

Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”: THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY (JOHN 2:13-22)

I. Introduction

II. Jesus Goes to the Temple (John 2:13-14)

- A. John 2:13 opens with the season of Passover.
- B. The eight-day festival of Passover...
 - 1. marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year (Ex 12:1-2).
 - 2. occurs in the spring, starting at the end of March and concluding early April.
 - 3. celebrates how God’s angel of death “passed over” the houses of his saved ones and freed them from slavery (cf. Ex 12:25-27).
- C. As the Law instructed, Jews were required to go up to the temple in Jerusalem on the Passover to worship God with sacrifices.
- D. Being pious Jews, Jesus and his disciples travelled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival.

III. Zeal for His Father’s House (John 2:15-17)

- A. At the temple, Jesus saw something that deeply upset him: “In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there” (v 14).
- B. Jesus made “a whip of cords,” and began driving out the money changers, traders, and animals from the temple grounds.
- C. He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturn their tables.
—This is no gentle Jesus, meek and mild, we’re seeing here. This is Jesus on the warpath. This is Jesus the heavenly Judge.
- D. As merciful as he is, God is still a God who is opposed to sin.
—Here we do not see Jesus the Bridegroom. Here we see Jesus the Judge (cf. Jn 5:22).

- E. This is the reason Jesus gives for his prophetic actions: “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade” (v 16).
- F. The disciples understood Jesus’ work in terms of Psalm 69:9: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”
- G. Jesus wasn’t against the sale of animals per se. He was attacking the doing of such things on the grounds of the temple itself
 - 1. D.A. Carson explains our Lord’s work this way: “Jesus’ complaint is not that they are guilty of sharp business practices and should therefore reform their ethical life, but that they should not be in the temple area at all.” (*The Gospel According to John*, 179).
 - 2. Carson adds: “Instead of solemn dignity and the murmur of prayer, there is the bellowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. Instead of brokenness and contrition, holy adoration and prolonged petition, there is noisy commerce” (*The Gospel According to John*, 179).
 - 3. Holiness requires protection.
 - a. If we want to guard the quality of our relationship with God, we must be zealous for that relationship.
 - b. We must not let sin or the cares of this world intrude.
 - c. We must zealously put aside the sins and fears that intrude.
 - d. Just as Jesus purged the temple, we must purge our lives of the inner corruptions that hinder us from praying and worshipping God.
- H. The source of Jesus’ own zeal was his own love for his heavenly Father.
 - 1. Jesus is the Law of God in human form.
 - 2. Our Lord’s example is a call to us to be zealous for our own purity and devotion to the heavenly Father.
- I. Why did Jesus opt for such a strict action in this instance? Calvin explains:

But it may be asked why He did not begin by teaching them. It seems a disorderly and inverted procedure to use force to correct abuses before the remedy of teaching has been tried. But Christ had a different aim. For since the time had come for Him to discharge in public the office committed to Him by the Father, He wanted in some way to enter into possession of the Temple and set forth evidence of His divine authority. And that all might pay heed to His teaching, their sluggish and drowsy minds had to be aroused by something new and strange. Now the Temple was the shrine of heavenly doctrine and religion.

Since He wanted to restore purity of doctrine it was of great importance to establish Himself as the Lord of the Temple. Besides, there was no other way to bring the sacrifices and other religious exercises back to their spiritual purpose than by removing abuses of them. (*The Gospel According to St. John 1-10*, 51).

IV. The Sign of Jesus' Authority (John 2:18-22)

- A. The Jewish leaders had a problem with what Jesus did: “What sign do you show us for doing these things?”
—They want to know if Jesus had to perform such a disruptive action. The underlying assumption was that if this was something God wanted done, then God would give a miraculous sign of authentication.
- B. Jesus' response was that God will give a sign. But it just might not be what the Jews expected (v 19)!
1. There seems to be a common attitude in the people who ask things of Jesus.
 2. Like Mary at the wedding, the Jews at the temple want Jesus to do something to prove himself. They appear to have somewhat specific, well-formulated ideas of what they expect God to do.
 3. But God does not answer in the way people expect him to. God simply will not be controlled. God will not be manipulated to play our games. God will not stoop to our demands.
—He will answer on his own terms.
 4. This is precisely what Jesus does. While the Jews ask for a sign, Jesus responds with a riddle: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (v 19).
- C. But the Jews were bemused: “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?”
1. This statement is revealing: If God stands behind his Messiah, wouldn't it be possible for the temple to be rebuilt that quickly if that was what God wanted? Isn't that what a miraculous sign was, the doing of the impossible?
 2. The fact that the Jews mocked what Jesus said is telling.
 - a. They were not honest to begin with. They were never really trying to understand Jesus. When they asked Jesus for a sign, they were simply out to get him.

- b. Here is where Mary (and struggling but sincere believers) and the Jews part company: While Mary was willing to let Jesus be the Lord, the Jews were not.
 - 3. Are we like that ourselves? Have we secretly made commitments in our minds that such and such a course of action would not be open to us?
 - a. In effect, we have already said “no” to God.
 - b. If there is any hardness of heart in us, we must ask God to give us the strength to repent and embrace his will.
- D. The Jews had missed what Jesus was saying. He wasn’t talking about the temple of stone that was presently standing. He was “speaking about the temple of his body” (v 21).
- E. This is a deeply wonderful statement.
 - 1. There is a mysterious link between the temple in Jerusalem and Jesus. One is a symbol, a temporary arrangement. The other is the final reality.
 - 2. As much as the powers of the world assault the house of God, God himself will come to the rescue of his own worship.
 - 3. When the temple of Jesus’ body is destroyed, Jesus himself will raise it up after three days.
- F. When the Lord is raised from the dead, the disciples will remember the words he spoke that day. They will believe the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

V. The New Temple Has a Name

Things are coming into sharper focus for us. Jesus is the Ladder that bridges heaven and earth. He’s also the new Temple where God lives, where God’s people will bring their worship to him. A new day of worship is coming, because God’s new House is about to be revealed. This new House will replace the old one. People will try to destroy this new House, because they perceive it to be a threat to their power. But this new House will rise from the grave. When that happens, it would forever be beyond the reach of the powers of darkness. No army, no government, no disease or natural disaster can destroy God’s new House. Yet, this new House would *not* be beyond the reach of tired, weak, repentant sinners who are sick and tired of this world and want to go home to God. It is for such people that God gives his new

Temple. Once again, the Gospel is clear: God's Goal for all mankind is Jesus. If we desire to be reconciled to God, if we desire peace beyond our comprehension, if we desire stability and security amidst the chaos of life, then we must go to the Place God himself has designated. That Place is the new Temple of God, who is Jesus Christ.

Questions for Reflection

1. Is there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Why does our Lord take such drastic action on the temple?
3. What does Jesus mean by "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"?
4. The Jews reacted with incredulity at Jesus' statement (2:20). What does this suggest about their sincerity?
5. In what ways are we like the Jews? Are there areas in our lives that are resistant to God's Word? Will we humble ourselves and ask God to change us?
6. How do the lessons in this sermon affect your relationship with God? How do they change your disposition toward God? How do they teach you to relate to God and show God your love? How does your new relationship with God affect your relationships with others?