



Welcome to Grace Communion International

March 7 , 2021

THIRD WEEK OF EASTER PREPARATION

SERMON

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

John 2:13-25



SCRIPTURE READING

John 2:13-25 (ESV)

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“13 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.

15 And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.”

John 2:13-25 (ESV)



THESE ARE THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

THANK YOU GOD THAT YOUR WORD IS TRUTH (John 17:17)

AMEN



This passage of Scripture is loaded with significance. It is a dramatic description of Jesus' zeal for all things of his heavenly Father.

The Jews and even the disciples did not understand some of the things Jesus did and spoke. In the eyes of the Jews, Jesus was just a man. They did not see God hidden in the flesh. They did not recognize who he was. The religious leaders and the common people were impressed by Jesus and what He did. To them, he was an enigma, a mystery. They realized there was something special about him. When Jesus told them who he was, they recoiled and many became angry with him. They enjoyed the benefit that Jesus gave them such as healings, feeding the multitudes, raising the dead, liberating people from demon possessions and oppression. For most, that is where it stopped.

As we read in this passage, even the disciples were oblivious to the reason Jesus did what he did. It was only after the resurrection and his ascension they understood. It had to be revealed to them by the Holy Spirit from Pentecost on. This is when they received the Holy Spirit to indwell them. Before the Holy Spirit was working with them but not "in" them.

In this brief passage of scripture when Jesus cleansed the temple, there are several things revealed about Jesus (next slide)

1. Revelation of who he is.
2. His zeal for God's house;
3. His death and resurrection prophesied,
4. Knowing Jesus as the Son of God is by Revelation.
5. Jesus knows all people and knows what is in their hearts.



During today's sermon, we will briefly consider each of these points and how they apply to us.

1. Revelation of Who Jesus Is



Jesus was still living under the old covenant during his ministry. He had come to the earth to fulfil both the law and the prophets. The old covenant came to an end when Jesus died on the cross. When he died, the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. **“50 ¶ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.” (Mt 27:50-51 ESV).**

This meant that Jesus became our high priest. Being perfect in himself, the only sacrifice needed was the sacrifice of himself which he did once and for all. This he was as he died on the cross as the Lamb of God. Christ being the perfect man has opened the way to God’s throne for everyone. He is now our mediator and high priest as we read in the book of Hebrews.

Jesus came to the temple and he said to the money changers as he overturned their tables, **“Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.”**

You will notice that he did not say, **“our Father’s house”** but **“my Father’s house”**. He

therefore identified himself not as the Son of Man but as the son of God. He identified himself as God in the flesh. Of course, the people in the temple did not see him this way. They saw him as a man which he was. They did not perceive that he was God in the flesh as he began his ministry. As we read the Gospel of John, the Jews could not accept what Jesus was saying about himself. For example, in John 6 when Jesus told his disciples that he was symbolically the bread of life, a good number of them stopped being his disciples. They could not believe that Jesus was the source of their life.

When he came to the temple on this Passover, he began to give a clue of who he really is.

In his church, we know that Jesus is both God and man. When he began his ministry, the Jews of his days were oblivious to this revelation. The Holy Spirit had not yet come to the earth. In their minds, they were expecting a powerful deliver and not the son of a carpenter.

2- Jesus' zeal for his Father's house.

“but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.” (Heb 3:6 ESV)



As Jesus entered the temple to clean it because merchants had used the temple as a business opportunity rather than respecting it as a house of worship, he was doing the will of the Father.

“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.” (Joh 5:30 ESV)

“But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.” (Joh 5:36 ESV)

The Bible tells us that when we see Jesus, we see the Father. The character of Jesus and the character of God the Father is the same because they are distinct persons in the oneness of the Godhead. The best word to describe God is Trinity.

Jesus sets out to correct anything not done according to God’s will in God’s house. He

brought correction enthusiastically and passionately. His actions did not stem from his desire to please people. His desire was to honour and please his Father in every way which he did perfectly.

Jesus, as noted before, lived under the Old Testament when the temple was still erected in Jerusalem. After Jesus' death and resurrection, there was no longer any need for such a place of worship.

In the New Covenant, God's temple, God's house is completely different. The temple, God's residence, changed from a physical building in Jerusalem to an unexpected location—in individual humans by the Holy Spirit and in the church as a whole. **(see next animation on right hand of slide)**

The church is also referred to as the house of God.

(Next slide to show some of those Scriptures)

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,” (1Co 6:19 ESV)

“What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (2Co 6:16 ESV)

“4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)

5 Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later,

6 but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.” (Heb 3:4-6 ESV)



As God’s temple we cannot cleanse ourselves. We cannot self-clean. It is Jesus living in us by the Holy Spirit who does this transformation. It is a miracle that we are called to participate in.

What are some of the symptoms of this selfish orientation that Jesus is cleansing in us and in the church?

He is certainly going to cleanse us of any idols, selfishness and others sins we may have in our life.

We cannot name all the manifestations of indwelling sins in a brief sermon. One manifestation of selfishness may be becoming angry at others when we feel offended because we want to protect ourselves.

Another one may be overly worrying and panicking for fear that God is not in charge of a particular situation.

It may be being offended when we not being acknowledged as we think we should be.

It may be being so self-conscious that we are afraid to express ourselves in loving and truthful confidence.

It may be serving and putting our trust in physical security rather than in God. An example is the parable of the man who built barns and who hoarded grain thinking that in the material is real safety. In this particular parable, Jesus said this man was foolish. He died the same night. **“20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”** (Lu 12:20-21 ESV)

It may be lusting after other men or women or spending time looking at pornography. The list goes on.

It may be seeing all these characteristics in others in pride and failing to look at ourselves. It may be magnifying the speck in our brother’s eye failing to see the log in our own. (Luke 6:42 (ESV).

Some of these sins, we are not aware that we have them. Jesus is aware of everyone of them. In his love, he is cleaning his house, each disciples individually and the whole house, the church.

We are to participate with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ as he does his work. We are not to grieve him.

It is important to always realize that Jesus loves his children. We are beloved of the Father. He is the great loving shepherd. When we are corrected by God, it is always in love and mercy.

Again, we cannot overcome these sinful tendencies on our own. We can only participate in the work of Jesus in our life and the life of the church. The life of Jesus in us is not a self-help effort. It is Christ saving us from our sins. **“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”** (Mt 1:21 ESV)

We also need to realize that Jesus is passionate about us. He wants us to be faithful to the end. He is zealous for us and passionate. To see further how Jesus is cleansing his temple, I encourage you to read Revelations chapters 2-3 where

God addresses 7 churches directly, tells them their strengths, corrects them and teaches them how to be victors in Him! What he says to those churches applies to us also. We should take it personally.

We should welcome Jesus to clean the temple of our body. We should welcome him cleaning the church because it is his house.

We want him to bring all of us in the obedience of faith.

3 – Jesus Prophesied His Own Death and Resurrection



At the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus spoke of his mission on this earth. He was sent by God the Father not to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved by him through faith.

The people in the temple did not understand what Jesus was getting at. Even his disciples did not understand. It was only after he was resurrected that they grasped his words. It was after the fact that they comprehended Jesus' zeal for God's house. After his resurrection, they understood the meaning of Psalm 69:9, a verse that speaks about his zeal. (**"For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me."** (Ps 69:9 ESV))

God waited to reveal the truth to the disciples about his death and resurrection until the time after he was resurrected.

They did not understand at the beginning of his ministry what was awaiting Jesus. They did not understand it at the end of his ministry either. ("31 ¶ And taking the twelve, he said to them, **"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and**

everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. 32 For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. 33 And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” 34 But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.” (Lu 18:31-34 ESV)

Jesus said, **“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”** The Jews thought to themselves that he was talking foolishness. How could such a magnificent temple which took 46 years to build be raised in three days?

The disciples did not grasp his statement either.

They could not see God hidden in human flesh before their eyes.

Today, the world knows that Jesus was a historical figure. The world knows He died on a Roman cross. However the world does not acknowledge that Jesus was resurrected—that he is very much alive today, glorified at the Father’s throne and still very much involved in human affairs! The world lives as he does not make any difference.

We, being his house, acknowledge and believe that he is alive today. He is the head of the Church. He is involved in the affairs of the church and of the world. God’s plan is unfolding as it should!

4- Knowing
Jesus
as the Eternal
Son of God Is by
Revelation.

“And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”” (Joh 6:65 ESV)

“At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children;” (Mt 11:25 ESV)

“All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” (Mt 11:27 ESV)



As we read these verses, coming to know God the Father and knowing Jesus is a miracle.

We read these verses after the fact. The apostles lived before, during and after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. We have the privilege of living after all these events. We benefit from the teachings of the writers of the gospel and the other writers of the New Testament. Everything is inspired by God.

Even if we live after the fact, it is important to realize that God must make a miracle for us to understand what Jesus said about the temple when he cleansed it. Grasping who God is in his triunity is a miracle we are graciously given. Knowing the living Jesus is a miracle. (next slide)

“26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

31 Therefore, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”” (1Co 1:26-31 ESV)



Important to quickly review who God is and how we fit in the loving triune relationship of God.



This logo or symbol is particularly important. It would be the subject of the whole study. In a brief summary, this logo/symbol reflects the oneness of God in three distinct persons. As you can see on the logo/symbol, the Father indwells the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus indwells the Father and the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit indwells both the Father and the Son.

They indwell one another in a relationship of love that has lasted for all eternity. As human beings, we are included in the God-man Jesus Christ. We are and never will be divine. We will always remain human united to the man Jesus Christ. Consequently, united to Christ in faith, we participate in the divine relationship in the oneness of God. To know this is a gift of grace!

Jesus said the following, ‘Jesus answered him, **“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”**’ (Joh 14:23 ESV)

The apostle Peter wrote, **“3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory**

and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 ¶ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,” (2Pe 1:3-5 ESV)

This is a big subject. We participate in the divine nature by being united to Jesus. As the Holy Spirit dwells in us, the whole God dwells in us because God cannot be divided.

When Jesus came to the earth, he came in the distinct person as the Son in human flesh but always being in relationship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

I hope that this brief illustration is helpful to you. It’s very encouraging to know that when we say that Jesus is our life, we also say that God is our life because God is one in three distinct persons.

We can only know who God is by God revealing himself to us in Jesus.

5- Jesus knows all people. He knows what is in our hearts.

“23 ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.

24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people

25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.” (Joh 2:23-25 ESV)



In other words, they believed in him because of the signs but they did not recognize that standing before them was God in the flesh. That’s why they were so fickle and changeable. Jesus knew very well that they could turn on him at any time which they did.

Let us thank Jesus that he had a zeal for his Father’s house as he cleansed the physical temple.

Let us be thankful to him that God has taken residence in Christ one’s, Jesus’ disciples. He continues his work of cleansing his church and us individually. The end product, which we will see at the resurrection, will be awe-inspiring. We will be like the man Jesus, glorified and perfect in every way. It is our hope. **God Almighty is doing a work in individual believing disciples, in his church and in the whole world.** (1 John 3 and John 1:29).

As part of the cleansing process, we are being transformed and prepared to become immortal and to be included in the triune relationship of God’s love forever! (next slide)

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” (Ro 8:29 ESV)

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (2Co 3:18 ESV)

“and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” (Col 3:10 ESV)



How blessed we are to be part of the ongoing work of cleansing. We are being perfected to be in his image of the man Jesus! What a magnificent calling!

Let us pray.