

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 September 2013

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons and the money changers sitting there and so on. So we find that after this wedding in Cana of Galilee that Jesus went with his mother and his brothers and his disciples to Capernaum.

Capernaum would be roughly about 10 miles from Cana. Cana was more up in the hill country and you go down towards the sea. Capernaum is nearer the shores of Galilee.

And Jesus seemed to make Capernaum his headquarters for the next good while. It was from there he seemed to be based. And that is why he said of Capernaum that it was going to be better for Sodom in the day of judgment than it was going to be for Capernaum.

A lot of people found that very strange to understand. But the point that Jesus was making was that he lived amongst the people in Capernaum.

He taught there. He ministered there. He healed there. He worked there. It was his headquarters for virtually close on the three years of his public ministry.

[1 : 16] And the vast majority of the people in Capernaum paid no attention to him. They ignored him. Many of them despised him. And that is why Jesus is saying he pronounced woes against Capernaum.

Because he said it is going to be better for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you. And the point that Jesus was making is that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah didn't have the privilege.

And they didn't have the light. And they didn't have the understanding that the people of Capernaum had. Because we remember that in Sodom there really was only Lot.

And Lot, although he was a good man, had compromised in many ways. And the only thing that Sodom had was the lone witness of Lot.

And it wasn't a great witness at that. And the prayers of Abraham. Remember how Abraham was praying that the Lord would spare Sodom? And he went right down to ten.

[2 : 24] Remember he said, Lord, if you'll find ten righteous there, will you save it? And the Lord said, for the sake of ten, I won't bring judgment. So we see there just how grim things were.

So that's a point that Jesus is making. And he's saying Sodom was in absolute darkness. It's going to be better for them on the day of judgment than it will be for you, he said to the people of Capernaum.

And you know, the same thing could be said for us as well. Because we have so much gospel light and gospel privilege. We've grown up in communities.

I know things are changing. And there isn't the same impact as there was. But we still have so much in the way of gospel privilege. And it's an incredibly serious and solemn thing to have the light, to have the knowledge of the light, to have the knowledge of the truth, and yet to turn one's back against it.

It is an incredibly serious and solemn thing. And so the Lord will say the same thing of us, that it would be better for Sodom in the day of judgment than it would be for Stornway as it is just now, because of the privileges and the opportunities that we have.

[3 : 43] If we don't accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. So, anyway, we find that Jesus is making his base there in Capernaum.

And then we find that Jesus, after he was in Capernaum for a few days there, he then went up to Jerusalem. And he went up to the feast of the Passover.

The Lord had given three Passover feasts that required all the Jews to make their way up to Jerusalem. There was the Passover feast, which was the main one.

And then there was the feast of Pentecost, and there was the feast of the Tabernacles. These were the three main feasts that the Lord required that the Jews would all make their way up to Jerusalem.

And we find Jesus, in his life, that he honored God's law. We find him doing this all the time, that he didn't set himself apart from the people. He, if the Passover was to be kept, he kept it.

[4 : 46] He did what was required of him, because he was a Jewish man. Yes, he was God, and is God. But he was a Jewish man as well, living in Israel.

And he did everything that the law of God required of him. And God required of his people that they would go up to Jerusalem, and that they would commemorate and celebrate this feast of Passover.

And so, this is what Jesus does. But it must have, I often try and think, you know, I'm sure we all do that. We try and put ourself into situations.

I wonder what it was like for Jesus, as he would be taking of the Passover. Knowing full well that this Passover, that had been begun, instituted way, way back in Egypt, was speaking all throughout the centuries about him.

And as he would be taking of the Passover, he knew that in another, this Passover, he would be saying, well, in another two, three years, I will become the Passover lamb.

[5 : 59] So, it must have been quite an extraordinary thing for Jesus himself, taking of the Passover. Something that was speaking historically and speaking now in the present with regard to where he was then of himself.

So, Jesus, he makes his way up to Jerusalem. But as was his custom, he went to the temple. He always did that when he went to Jerusalem. And when he went into the temple, he found there a scene which absolutely shocked him.

He was filled with righteous indignation. Because he found there that in the temple, instead of it being a place of worship, it had become really a religious market.

It had become a cattle market with a religious cloak over it. And so, he became utterly incensed. Now, this religious market was set up in the court of the Gentiles, which was really the outer court in the temple.

And this court was given or set there for those who were non-Jews who wanted to embrace the Jewish faith, who wanted to worship the living and true God.

[7 : 16] But yet, there was this separation and segregation. So, they weren't allowed beyond this particular, it was the court of the Gentiles. And it was in here that this cattle market was taking place.

And rightly, Jesus is incensed because here is this place. You could say if ever there was a place of evangelistic work, it was here.

And instead of Jewish leaders, spiritual leaders, talking to all those non-Jews who came in, seeking to know about the living and true God, that wasn't happening.

All that they were being offered was to buy, to purchase. It had become a trading place. And so, Jesus is horrified by what he meets.

Now, of course, what had happened there, I suppose, it's so often these sort of things happen. There was, if you could put an element of legitimacy about it, it had begun, and we can understand why it began, it would have begun initially outside the temple.

[8 : 27] And what would have happened is, because people would be coming, say, all the way from Nazareth, and they were coming down to Jerusalem to sacrifice. They were coming down to commemorate the Passover.

And it required having a Passover lamb, if you're going to keep the Passover. So, it would be very difficult to take a lamb, or in any of the feasts, to come all the way, the full distance, really, of the whole land.

So, what was happening was that people wouldn't take a lamb from home, but they would buy when they got to Jerusalem. And it made things a lot easier.

Now, of course, what we all have got to remember is that it was stipulated that what was worshipped, what was sacrificed, had to be perfect. There wasn't to be any spot or blemish on it.

And you can see what was happening. Not only were the priests and the religious leaders selling animals, but sometimes those who came and they brought an animal for sacrifice, the priests would have a look at it and say, I'm sorry, that animal is not good enough.

[9 : 42] I can see a little fault, a little blemish there. Sorry. And they would say, well, I've come all the way with this animal. What am I going to do? Well, let's say, you'll have to buy another one.

So, they would purchase a new animal. And then they would say, well, what am I going to do with the animal that I've already had? And the priests would say, well, I'll buy that of you. But he would give a rock-bottom price.

And then he would sell it on later, making profit. So, that had become a really corrupt whole money-making mechanism.

And this was all part of what really incensed Jesus. That here are the spiritual leaders who have no concern with spiritual worship.

All they're concerned about is lining their own pockets. Instead of coming to worship God. Instead of having the broken spirit, which is to God a pleasing sacrifice.

[10 : 39] Instead of having a sense of the holiness and majesty of God. All they were concerned about was, I want to make some more money. I wonder what kind of deal I can make here.

And so, there was this exploitation of the people. And particularly, the exploitation of the poor. Because it mentions not just sheep and oxen.

It mentions also pigeons. Now, we know that the dove or the pigeon, although it was set apart for particular sacrifices. If a person was really poor.

And they couldn't afford to bring a lamb or a sheep or an oxen or anything like that. They were allowed to bring a pigeon, to bring a dove. So, even for the poor people.

And you could see somebody coming. A poor person coming with this pigeon. The priest saying, ah, sorry. No. It's a wee spot on that. Can't let it go. And them having to buy another pigeon that they had.

[11 : 37] So that even to the poorest people, there was this exploitation going on. And Jesus, of course, was somebody who always had a heart for the poor.

For the marginalized. For those who were the victims of injustice. For those who were being put down. And let us remember this. That one of the things that God hates above all.

Is injustice and the oppression of people. You read through the Old Testament. I've said it before. And apart from idolatry. There was nothing that brought the judgment of God upon the nations.

And particularly upon his own people. Upon both Israel and Judah. But the injustice and the oppression of the poor people.

Where people had. Where there was no honesty within the law. Where everything had become unjust. And where people were being oppressed.

[12 : 39] Over and over and over and over again. You'll read it in the prophecies. That God is saying, I am coming in judgment. Because of the way those in authority are dealing with the people.

It's a serious thing. And I don't think we take it to heart as much as we should. God hates dishonesty. He hates injustice. Because he is altogether pure and just.

And he hates seeing it. Whether it is nationally. Or in any form within society. And this was part of what really went into the very heart of Jesus.

Where this righteous indignation. Pours out from him. As he sees his house. His father's house.

Being so abused. And instead of a place of worship. It has become no more than a money making market. And so. Jesus.

[13 : 40] Reacts. So. So. Incredibly. Against what's happening there. And of course. We see here. The fearful danger it is. Or how awful a thing it is.

When spiritual leaders. Have no heart. Have no soul. Have no spirituality about them. They are what Jesus says.

Wolves in sheep's clothing. They are there devouring. That's what wolves do. They devour the sheep. And that's what happens when. If you. If spiritual leaders.

Do not have God's grace within their heart. And. It's an extraordinary thing. I was speaking to a minister one. One time. From away. And I'm not.

Please don't get me wrong. I'm not. I'm not making. Making judgments upon people. But. Somebody who. In the course of conversation. Had no understanding. Whatever.

[14 : 35] Of the new birth. No. No understanding. Of salvation. In Jesus Christ. And. I. I. Said to. Do you mind me asking.

What. Brought you to go into the ministry. Well he said. I saw it as a really good job. Because he said. People need to be married. And people need to be. Buried. And he said. I saw it as a secure job.

And he said. I. Believe in the morality of the Bible. And. I think that's a great thing to teach. So. That is how he saw. But had no concept.

Or understanding. That I could. See in a course of conversation. That he. He knew anything. About salvation. In and through Jesus Christ. The need for saving faith.

And. If. If. People who are blind. Spiritually. Jesus says that. What hope is there. Of. If the blind. Are leading the blind. And.

[15 : 32] So. This is a situation. That. Was largely. In the land. At that time. Where people. The leaders. Were in spiritual darkness. They knew nothing of Jesus. They didn't understand.

His mission. They couldn't appreciate. His work. They were dark. Times. And so. We find that Jesus. Is. Incensed. And we find.

Here. This righteous. Indignation. Of Jesus. And we find. He reacts. And he makes. This whip of cords. And he drove them. All out of the temple. The sheep. And the oxen.

He poured over the. You know. People sing. Gentle Jesus. Meek and mild. Well. There is nothing. Of that. At this particular. Moment. Jesus is showing.

Now. Some people say. Is Jesus. Angry here. I believe he is. And people say. Well. I thought. I thought.

[16 : 24] Anger is sin. Well. Remember what the Bible says. Be angry. And sin not. Let not the sun. Go down.

Upon your wrath. So it is possible. For a person. To be angry. And not sin. Now. That is actually. Very difficult. For us. Because when we become.

Angry. Then other things. Come in. If we lose our temper. We have lost it. Because when a person. Loses their temper. Then they will say. Things that are wrong. They will do things.

That are wrong. And we can become. Irrational. And very often. Afterwards. People regret. When they have lost their temper. There is a big difference. Between being angry.

And losing your temper. God. Never. Jesus. Never. Lost his temper. It is a totally different thing. But there was our righteous. Anger.

[17 : 19] Which was our reaction. To the awful. Injustice. That was taking place. And the horrendous. Abuse. Of God's house. Jesus.

When he cleansed the temple. Just before his crucifixion. He said. If the same thing had happened. And he overturned. And he said. You have made the house of God. Into a den of thieves. A den of robbers.

And the robbers. Are in their den. Counting their loot. Hiding. And planning. Their next robbery. And that is what they were doing there. That is what Jesus said. That is what you are doing.

You are just planning. How to rob the people. In my house. The abuse was awful. And it brings us. To look at ourselves.

Because it is very easy for us. To say. Oh well that was awful. But we have to bring this. And look at ourselves. And say. When we come to God's house. How do we come?

[18 : 15] What is our motive for coming? Are our hearts seeking to engage with the Lord? Because remember. Ultimately. It is not about us. It is about Him. We come here in order.

To worship Him. To exalt His great name. To glorify Him. And we must seek to worship Him. In accordance with His word. You know.

This is. I sometimes feel. Part of our problem. Is that we have lost sight. Of who God is. And people say.

You know. You can worship God. Now I know. There is. You can argue. As long as the day is. About. About worship. And people have a lot of different ideas. But the one thing I am going to say. Is this. God is an infinitely holy God.

God is not like us. God has revealed Himself. In His Son. Jesus Christ. Who came. As one of us.

[19 : 19] But the fact of the matter. Is this. That yes. Jesus has come alongside us. He has become one with us. And that is one.

That we must never lose sight of that. And has enabled us. To worship freely. And our worship must be in liberty. And in freedom. But. The thing is this.

God does not want us. Ever. To think that He. Is exactly. Just like us. That He is like a. For usual.

Like a pal. Just somehow. You can just. It doesn't matter. You and I. We are just one. And it doesn't matter. It does. It matters to God. And if we read through His word.

We will see clearly. That it matters to God. God. And He brought down His judgment. Upon His people. For mixing. The worship. Where they were just.

[20 : 14] Where they were mixing. Some of the idolatry. From the other nations. They were taking stuff in. Here and there. And they were. Still keeping part of the old worship. It was a mixy moxie. Of things. God said. I am not having that.

That is an abomination. In my sight. You see. Our hearts. Have to. Have to be right. In Psalm 50. God accuses His people. And He says. You know. You know the big mistake you've made.

You think. That I'm just like you. And you think that. Everything is all right. What you judge is all right. That it's all right with me. There's a version of scripture.

Which says. Things that men. Highly esteem. Are an abomination. In the sight of God. And that is why.

The word of God. Must regulate our lives. In everything. And so. As we look at this. Cleansing of the temple. We've got to apply this. To ourselves today. To me personally.

[21 : 12] To you personally. Because the word of God. Tells us that. We are. Where's the temple today? Well we are. We are the temple. Of the living God. Our bodies.

Our minds. Our all. Are we living. To and for the Lord. Is the Lord. The Lord. Of my life. Has he come.

In. To this temple. It's a. It's a serious. And a. A solemn question. If so. Then we need. We need today. We in fact.

We all need. The cleanse. That's what we're singing about. In Psalm 51. Cleanse me. That's what David would say. David had so sinned. All of a sudden.

He was so convicted. Of his sin. Oh. He says. Against you. You only. Have I sinned. Lord. Cleanse me. Clean me. Wash me.

[22 : 07] Thoroughly. Right through. David. A man. After God's own heart. And that's what you and I. Need to do. We need to go to the Lord.

And we need to ask him. Lord. Forgive me my sin. Cleanse me from my sin. We have. We don't have. A proper concept. Of the heinousness of sin. I don't. There are moments.

We get glimpses. There are moments. We get glimpses. Of the holiness of God. And at these moments. We feel like Isaiah. Oh woe is me. For I am undone.

But it's only glimpse. Well for me anyway. It's only glimpses. And when we see something of that. It changes everything. And that's what.

Where Jesus is coming from here. Where he is seeking. To cleanse the temple. Of course when he did that. Very briefly the Jews. Time has gone. The Jews challenged him.

[23 : 05] And we can see. Obviously Jesus carried so much authority. When he was doing this. Nobody. They got up. They ran. He scattered. Everything was scattered. They are not saying. Hey hey. You can't do that.

There was such an authority. About his actions. Nobody said. Oh. But afterward. The Jews came to him. And said. Who gave you the authority. Really to do this.

How did you do this. What sign do you show us. For doing these things. Jews were always looking for a sign. Jesus said. I am not going to give you signs. I am going to give you the sign.

Of the prophet Jonah. When we are looking at the prophet Jonah. Remember. Three days and three nights. In the belly of the great fish. Here is another of the signs. Destroy this temple.

And in three days. I will raise it up. Jews couldn't make head or tails of that. Took forty six years to build. And you are saying. Destroy it. And I will build it in three days. But of course.

[23 : 59] Jesus was talking. About. The temple of himself. The sign. Of his authority. Was the cross. And the empty tomb.

That was. That's what he is talking about here. The temple. That he says. Destroy this temple. Destroy me. Put me to death.

And in three days. I will rise up. That's really what he is saying. And of course. It was afterwards. The disciples. Understood that very thing. Because it says that. Verse twenty two.

When therefore he was raised from the dead. His disciples remembered. That he had said this. Remember when Jesus. In the upper room. He said. You know when the Holy Spirit. Comes in power upon you.

One of the things. The Holy Spirit. Is going to do. Is to bring. To your remembrance. What I taught you. See an awful lot.

[24 : 55] Of what Jesus was. Saying. They weren't grasping. It was. Kind of passing them by. Couldn't. Couldn't understand it. Well Jesus said. When I rise from the dead. Holy Spirit. Is going to come in real power.

You'll remember these things. Well this is. This is an example of it. They remembered. Ah. The temple. That was his body. Put on the cross. The empty tomb.

Raised up. Three days. The Jews were always seeking for a sign. You know. There's still people like that today. And I say. You know. If I got a sign. I would believe.

If I really saw. If a message. Something came down from heaven. If somebody. Was raised from the dead. I would believe. No you wouldn't. The rich man in hell.

Thought like that. He said to. That conversation. Between heaven and hell. Jesus gives us. Oh. He says. I've got five brothers back at home. And I don't. I don't want them.

[25 : 53] To come here. Send Lazarus back. Remember the voice from heaven said. Supposing one rose from the dead. They will not believe.

They have Moses and the prophets. In other words. They have the Bible. They have the word of God. If you don't believe that. There is nothing else. If you do not believe. Who this word is about.

The living word. Remember. We're looking at that. At the very beginning. As we're looking at. First. John chapter one. The word. He is the one. He is the one.

That we must believe in. Then we see. Just in a word. That Jesus didn't. Trust himself to anybody. Because he knew. What they were really like. See. When he performed the miracle.

At Cain of Galilee. That was great. Because it helped the people. There was something. Oh. People were right behind him. When Jesus did things like that. When he fed the thousands.

[26 : 49] With the bread. Wine. Bread. Tangible things. Oh. That was great. But they couldn't. They couldn't. Cope. With a lot of his teaching.

And they couldn't cope with. His breaking of their man-made traditions. They could. There was so much. They couldn't cope with. And although he did many mighty miracles.

Down there. He knew. That their belief in him. Was surface. He knew. What was in people's hearts. That's one of the wonderful things.

As we'll go through. John will see the way Jesus. He knows people's hearts. He knew Nicodemus' heart. And he dealt with Nicodemus. According to how he was thinking. The woman of Samaria.

He could read her heart. And he dealt with her. According to her heart. The woman that was taken on adultery. That they were wanting to stone. Oh. Jesus saw her broken heart.

[27 : 45] And he dealt with her. Accordingly. And he saw the heart of the religious leaders. He was. Hard as stone. My friends. He can see your heart today.

He knows. What's there. And the one call. That goes out in the Bible. Is my son. My daughter. Give.

Me. Your heart. Well will you. Give your heart. To Jesus today. Let us pray. Oh gracious God. We pray that. As we have considered.

Your word today. We pray that this word. Will go right into our hearts. That we may realize. What a privilege. We have.

Of meeting together. Around this word. We pray that. We may indeed. Be. Regulated. By the word. So that their life. Will bring honor.

[28 : 41] And glory. To our savior. Grant us. Grace. Lord. For. All that. We have to do. We pray to take us. To our homes. Safely. Watch over us.

And part us. With your blessing. In Jesus name. We ask all. Amen. Our concluding. Psalm. Is. Psalm. Nineteen.

The nineteenth. Psalm. From. The Scottish. Psalm. The Baptist. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm.