the narrative in Luke 11 verse 12 where he says then on the following day so he gives us a cue on when this event happens of Jesus cleansing the temple he says on the following day and then Mark picks up in Mark 11 15 the temple cleansing story so we know from the Gospel of Mark that this event occurred on Monday problem solved not really there's an additional account where Jesus curses a fig tree and Luke says nothing about it and then we have an issue in in in in Mark and in Matthew because Mark says that the cursing of the fig tree it happened Monday morning before Jesus enters into the temple to cleanse it but Matthew records the Jesus cursed the fig tree after he cleansed the temple let's just close our Bibles contradiction not trustworthy I'm out of here what's going on let me give you a short answer to help reconcile the records that Mark and Matthew have that Luke says nothing about Mark writes primarily to Gentiles to the Greek mind and he is far more concerned with the chronology of events Matthew his audience is primarily Jewish and he is far more concerned with themes in fact instead of being concerned with the chronology of events Matthew arranges his gospel around five discourses which also makes sense that Matthew is

the longest gospel because he records so many of Jesus's teachings they're different in the way they structure it because they had different purposes D. A. Carson probably the leading New Testament scholar says it this way chronologically Mark is more detailed if the triumphal entry was on Sunday then according to Mark the cursing of the fig tree right and the cleansing of the temple was on Monday Matthew has simply put the two parts together in a typical topical arrangement why did I take the time to tell you this because I had issue with it in my studies this week and I'm just sharing the pain of being an expositor of God's word because you want to be accurate but I actually share it here because all to say the gospel writers knew their audiences and they wrote accordingly and what I want us to note from this is this book it's trustworthy so when the critic says ah contradiction maybe we need to dig a little bit deeper now that that settled we can all rest I just sort of exposed you to this thing called the synoptic problem you had no idea about and now you understand you appreciate your pastors a little bit more let's consider the historical context of this passion week we know that there are three major feasts that the Jewish men were to celebrate by making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in fact Deuteronomy 16:16 tells us it says three times a year all your male shall appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose at the feast of unleavened bread at the feast of weeks and at the feast of booths they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed well guess what it's the seventh day it's the seven day excuse me feast or almost of unleavened bread in fact that feast kicks off on the Thursday approaching which is Passover and this feast of unleavened bread recall the Jewish people were required to clean their homes of leaven before being out of Egypt and it was symbolic of the removal of sin giving us a picture and a teaching highlighting that God desires a pure people and then Passover associated with this feast of unleavened bread the actual Passover it's it's it's really the defining story of the Jewish people celebrating the Exodus from Egypt and you can read about that in Exodus chapter 12 when the angel of death passed over the homes of the Israelites where the blood of the

[13:00] Lamb was painted on the door frame Israel was freed from Egypt in order to go out to the desert to worship their God they were delivered in order to worship whose story does that sound like ours and God gave us a picture of that in the Old Testament this is one story and it all fits together God is a genius in how he teaches us what Jesus accomplished for us as the Passover Lamb which we will talk more intently about when we get to the Thursday of this Passion Week but the thing that I want us to just to be aware of because of these feast days that this city Jerusalem during the Passover it would have been packed think of it as Times Square on New Year's

Ever gridlock on the freeways there were lines to get into line to get into the restaurant or the restroom all the Jews scattered throughout the known world would come together for these occasions scholars are all over the map in terms of the the population of Jerusalem and how big it would get conservatively the population would have grown three to five times so just think about the mass of people that were gathering in this city during this week and certainly the crowds are an inconvenience but they're not the problem Jesus addresses the real problem when he observes what is occurring in the place that was set aside for God to meet with his people he enters the temple and it says later in the second part of Luke 19 verse 45 he says and he began to drive out those who sold now Matthew gives us a little bit more color in in what occurs in Matthew 21:12 we have the record and he writes in Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple and he overturned the tables of money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons now when you have a lot of folks gathering in one place what else do you have you have a lot of wallets you have a lot of dollar signs you go down to the Soto district when there's a Seahawks game and there are vendors everywhere you go down there and there's no event the vendors aren't there because the world knows people know where there's people there's opportunity to make a little money and there are two enterprises that are profiting for those who have traveled to Jerusalem to worship

God and it's occurring in the temple we have two different groups first we have the money changers so every male 20 years or older was to pay a temple tax and you can read about that in Exodus chapter 30 verse 15 and the tax would have been a half a shekel and so if you came to town and you had foreign currency that didn't work you needed the closest thing to a Jewish shekel of the day and in this time in Jesus day that was the Tyrian coin or the shekel of Tyre and this coin was originally minted in the Phoenician city of Tyre and it's the only silver coin that Herod the Great actually minted in Jerusalem and that was the coin that the priests would accept as offering it was the only coin very clever to have proprietary tokens and the priests were so kind because they would provide a service you bring your currency and they'll exchange it for you that's pretty great how convenient but what a great opportunity for them to make a little bit of scratch in fact one historian says there was possibly a surcharge of 25 percent the second group you have the money changers you also have the merchants here says selling sacrificial animals right you go on these feast days and as Deuteronomy 16 says you don't come empty handed you come to make an offering to the Lord and then in Leviticus 14 we find that the appropriate offering would have been two pigeons or two doves and how convenient if you're traveling from a distance for you not to have to pack your own animals right stuffing the parakeets and the carry on you don't have to do that right you travel light you get to Jerusalem you get to the temple they will provide the sacrificial animals for you and I can guarantee you they're gonna charge you a premium could have been a nickel for a dove but no we're gonna charge you four bucks and no doubt if you took the time and were disrupted and brought your own no doubt when you brought them the priests would look at that animal you brought so well that's not actually certified that's not temple certified that's not gonna do but we'll provide one for you at a minimal fee so it reminds me of like going to the movie theater and you want that big thing of popcorn but you know you're gonna have to mortgage the house right but it's the only game in town so what do you do right put a loan on the house and then you get your popcorn and enjoy your movie well this is what's going on here in the temple it's extortion no doubt the money changers the merchants the clergy the priests they were all taking a cut from this booming business and instead of the temple being this place where where a man was to come to meet with God to experience something of his presence it had become a place of commerce the outer courts of the temple must have looked something more like the floor of the stock market priests and scribes the commotion and here's the the hypocrisy because the priests and scribes they didn't mind the noise and the commotion because they were making money but listen to what Matthew says in Matthew 21 15 he says hey the

children crying out in the temple Hosanna to the son of David and they were indignant I don't mind the noise if I'm benefiting from this but those kids that ruckus quiet them down just the utter hypocrisy and so if Jesus had visited the temple the evening of the triumphal entry you have to imagine that he was just torn up all night before returning the following day to clean house and Jesus knows how to clean house Matthew 21 12 drove out all who sold and bought in the temple any overturned the tables we see like the full range of emotions from Christ this week right we saw his humility was he as he entered into Jerusalem and he's he's sitting on a donkey there's no fanfare then we observe him weeping over the city and now Monday you see this righteous anger the strength of God and he just he cleans the temple and no doubt it would have been a sight in the gospel of John on the first cleansing John records in John 2 17 his disciples remembered what was written zeal for your house will consume me referencing Psalm 69 9 no doubt crushing to Jesus as really he observed the gap that existed amongst what were supposed to be his people he saw the gap between true worship and what was occurring and in fact Jesus puts words to the gap that he observes in Luke 19 verse 46 Luke records saying to them it is written my house shall be a house of prayer but you have made it a den of robbers Jesus here is quoting two Old Testament prophets describing what the temple was supposed to be and what it had become and you see the gap what had it become well Jesus quotes Jeremiah 7 verse 11 has this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers the den of robbers what do you use a den of robbers for what happens in a den of robbers well it's where you store your stolen loot it's also where you plan and strategize your next event your next robbery your future crime and that's how Jeremiah described the temple and that's how Jesus describes what he is observing and it's really the polar opposite of God's heart for his people the extremes I don't know if this completely connects but I just I hadn't thought about this for many years at just the juxtaposition of what was occurring here but

I remembered as I was studying this week about when we had planted a church in downtown Bellevue and we found office space in downtown Bellevue and we set up the church office in this very small office building and right next door to us was an industry that was the polar opposite they had a website they ran that was not for anyone enough said and I remember man this is so weird like we're just accomplishing completely different things here they're putting out all this filth and we're trying to put out all this truth and so I was like we got to figure this thing out and so I was like let's do an office party and so we decided to do like an all office building lunch and we invited everybody I was like I just want to meet these guys and they showed up and I still remember the conversation because they come into our office space and they're like wow this is really nice what you've done and we had it set up you know fairly nice and they're like what is this place they had no idea what our industry was and I was just like waiting for this I'm like we're a church and he's just like he's like wow we're not it's it's humorous but it's heartache right it's tragic the temple that was supposed to be had become something that it was not supposed to be and I would say the first priority that God cares about that we learn about through

[26 : 05] Jesus cleansing the temple God cares about our worship this story is all about worship in fact that was the same issue in Jeremiah's day God's people their heart was far from God they gathered in the temple they claim to love God but their lives were anything but faithful to the Lord and in fact if you just kind of bump couple verses up in Jeremiah 7 before Jeremiah 7 11 beginning verse 9 Jeremiah writes you steal murder commit adultery swear falsely make offerings to bail and go after other gods that you have not known and then come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name and say we are delivered only to go on doing all these abominations

I would say practically for us church related to our worship I think it's a fair question to ask what tables need to be flipped in our lives to bring us back to a place of faithfulness and full surrender to Jesus because Jesus wants everything he wants all of us that we would have hearts holy devoted to him Jesus entered the temple and he intervened he saw what was taking place and it was an intervention it was a radical surgery that was taking place when he cleared the temple and that's the the essence of what Jesus says in Matthew 5 Matthew 18 if your eye causes you to sin tear it out get extreme what table needs to flip in your life in my life for God to have all of us are there areas that we have partitioned off and are we going to do something as radical as Jesus to go after the sin and there was a period in my life that I had found alcohol to be my refuge and then there was a day when I repented and I had to go and I poured all of the bottles out and it wasn't just oh I'm gonna I'm gonna I'm gonna handle this now some people can enjoy and great not this guy and I to tear out the eye and Jesus gives us this picture what tables need to flip in our own lives and I would say as we repent of sin forth God then accepts our worship and joy returns

I don't think there's a more miserable creature on this planet than a believer trying to hang on to their sin they know the Savior they know the truth but they're trying to live in two worlds and what sin eventually does it just makes us something unrecognizable I have that image of Gollum from from Tolkien's story we just hang on to that thing and it changes us and so I would say whatever you need to do do it to get right with the Lord if you're not right within this morning and by the way you don't you don't have to do that in isolation you actually have a family the church around you that would love to walk with you they would love to walk with you in fact you just saw some of the shepherds the Lord has provided this is not a group of men that want to condemn they want to say hey I want you to know the grace of God and I want to help you and encourage you so that we could walk together but let's get a little severe here with our sin let's be true to serpents let's be wise what what do we need to do what radical step you know if it's your cell phone that you can't handle as your nightstand a lot you know clock then go to target today and buy yourself a clock it's an old invention but they work and when you get home just leave that phone at the front door in a basket and you don't have to worry about if that's a temptation be shrewd as a serpent well what was the temple supposed to be Jesus quotes then from Isaiah 56 7 he says for my house shall be called a house of prayer this should be a place where men and women youth children they can meet with God they can experience something of his presence they can commune with the living God let me highlight a phrase that actually Luke omits but Mark includes and I think this is actually vital in this passage because the way that Mark records it in Mark 11:17 he writes that he was teaching them and saying to them is it not written my house shall be called a house of prayer catch this for all the nations which is in Isaiah's original prophecy all of this commotion that's taking place in the temple where is it happening well it's happening in the outer court in the temple there's four courts you have the holy place and the holy of holies right here in the center outside of that you got the court of the priest and then the court of Israel then the court of the women and then on the very outside you have what court of the Gentiles and that's where all this business activity is occurring in that court that place the only place that the Gentile the non-jew the unbeliever could come and learn who this God is that Israel worships this is where the nations were exposed to the God of Israel which has always been God's intent God intended the temple to function that way in fact if you read about the dedication of the temple Solomon writes in first kings 8:41 43

the dedication temple verse 41 likewise when a foreigner who is not of your people Israel comes from a far country for your name's sake for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand and of your outstretched arm and when when he comes and prays towards his house here in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you in order that all peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you church this was the place the Gentile the unbeliever was taught and encountered the living God and if you were to show up during one of these feast days now this passion week you saw this activity occurring around you what would you think about Israel's God the poor being taken advantage of pilgrims being extorted from and I would say the second priority God cares about and demonstrated as Jesus cleanses the temple it's not just our worship but he cares about our witness what sort of God does this reveal to the unbeliever what sort of gospel are the people coming to gather just dollar signs

I had a conversation with a new believer two weeks ago and he said to me Jay I have been suspicious about Christians and church and I'm still struggling because every time I go into the church I'm just wondering to myself are people being nice to me because they want my money it's a real thing no wonder Jesus cleansed house in righteous anger because it was actually this activity this commerce it was veiling God to the nations it was conveying something about salvation that it's something that you pay for if you pay enough then God will meet with you has some kind of undertones of Roman Catholicism actually right that coin in the coffer rings a soul from purgatory springs transactional but you can pay for it and I think it's a fair question for us today both when we are gathered as well as gathered how do we hide the gospel you know in our gathering what do people think of our God what do people think of what God has done in this in this gathering and in our lives when a person shows up and there's just there's there's a lack of hospitality they come into the into a gathering and no one takes the time or goes out of their way or has the courage to say hi are you new now I get it I've done that in many of you said Jay I've been here for like 30 years you're new so I get it that happens I think we're growing here church actually I think we are growing here but we have to continue to be thoughtful about this because how did you come to faith maybe it was through the witness through just the winsome presence and and hopefulness and and joy of someone else's life and and and so what sort of people are we when the stranger comes through our doors why do we gather do we gather to worship because that's another example or do we gather just so that we can network for our business for the thing that we want to to get out of life recall at a former church someone took our church directory and they sent mailers to every person in the church about their new real estate business great to do real estate but it it hurt the ministry of those of this person because people became suspicious why do you want to spend time with me all sorts of things that we could get into there I'm not going to talk about multi-level marketing I'm just we have to be careful like this is a precious thing that we have here and and we should know as people give us attention and time that there's a real concern for that individual for the heart of that person we can hide the gospel in all sorts of ways we can hide the gospel by majoring on minor things by never getting to the gospel we can hide it in

[39 : 04] our preaching we can hide it in our conversations let me tell you more about and talk about more about the social evils occurring or or the political things that are that are happening but never have those gospel conversations never talk about the goodness of God's grace and mercy and how you've seen it and experienced that day that week in your life that's encouraging when we remind one another that God is real and he's at work in my life and in yours I think we veil the gospel when we're unwilling to forgive a brother and I love that we're called to examine ourselves and and to make ourselves right before we take communion like God has built this in because some of us are stiff-necked and we would never go and make things right but God gives us these opportunities often I would say in a home if there's bitterness between a husband and a wife there's unforgiveness that just that veils just the beauty of grace to the children they don't encounter the gospel at home when an unbeliever's life crosses ours do they collide with the heart of a compassionate God one that desires that none should perish Jesus cleansing the temple tells us that God man he cares about our worship when we're together but when we're also apart and God is jealous for his witness that people would encounter the living God through coming in contact with our lives now did the leadership appreciate Jesus doing this were they like wow this is exactly what we needed not at all let's finish this passage verse 47 and 8 and he was teaching daily in the temple the chief priest and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him but they did not find anything they could do for all the people were hanging on his words

Jesus has expectations for those that claim to know him right and many in this place they wanted the benefits of God but they didn't really want to surrender their lives to him or offer the opportunity to the other individual they came in contact with you know it's interesting because in the other accounts it says Jesus was healing the blind and the lame like the goodness of God was on display and the leadership hardened their hearts and this event Jesus cleansing the temple it was a key catalyst and then moving the events forward to see Jesus crucified on a cross significant event let me end with this thought I think the greatest heartbreak of this scene is really that God was present he was present in his temple and those that should have recognized the Messiah they were too blind to see they saw the beauty of the temple Herod's temple was magnificent Josephus says he who has not seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building it was magnificent but who was the real temple in this story it was Jesus

John says in John 1 that in Christ the fullness there was the word it became flesh and it became flesh and it dwelt among us that Jesus he tabernacled among us that Jesus is the presence of God he is the radiance of his glory he's the genuine article and God's glory is standing right before these men and they reject and I would just end with this the worst decision you could ever make in this life if you don't know the Lord yet is to reject him Charles Templeton was the co-founder of the ministry youth for Christ they hired Billy Graham as their first full-time evangelist and Charles Templeton and Graham they led rallies together in America and Europe and actually many thought that Templeton was the more talented of the preacher of the two by the late 1940s Templeton rejected the faith rejected Christ then years later in 1996 he published a book and he entitled the book Fair

Well to God and it was around that time that Charles Templeton was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and he eventually died in 2001 I know about him because Lee Strobel writes about him in his book Case for Faith and Strobel asked interviewed him actually and asked him there at the end of his life what he thought about Jesus and this is what Templeton said he was the greatest human being who has ever lived he was a moral genius his ethical sense was unique he was the intrinsically wisest person that I have ever encountered in my life or in my readings his commitment was total and led to his own death much to the detriment of the world what could one say about him except that this was a form of greatness

Strobel writes I was taken aback you you sound like you really care about him well yes he is the most important thing in my life came his reply I he stuttered searching for the right words I I know it may sound strange but I have to say I adore him everything good I know every decent thing I know everything pure I know I learned from Jesus in my view he declared he is the most important human being who has ever existed and if I may put it this way he said as his voice began to crack I miss him with that tears flooded his eyes he turned his head and looked downward raising his left hand to shield his face from me his shoulders bobbed as he wept Templeton fought to compose himself and I could tell it wasn't like him to lose control in front of a stranger he sighed deeply wiped away a tear after a few more awkward moments he waved his hand dismissively finally quietly but adamantly he insisted enough of that tragic perhaps he came to faith at some point we don't know how to be so close to Jesus and yet reject him as a beautiful Savior that he is amen father we thank you for this story Lord for the reminder that you desire our whole hearts desire our lives you deserve our lives you're worthy of directing our lives Lord if we've been holding something back we want to repent of that today holy spirit search us know us spirit of God if there is a way that we have been living in some form of idolatry would you convict us and if there's some way that we have somehow been hiding the gospel in the way that we live maybe it's a sin of omission or a sin of commission a lack of seeing the other or maybe simply we just have been living with a critical spirit whatever it is it's that's hiding the gospel from others convict us so that we can repent and Lord we can align ourselves more with your heart Jesus and we can enjoy your presence and the work that you might do through us and Lord I want to pray for for everyone here Lord if there's some that don't know you and they've been contemplating and they're just they're wrestling I don't know that I want to lay down my life to Christ I I like things the way they are but I want a little bit of Jesus and if they're there Lord convict them today and Lord might they bow their their knee to you and cry out to you and ask you Jesus to to forgive them of their sins to clean them that you would be their Savior Jesus you demonstrated that you're God you lived a perfect life you died in our place you rose from the grave you demonstrate you got power over death so Lord as those in Christ we we just celebrate the fact Lord that regardless of what is occurring today today is still good and the future is so very bright we love you Jesus it's your name we pray amen