A New and Living Way

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[0:00] two in the gospel of john continuing our series of studies this will be the last time we'll be in the pulpit for a couple of weeks we'll get visiting preachers so while i remember two weeks today is the dedication of mercy so we will be give thanks to the lord on that occasion on the 27th two weeks today of october family and friends will be here and as we give thanks to god's goodness to them as a family and the gift of of mercy and as they dedicate themselves to the bringing up mercy in the knowledge and grace of god so that's two weeks just to prepare you for that as well not the happy occasion looking forward to that very much let's read this passage we're reading from verse 12 last time a couple of weeks ago we'd harvest last week the week before that we finished looking at jesus first miracle his first sign that john presents to us where jesus turns water into wine now let's read what happens next verse 12 after this he went down to capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples there they stayed for a few days when it was almost time for the jewish passover jesus went up to jerusalem in the temple courts he found people selling cattle sheep and doves and others sitting at tables exchanging money so he made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple court 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 his disciples remembered that it is written zeal for your house will consume me the jews then responded to him what sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this jesus answered them 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're going to raise it in three days but 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 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 we'll end our reading at the end of chapter two let's come before god in prayer our loving heavenly father we thank you for the great privilege and the great joy that's ours now to consider your word but lord not word that relates to us specifically in the sense that what we should be doing but father as we consider your son afresh lord therefore we come with confidence knowing that you will want to glorify him in our midst so father help us to understand this passage help us to make much of jesus may the holy spirit himself be our teacher so father lead us and guide us until truth we pray we ask these things in jesus name amen i remember a number of years ago before i became a christian when i was wondering if there is a god uh various things were confusing for me here is one uh various other religions uh i thought what i knew other religions existed i knew but they all taught different things and i began to wonder did it really matter here are are some places of worship here i think they're all in london uh the top left is a a sikh temple a gurdwara and uh jewish synagogue in the middle uh do you know the one in the top right where that is liverpool yeah do you know what they call

that the locals call that they call that paddy's wigwam that's a that's a roman catholic uh cathedral in liverpool and uh i like the sense of humor uh for the liverpool they're quite similar to the scots that's paddy's wigwam and the top the top left and then uh middle middle left is a jw's and uh then you've sent her that was my last church right in the very center there baptist church uh hindu temple uh in the middle right and then you come down to a mosque and then mormons and then a buddhist temple uh all preaching different things different messages does it really matter what we believe as long as we are sincere that is what we are looking at this morning the centrality of jesus in our approach to god it's a very important passage and then that's what we're going to look at now we are continuing our series of studies in the gospel of john looking at jesus and if you're to get the best out of this series it's good to come to the gospel of john almost forgetting everything that you

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know but only what john reveals think of what he's just said think of what he's about to say because john is painting a picture of jesus each time something more about jesus it should cause us to go wow we are so familiar with these things the passage we read about the cleansing of the temple you know this and it's very easy to just switch off but think about what john is doing here we're considering john's gospel not matthew mark or luke john wants us to understand who jesus is he is the christ he is the son of god he is god's anointed he's not just a good man or a good prophet he is god's anointed he is all he wants to produce a response he wants us to believe in him and he wants us to have eternal life by believing in him that you may know that you have eternal life and these are the things that god wants us every time we gather to make much of jesus to trust in him and to know that we have eternal life that's that's the that's the agenda for every time we meet in sunday mornings and in sunday nights and we've already considered quite a few of these things right at the beginning of the gospel he is god he is the eternal son of god he came with grace and truth some received some rejected then in the last time we looked at jesus now mingling in public he's gathering a few disciples they are following him they've chosen to follow him they understand who he is could this be the messiah they're beginning to follow him and then we saw the first sign that john gives us that jesus is the messiah and we saw two things it's not just a trick water into wine it shows us his compassion of a wedding and uh just he ran out of wine and out of compassion out of embarrassment to save embarrassment from the groom and his family he does this but we saw last week or two weeks ago that this relates to the kingdom of god it is it is a picture of of wine quality wine uh great celebrations prophesied that's the way the bible tries to describe it's going to be a time of of of drinking that type of thing this great feasting picture a picture of heaven but not only that a better cleansing he turns ceremonial cleaning water into wine there is a new a better cleansing now not in a jar uh but through his blood we will remember communion we it's not wine it's ribena or whatever this is the color of it reminds us we are cleansed in this blood and uh there's a picture of that and not only that quantity of wine enough cleansing for all nations and we looked at that last time and we john summed it up in verse 11 that was the last verse we considered this was what the first of his signs that he did he revealed his glory and his disciples believed in him so they were beginning to discover that jesus is the lord's anointed time and time now what john wants us to do now in what he presents to us in the passage we read he wants to show us when it comes to worship when it comes to approaching god how do we worship god how uh as man and women and uh children reconciled back to a holy god we get something of this in the passage before us so what john begins by telling us in verse 12 we he doesn't tell us why they went to capernaum uh verse 12 that's what they did next he went with his mother and his brothers it's the last time his mother's mentioned in this except right at the very end of the gospel of john stayed there for a few days we don't know why but if you know your bible in the synoptic matthew mark and luke capernaum was basically jesus headquarters it was where he ministered from he would go out for the day and come back to capernaum so later on certainly it was certainly uh where he would minister from but he wants us to know notice right at the very beginning that things in judaism in the jewish religion were not good at this time and when jesus comes as the son of god as the messiah he comes to confront this and this is what's happening here when he cleanses the temple uh you would expect this he who is god who is holy who has put rules and regulations in place he comes and he now encounters things that are not right and he begins to do this so i want to note two things uh in the passage this morning two main things that jesus that john wants us to note first of all jesus cleanses the temple jesus cleanses the temple you see this in verses 13 through to 17 john begins verse 13 when it was almost time for the jewish passover jesus went up to jerusalem and john will mention he mentions the passover three times in his gospel john is very interested in the jewish feasts he mentions them and he mentions jesus involvement in them and uh when it comes to this verse 13 this is one all the commentators say the same thing in this of all the passages in the gospel of john this is the one that causes historians the most trouble because the the synoptic writers matthew mark and luke have jesus cleansing the temple at the end of his ministry whereas john has it right at the beginning how do we make sense of this well there's there's various possibilities that one is there was one cleansing and the synoptics were right it happened at the end didn't really happen at the beginning knowledge and that is true of jesus life he's more interested in the theology behind it so for fear that might well be the case we we do not know the other reason is this that john is actually right and the other three are wrong that happened at the beginning and they put it at the end because of their theological reason i think that's probably the one that's less likely than the rest the three of them have a different agenda the other option is that there actually was two cleansings

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of the temple and uh similar but not identical a lot of the commentators say that that is a possibility there could well be two separated by three years jesus did this at the start he did it at the end which signaled basically his death when he went in and did this they had had enough of him and so forth and over that three year period that that could well be the case two cleansings after all that the the synoptic writers have two feedings two mass feedings jesus was anointed more than once as well so we do not know the simple truth is we do not know whether it was at the beginning whether it's at the end whether there was one whether there was two we cannot say for certain but john presents that to us here but what we must note is what john wants us to see and what he wants us to see is that the religious life uh or obedience to god's word was not happening when jesus goes up to jerusalem look at verse 14 in the temple courts he found people selling cattle sheep and doves and others sitting at the tables exchanging money and there's no problem with this there's no problem in and and basically the markets the problem is where it's taking place not so much that it was taking place uh the whole point of having markets uh in jerusalem at that time for the passover was people were traveling a distance and for convenience they didn't bring all their animals with them from wherever they came birds or whatever it is they they would come with money they would buy their animals there it was more a convenient thing and it's the same with exchanging money uh there had to be the temple people over 20 males over 20 had to pay the temple tax but they had to pay it in a particular coinage it's the tyrian coin and it's it's that coin because that's got a high value of silver and it's purer in that form so that's what was done so you had these money changers they come with various currencies to the passover from various parts of the world as it were they have to change that money and the people who change it make a commission out of that and that is is the problem and jesus isn't against this uh he's not against these things happening buying these things exchanging money and so forth what he's against is where it is taking place it is taking place in in the the outer courts probably the court of the gentiles we touched on this when we looked at jonah uh and if that's the case it's very much well with this side the gentiles don't really matter they can just buy and sell uh and so forth and that is what angers jesus it is this whole turning god's house into a den of thieves verse 15 so he made a whip of cords it really is very dramatic and drove out from the temple all the temple courts both sheep and cattle he scattered the coins of the money changers overturned their tables those who sold doves he said get these out of here stop turning my father's house into a market that is the problem that is what they were doing not what was happening but where one of the commentators says this instead of solemn dignity and the murmur of prayer there is a bellowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep instead of brokenness and contrition holy adoration and prolonged petition there is noisy commerce instead of people praying and and seeking god there is this marketplace that is what jesus is against and uh they have turned uh the lord's house into a den of robbers john is possibly thinking of malachi here let me remind you of malachi chapter 3 verses 1 and 3 i will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me then suddenly the lord you are seeking will come to his temple the messenger of the covenant whom you desire will come says the lord almighty he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver he will purify the levites and refine them like gold and silver then the lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness those who have ears to to to hear and eyes to see this is now the lord come to cleanse his temple and uh and it's very dramatic and uh he comes with this burning all-consuming zeal for the honor of his father for the honor of true religion and it causes the disciples when they see this to recall psalm 69 verse 9 verse 17 his disciples remember that it is written zeal for your house will consume me they have yet eyes to to see and ears to hear this is the messiah this is the one who has come to cleanse his temple in fact what you see jesus doing here it's very similar isn't it to to mount sinai in the golden calf when they were worshiping in a way that was not worthy of god and the lord was angry at that time it is similar here as well you know one chronicle 16 29 ascribe to the lord the glory due his name bring an offering and come before him what comes next worship the lord and the beauty of holiness that's the word you have in duncan street baptist church if you ever go there i couldn't believe when i went back about 40 years it's still there i thought maybe painted over and put another verse it's exact same verse looks the same nothing wrong in that is there worship the lord and the beauty of holiness that's a great reminder isn't it when we come to the lord they'd obviously forgotten this and they were no longer doing this and what's happening here is the religious worship needs to be cleansed at that time and what's happening here his motivation uh jesus motivation his zeal has far-reaching implications for disciples then this is how they should live they should worship and also for us we too should worship the lord in the beauty of holiness i wonder if we're always aware of that when we come if

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that is your agenda when when you come we don't have those words worship the lord in the beauty of holiness but imagine if it was i wonder if that would regulate our worship sometimes if we're honest we come and we hope the songs are going to be good we come that that that we are served that that we have a good time and it's not necessarily that god is honored in his way that the songs we sing the lyrics challenge us they they they speak of of great biblical truths i wonder if we always see that as well or whether it's it's about us and about our needs do we come in personal prayer do we come in contrition remember the acts adoration confession thanksgiving or do we pray for this meeting before it begins uh do we pray when we are here do we seek god's face or do we just sing i wonder do we really worship or do we leave it to the singers to to do all we're thinking for us and the musicians and we just sing whatever comes our way we just well if they sing we'll sing if they don't really sing we'll really bother uh are we worshiping the lord in spirit and in truth is a worship real when we come do we seek the glory of god above our own blessing the honor of god will make us better worshipers every time we come we seek his glory so what jesus has done here is a challenge to us is there anything that we need cleansed from personally as a church lord i'm coming and there's there's so much rubbish in my life i'm coming i'm just sitting i'm not really well i don't really get changed i leave the way same way i come in may have a wee thought but that was about all never really worshiped you never really wowed and praised you for who you are never really thanked that's a challenge

[20:17] isn't it but also as well this shows us a zeal for worldwide evangelism if this was the outer court of the gentiles and this time they didn't matter we're okay jack here is as a desire for all nations to come to know jesus as lord and savior uh one of the commentators says this the temple of so many lives today which were created for the sole worship of god are polluted by the idols of sin we are created in the image of god and this vessel everybody was created to give glory to god and we live in a world where the temple of god is used for idol worship no interested church no interested in jesus no interest in god this should distress us you remember when paul went to athens he saw i see that you you are very religious you're given over to many idols but he was distressed when he saw this jesus was angry when he saw that god was not being glorified or recognized i wonder if you and i feel the same or do we think well we're saved we have a good sing song when we get together we're okay but family and friends it should distress us when we see people that do not know god or give glory to god and that is the zeal later on we might meet simon the zealot uh the simon the freedom fighter he was basically the ira of his day and uh he was zealous for israel at the time and uh prepared to to put his life on the line here is jesus zealous for god turning over the money chain i think it was me i might have said this isn't very good is it i might have spoken to somebody it's not great is it it's not great wandered away whether i would have done something and uh and that is really the challenge as well jesus didn't just lecture he didn't stand and just say hear me he truly i say to you you shouldn't be doing this he was so zealous he kicked over the tables and chairs and chased out all these animals i wonder if we are so zealous that it shows itself in deeds whatever that is writing to an mp or whatever or standing up for we need to be doing this uh zeal is not just here it is uh it shows itself in other ways so that's the first one jesus cleanses the temple a challenge then a challenge now secondly jesus replaces the temple very quickly uh the jews don't like this what sign do you give uh you remember paul says jews demand a sign they're a very practical people show us that you're the messiah show us what you're doing they didn't condemn jesus you notice for what he did in some ways they could understand it but they wanted to know what authority he had for doing this and jesus answers in a very puzzling way verse 19 destroy this temple and i will raise it again deliberately ambiguous what is he talking about 46 years this has been building in fact it's not even finished they're still working on it it didn't get finished until ad 63 but another 60 years later before this thing is finished and it doesn't last long before it's destroyed but it's still in the building and it's taken 46 years uh to that time and uh it's they just don't get it but john tells us in verse 21 exactly what jesus meant the temple he had spoken of was his body john is writing obviously after jesus death and resurrection he's looking back and he's saying that is what he meant at this time he's not just talking about the destruction of the temple but the destruction of his body but the most significant

thing in this what is jesus saying he's looking beyond the age of the temple and temple worship to a time when true worship will be offered through him his body broken for us his resurrection destroy this body and this body will be uh be uh raised back to life he is now the temple it's what jesus is saying here is is mind-blowing here is here's the image i showed you at the start this is exactly what

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you need to do next you need to put a cross over all of these things phil if you can stick that up there that'd be great uh the temple now passes into oblivion uh in that sense the temple is where god and worship worshipers meet that is the temple was then it is what all these other places are it's where sinners meet with god where do sinners now meet with god you don't have to come into western hails baptist church there's nothing holy i know you guys call this a sanctuary this is just a building this is just bricks and mortar these are chairs you can buy anywhere there's nothing holy no holy relics in here where do sinners come but where do they meet god they meet him in jesus he is the temple he is the temple and uh and that is what's happening here one of the commentators says this the action of jesus is more than an example of prophetic protest against corrupt religion it is a sign of the end of all religions wonder if you can grasp what's happening here the end of all these other religions there is only one way i am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me our religion is not one amongst others and they might be right and we might be right there is only one way it is through jesus that is the most important thing and the ironic thing is the jews here will bring about the sign that they asked for what sign do you show they will provide the sign they will crucify the son he will die he will rise again and that will be the sign that he is now the temple he is the place where sinners and god meet together and uh that is what paul will later talk about uh the church is the temple of the spirit god who made the world he says to the people in athens and everything in it is the lord of heaven he does not live in temples made by human hands one corinthians 6 do you not know your bodies are temples of the holy spirit you are the temple the holy spirit god the third person of the trinity resides within you who is in you and you have received from god and uh this is quite an amazing statement it's quite a statement that jesus makes because ultimately it's what crucified him you remember that not only the disciples remember he said this when he rose from the dead the religious leaders quoted this to jesus as a sign you remember in matthew 26 when they could not find any though they found many false witnesses came forward finally two came forward and declared this fellow said i am i am able to destroy the temple of god and build it in three days they remembered this this was a dramatic statement that jesus makes people they didn't understand that people today don't understand the importance of jesus as the meeting place of sinners and god and that's why you have all these other religions especially this bottom one i should have covered that up the the mormon one uh jesus christ it's got the word jesus christ but off the wall jesus is not the son of god just bonkers and uh whereas we know the centrality of jesus we know what he means and if you're a believer here this morning rejoice in the fact that you know this is the case it's one of the things i sometimes find frustrating is new members coming into membership i want i want them to say uh when i was at charlotte chapel did a wee tick box thing and the people who were interviewing the first question was do they have a clear understanding of conversion in other words you want them to say without putting words in their mouth how important is jesus to you you want them to say he's my lord and savior not that he's a good guy i walk with jesus i read about him every day oh these folk will do that a lot of them you need jesus as lord and savior and this brings me on to the last point very quickly john presents to us a faith that does not work john's whole reason for writing is that people believe and he's just told us that the disciples believe but then look how it finishes in verses 23 to 24 it now tells us about a wee group of people who don't really believe they profess to believe but they don't really it's quite dramatic these verses should really belong in chapter 3 when nicodemus that well-known passage uh but it's mentioned here and basically what's happening here is we are told in these verses verse 23 now while he was in uh jerusalem many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name now if that was here we'd be going whoop-de-doo party poppers yeah many people believed in his name next verse but but jesus did not entrust himself to them in other words there's a faith that you can have that is not saving faith that it's a vague view of jesus in other words they believed only because they saw the signs they weren't necessarily it's the same with the disciples they're still growing but they're accepting him as the messiah what do these people really believe in and it shows the importance of genuine faith saving faith next week we'll look at a couple of weeks time we'll look at how that comes about jesus will tell nicodemus how we see the kingdom how we enter the kingdom how we remain in the kingdom these people are not in the kingdom they believe because they've saw signs the best way to illustrate this is a bit like the try praying thing i love try praying because i i i prayed loads before i became a christian and that was advice i used to give others i should have started that organization because i used to say try praying for a whole year and a half i prayed and i saw many answers to prayer but i wasn't saved and i know i wasn't saved i didn't know the lord that was the same way i

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knew him when i became a christian when the holy spirit was given and i knew i was a sinner and i was converted i was born again from above try praying is but the first step yes get people to pray but and when they get an answer to prayer that's not the same as saving faith and they believe that god is there and he answers prayer that is not the same as being saved it needs to go deeper it's but the beginning it's better than nothing but it's but the beginning of a journey discovering who jesus is later on these people will say crucify him crucify him so believing in jesus is not enough the demons believe it's believing in him for salvation so that so new members you want not to say i'm a sinner jesus died for me i'm trusting in him as my savior what to do welcome brother welcome sister but as long as it's vague and jesus is out there and you believe he's real it's not the same and that is what is going to prepare now for the teaching of nicodemus if jesus is the way back to god if jesus is the temple where people meet god how does this come about that's what we'll look at and join two followers of god how what is a true disciple jesus will say to nicodemus you must and we'll look at that next time
let's close by singing our closing song this morning jesus our death christ alone christ alone christ alone what is our own that our souls to him belong who hold his hand what comes apart from his command and to the end the love of christ in which we stand oh sing hallelujah oh sing hallelujah now and every week and for hope in life and death oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh
The tears above the stormy trial, who sends the waves that bring to the shore, the rock of Christ.
[34:08] Alleluia, our hope springs eternal. Alleluia, now and ever we confess, hope in life and death.

And to the grave what shall we say? Christ he lives and for reward will heaven bring.
And with him there we will rise to meet the Lord. And we will be destroyed.
And we will feast in endless joy. When cry evermore. Alleluia, our hope springs eternal.
Alleluia, now and ever we confess, Christ our hope in life and death. Alleluia, now and ever we confess, Christ our hope in life and death.
[35:33] Let's close in prayer. Our loving heaven praise and thank you that there is a way, Lord, where sinful men and women can come before a holy God. We thank you that there is a way, Lord, in life and in death.

What a saviour, what a gospel you have given to us to proclaim to the nations. So, Father, of that temple years ago, Lord, we examine, Lord, perhaps even our own worship, Lord.
Do we will and in truth each time we come? Father, be with us now as we gather around the Lord's table to remember his death. We ask these things in Jesus' name.
Amen. Amen. Thank you, folks. Turn with me, please, to Hebrews 10.
I called that sermon a new and living way. Basically, a new and living way back to God. But I never quoted that in the book of Hebrews. And this is why we gather around the Lord's table.
[36:35] We gather here to remember the Lord. What this means is his broken body, his shed blood. This is our hope. Our hope is in Jesus. It is not but in his. So, let me read to you Hebrews 10, reading from verse 19 through to 23.

Therefore, to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way, open to his body. And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with and with the full assurance that faith brings.
Having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty cause with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess for he who promised unto the holy of whole.
I don't think we realize just how holy God is, how sinful we are, and how blood of Jesus Christ as our sacrifice to him. And that is what we do.
So, remember our sin. But we remember Jesus. We remember that his sin, his sacrifice is enough for our sin. I'm going to ask John if you'll lead us there for giving thanks for the bread that reminds us of our Savior's broken body.
[37:50] Lord, as we meditate on the crucifixion and your body being broken for us, we remember the crown of thorns.

That was for us. For our sins. For our guilt. For you, holy God.

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