

John 2:13-22

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

John 2:13-22, 2015

Has one of your kids ever driven you absolutely crazy because they won't keep their room clean?

That used to be a big deal around our house although I have to admit it didn't bother me too much.

I would go into Stephanie's room to kiss her goodbye in the morning before leaving and after I opened the door I had to decide;

do I try to tip toe across the room and hope that whatever I stepped on wouldn't break or maybe poke a hole in my foot,

or should I scoot my feet across the floor and just hope that there wasn't a straight pin lurking in the carpeting ready to stab me.

Most generally I was able to walk by her room and see the disaster and simply close the door and forget about it. That is probably a guy thing.

Laura on the other hand, was a different matter.

This stuff bothered her.

There were times she would like to have gone into that room and taken everything out and thrown it all away.

She would have liked to have taken the posters off the walls, thrown out all the stuffed animals,

rifle through the closets and get all the clothes Stephanie hadn't worn in 6 months and bag them up for Good Will; throw the pile of papers into the trash can, and then empty the trash can.

I am sure no one here can relate.

But more than that I really believe that Laura would have liked for Stephanie to change, to be more like her, to care the way she cared, to care about the things she cares about.

She would have liked her to see things differently and do things differently because she believed that those things were important.

Well this is what Jesus is faced with in our Gospel lesson this morning.

Jesus wants the Jewish leaders and the people of Israel to see things differently, to do things differently, to believe in Him differently,

as the presence of God in the world,
to believe in Him as God's messiah.

The people of Israel are doing what they have always done. They came to Jerusalem on their annual pilgrimage so that they could make sacrifice to God for the atonement of their sins.

This was, as they understood it, what God called them to do and they were doing their best to live faithfully to the

law that was given to them at Mount Sinai by God through Moses and they written in Leviticus.

So now it is the Passover many generations later and the people come to Jerusalem from the surrounding countries to make their sacrifice at the Temple.

We usually think, because of what Jesus does in this story, that all the marketers are there just for the financial gain, but we must realize that they are there for a holy purpose as well.

Without them there would be no sacrifice.

The people were supposed to offer unblemished animals in their sacrifice to God.

If they tried to bring animals from home on their pilgrimage, often hundreds of miles, those animals would no longer be unblemished by the time they got to the temple.

Even the money changers are there for a Holy purpose.

They were part of the financial system that facilitated the purchase of animals for sacrifice.

But Jesus walks into the temple courtyards, sees what is going on there and is filled with a righteous indignation that drives him to clean house;

His Father's house.

For you see that is what Jesus is all about; righteousness, rightness, believing in the right things, doing the right

things; and all this centers around understanding God in the right way.

Unlike the other gospels, John, in his telling of this story, lifts up this completely different theological perspective.

This is not about the money changers and the marketers taking advantage of the people coming to the temple to offer sacrifices to God.

He clearly and correctly understands that Jesus exercises His prophetic calling announcing a new day, a new era,

one in which the grace of God is not mediated through the cultic sacrifice,

but is now available to all who receive Jesus as God's Messiah.

Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!

It's not for sale. It isn't necessary.

Jesus is announcing the end to a way of relating to God.

John has already said in Chapter 1 beginning at verse 14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth...the law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

For the people of His day there was a new deal, where Jesus was, there was grace and truth.

There was God:

Outside the Temple, in the community, along the sea of Galilee, in Caesarea Philippi, on trial, nailed to a cross, on the road to Emmaus, in the Ethiopian's chariot.

For the people of Jesus day the Temple was the destination, the place you would go to receive God's grace and mercy, to the exclusion of all other places.

Today, the church is the place where you come to receive spiritual things much the same as those people in ancient times who went to the Temple in Jerusalem;

God's grace and mercy, hope, inspiration, the primary place where you can encounter the presence of God in Word, water, bread and wine, in fellowship and love shared with one another.

There isn't one church destination in Jerusalem, Chicago, Tampa or All Saints or any one other place.

God can be found wherever Christ is found,

and as you are the body of Christ in the world, God is found wherever you go.

What does that look like?

In the third book of C.S. Lewis' Narnia series, Aslan, the lion, meets Lucy and Edmund at the edge of the Eastern Sea and tells them they will never return to Narnia.

Lucy is distraught by this news, but Aslan reassures her

that she will see him in her own world.

This surprises her, but he tells her that the whole purpose for bringing her to Narnia was that in coming to know him well in Narnia, she would be able to recognize him more easily in her world.

So it is with you and your coming here.

Yes you do come here to receive spiritual things you need. I pray that your needs are relieved by your coming here.

You come here to worship your Lord, to offer your thanks and praise for God's love and grace and care for you.

But you are brought to know Jesus well here so that you will recognize Him more easily out there in the world; at school, work, Walmart, in line at the grocery, in your travels, your relationships.

Christ is here with you now, but He is out there in the world waiting for you also.