

"Cleansing the Temple"

Part 2

John 2:12-22

Introduction: Last week in our study of John we looked at John 2:12-17. It was in those verses that we watched as Jesus went to the Temple during Passover and He found the religious leaders taking advantage of the people who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. Josephus has recorded that there could have been upwards of 3 million people in Jerusalem at this time. They came to keep the Feast of Passover and to do this they needed a sacrifice. Some brought their sacrifices and others purchased sacrifices when they arrived, The Jews had set up a market in the court of the Gentiles and there they did three things as they took advantage of the people.

1. They sold sacrifices and they charged far too much for the animals they were selling.
2. They examined the sacrifices that had been brought and often they rejected the animals which forced the people to buy their animals at inflated prices.
3. They exchanged money that came from different regions. To pay the Temple tax the people were required to pay with Tyrian coinage. The religious leaders also inflated the rate of exchange.

Let us keep in mind that the Jews were to be the spiritual leaders of the world. They were to point the Gentile nations to God for salvation. But because of what they were doing at the Temple they had distorted the Gentile's view of what God was like. The Gentiles may have seen God in all of this as greedy, cruel, and needing what man possessed. This is why Jesus was so upset when He came to the Temple.

Notice John 2:12-16

Jesus turned over the tables and drove the religious leaders out of the Temple.

Application:

Last week we briefly considered how our Lord must view many churches today which have turned away from Him and have completely distorted the unsaved world's view of what God is like. We get a look at the church condition in the days before the Rapture as we look at the letter to the church at Laodicea.

Revelation 3:14-20

¹⁴ And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

¹⁷ Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

¹⁸ I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

There are many consequences for churches that have turned from the Lord and have become caught up in the ways of the world. The most devastating that I see in these verses dealing with the Laodicean church is that fact that Jesus is on the outside which means all they do is in the power of the flesh.

Let us consider another application. Today we who are believers are the Temple of God. He dwells within us and we are called to be His representatives to the world. We are to point people to Jesus, and we are to live in a way that others see Jesus Christ in us.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

²¹ For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

We are ambassadors for Jesus, and we are called be righteous so that others can see what life with Jesus Christ in us looks like.

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

We are to live in a way that others can see the hope within us. Getting back to the point; we have a responsibility to make Jesus Christ known to the world and when we get entangled in the world, we are blocking the view of others much like the religious leaders in the Temple. Let us see two more verses.

Philippians 2:14-15

¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

¹⁵ That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

Notice John 2:17

I will not spend much time here because we considered this verse last week. The minds of the disciples went back to the Psalms.

Psalms 69:9

⁹ For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

Application:

What are we zealous for? We all have a zeal for something. We should have a zeal for the things of the Lord.

➤ **Looking for a Sign**

Notice John 2:18

This verse reveals much about the religious leaders. In Acts 5 Peter and the other Apostles would be arrested for preaching in the name of Jesus. But when Jesus chased

these dealers from the Temple there was no arrest made. This tells us that they knew deep down in their hearts that what they were doing was not in line with Divine righteousness and holiness. They knew that what they were doing was wrong, but their desire for personal gain was permitted to override their conviction. Their request was for a SIGN to prove that Jesus had the authority to do what He had done. This religious establishment was very much offended by what He had done. Notice what Paul wrote concerning the Jews.

1 Corinthians 1:22

²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

This is exactly what the Jews were doing here at the Temple. They wanted a SIGN, but they never addressed what Jesus had done. They do not want to deal with the problem; they just want a SIGN. In the next verse we will see a SIGN described

Notice John 2:19

The SIGN of His authority would come through His death, burial, and resurrection. The miracle they were looking for would come after His death. Why did Jesus not just give them a SIGN at that time? The answer is in a previous verse that we looked at.

Notice John 2:4

His hour had not yet come. Jesus did not come into the world to minister to the curiosity of the people. He came into the world to be the Savior of the world, which was His ultimate mission. He knew the hearts of these men. He knew that a SIGN would not change them. He wanted them to act upon the Truth which they had already been given.

Let us remember the words of Abraham as the rich man pleaded with him from hell.

Luke 16:27-31

²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Let us notice something that John recorded later.

John 12:37-40

³⁷ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

³⁸ That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

⁴⁰ He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

The miracles would not make a difference because God had blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts. Why? Because they would not accept the Truth that was given to them. The cleansing of the Temple should have shaken them to the core, but they brushed it off and asked for a SIGN.

When Jesus spoke here, He spoke in what is known as parabolic form. In other words, He concealed the Truth from unbelievers because they would not have accepted it anyway and He made it known to His disciples.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Application:

The unsaved world is blinded to what the Bible says as well as what is happening in the world. They do not have the Holy Spirit and without Him they cannot understand things that are spiritual. As many in the world keep suppressing the Truth they then sink deeper and deeper into the darkness as they are blinded. Let us notice what the religious leaders did with this statement that Jesus made.

Matthew 26:61

⁶¹ And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

They distorted what He had said.

Notice John 2:20-21

They could not understand spiritual Truth because of the blindness brought on by suppressing the Truth they did have. This is why the Jews are in unbelief today and they are unusable.

Conclusion:

Notice John 2:22

It would be after the resurrection that His disciples would understand that Jesus was speaking of His death, burial, and resurrection. It would be the Holy Spirit who would give them the insight and remembrance through the Scriptures.

John 14:26-27

²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

As we end this evening, we need to see the importance of saturating our minds with the Scriptures. We may read something today and the Holy Spirit may use it years from now at a time when we need to be encouraged or strengthened.