

Sermon Outline

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

JESUS THE CENTER, III: THE TEMPLE IS A MAN (JOHN 2:1-25)

I. One Main Point Always

- John 6:29: “Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.””

II. Jesus and the Wine of Salvation (John 2:1-12)

- A. From verses 1-12, we see the very first miracle that our Lord did.
- B. He and his disciples were invited to a wedding while they were at Galilee.
- C. As the wedding progressed, the wine ran out.
- D. Mary asks Jesus to intervene; and, perhaps, we suspect, seize the opportunity to bring glory to himself.
- E. But Jesus says to her: “My hour has not yet come” (v 4).
—He reminds his mother, the very first human authority over his life, that he must now be about the business of his heavenly Father. It is God the Father who is the Lord of his life, not his earthly mother or anyone else.
- F. Yet, as a token of compassion, the Lord grants Mary’s request to do something. It might not be the exact thing that she was asking for. But it was something nonetheless. He turns the water into wine.
- G. But he does so quietly and discreetly. While the miracle was not “loud” enough to call public attention to him, it was sufficient to show his glory to his disciples and encourage them to deepen their trust in him.
- H. The episode ends with this summarizing statement: “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him” (v 11).

III. Jesus and the Purifying of God’s House (John 2:13-22)

- A. The second episode is the cleansing of the temple.
- B. Jesus performs a very different act.
 1. While it wasn’t a miracle like what happened at Cana, it still demonstrated his messianic authority.

2. When Jesus saw that traders were allowed to come into the temple grounds to sell merchandise, he was infuriated. Zeal for the Father's house consumed him (2:17). And he expelled those people from the temple.
- C. When the Jews ask Jesus for a sign of authentication (v 18), Jesus responds with a riddle: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (v 19).
 - D. The Jews did not understand what Jesus was talking about. They ask how Jesus would plan to re-build a temple that had taken forty-six years to build (v 20).
 - E. As it turns out, our Lord "was speaking about the temple of his body" (v 21).
 - F. It's only after he was raised from the dead that the disciples themselves understood what Jesus meant. And "they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken" (v 22).
 - G. Notwithstanding the scoffing of the Jews at the temple, there were others who do believe in him, because of the signs he performed.
 - H. Yet, verse 4 says that "Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people" (v 24).

IV. Jesus, the New Temple

- A. If we want to be true believers, we must embrace Jesus as the Messiah God has made him to be.
- B. While we should be thankful for all the blessings the Lord gives us every day, we must go on to make the journey *from* those blessings *to* the ultimate blessing who is Jesus himself. We must lay hold of Jesus by faith.
- C. When we trust Jesus, we discover who Jesus is for us.
 1. He is our life-giving Center.
 2. As John 2 shows us, Jesus serves as our life-giving Center by becoming God's new temple in the world; the Place where you and I can return to and be joined to God forever.
- D. Since the trader and the merchant have encroached on the sacred spaces of our lives (as they did back in Jesus' day), the idea that Jesus is the new temple means little to us.
- E. What was the value of the temple in Jesus' day?
 1. Like many ancient civilizations, the temple was the house of a nation's deity, the palace of a civilization's divine king-father.
 2. The temple was the source and center of the people's spiritual, cultural, national life.

3. The temple was where people received pardon from Heaven and renewed their relationship with the divine order.
- F. When we hear Jesus saying that he is God’s new temple, he is saying that everything in creation has begun to revolve around him.
- G. We can now understand why people would want Jesus killed.
1. If you do not trust in Jesus, you would see him and his followers as a threat to your society.
 2. To call Jesus the new temple of God is a deeply subversive thing to do.

V. **New Temple, New Normal**

- A. If Jesus is the new temple for the world, how do we orient our lives around this new normal that God has put in place by his grace?
- B. First: The Main Thing of our lives has to change.
1. What we consider (in the depths of our bones) to be of utmost pricelessness and supreme importance has to change.
 2. In as diverse, complex, and competitive a society as ours, we need to be guided by a Main Thing, Cardinal Value, and Controlling Virtue.
 3. God has given us a central point of reference, of thinking, of speaking, and of being—and that is his temple, who is Jesus Christ.
- C. Second: We ought to seek God in Jesus.
1. According to Scripture, God wants us to seek him.
 - First Chronicles 16:11: “Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!”
 2. God wants his people to seek after him; to come to him when they are in need, to dwell and find rest in his presence every day of their lives.
 3. The reason Jesus came was ultimately to unite us to God.

—In Jesus, we have God himself as our Father, our King, our Good. God alone is the ultimate prize.
 4. In becoming God’s new temple, Jesus came to perfect the worship of God, to perfect holiness for all who come to God through him.

God himself desires passionately to be in relationship with his people. He sent Jesus his Son not just to make the relationship possible, but to bring it into existence. In Jesus, God has “found” the faithful, holy, and righteous human being who can be his new temple, housing his eternal presence forever. Through Jesus, God reaches out across all space and time, across all cultures and nationalities, across the deep differences that divide different races, cultures, and families, to unite persons to himself. If you would go to Jesus, he will reunite you to his Father. That is his great mission. That is his purpose from the Father.

VI. “Through Jesus our Lord”

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today’s sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. What was the significance of temples in ancient civilizations, especially Israel?
3. Now that Jesus is the new temple, how should this affect our lives?
4. What is the importance of consciously praying through Jesus Christ?
5. 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?