

## **John 2:13-22**

Sunday Morning 10/3/19 Scott Wilson

### **Introduction**

Have you ever met someone, but then as you dig a little deeper and they become a little bit more vulnerable, you start to discover things about that person that surprises you? I think we all have.

One of the scariest things about getting to know someone, and letting someone get to know you, is that they might find out who you really are. Not who you are on Sunday morning, or at work, but who you really are.

The you who walks in the door after a long day at work. When your defences are down and you feel like you can let loose a little.

Sometimes you think you know someone and they do something that surprises you. Not necessarily bad.

Like if Ben was to get up to preach next week, and as part of his introduction, decided to do an interpretive dance. That would surprise me.

See the person who my wife met 14 years ago is different to the person, I am now.

Let me prove it. Here is a picture of me days before we got married.

Now you look at this picture and you see my guns. My mop, my eyes and of course my face.

All of which has changed.

My eyesight got worse, my hair got less, my beard got more, and my shape got full.

That's what you see.

But I look at this picture and I see pride. Which I'm still working on but **man**, I used to think that I was amazing.

My self-confidence was through the roof.

I thought that I was the poster child of what a godly man should look like. I was raised in a good home that loved the Lord and taught good theology.

Instead of travelling the world in pursuit of my own pleasures I devoted my time and energy to a small orphanage in Africa. My prayer life was good, my Bible reading was consistent. I loved God and I thought God was pretty lucky to have me.

However, I didn't see myself as prideful at the time. I was literally blinded by myself.

God knew exactly what I needed.

A wife. God knew that I needed someone who would show me how messed up I was, how tainted my good deeds were and how much I needed the gospel.

Stacy came into my life with love, grace, Friendship and kindness. She showed me that my worship was not to God but of myself.

I am sure she was shocked once we got married came back from our honeymoon and started to live our day to day life.

She didn't say it out loud, but I'm sure she thought it.

You think you know someone?????

Some, have maybe had this same thought about the passage we'll be looking at today.

You see, we're going to see a side of Jesus, that, up until this point, we haven't really witnessed before.

We are looking at the passage where Jesus goes to the temple,

He observes some things that cause him to make a whip and goes crazy on some animals and some money exchangers.

And then, when questioned about his authority do be doing such a thing, he makes an outrageous claim that they wouldn't understand for a few years.

The first four chapters of John serves a kind of introduction to Jesus.

And today we get a glimpse of Jesus that is a little shocking.

Up until this point, Jesus has been painted as a pretty great guy, as the giver of joy, as the life of the party, as divine, as a friend...

But today we see a side of Jesus that we're not really expecting. It doesn't seem, at first glance, to fit the picture created by most people of who Jesus is.

At the outset, this is quite a well-known passage in the Bible.

I don't know about you but this is often the passage that comes up when righteous anger comes into a conversation.

I also think that this is the passage that comes to people's minds to justify anger in their lives.

Unfortunately, all too often, this passage has been misinterpreted and wrongly used to give people a licence to treat someone with contempt, indifference and hostility.

Anger is a real emotion and I'm glad this passage is here so that we can see this side of Jesus.

Because the difference between Jesus and myself being angry, is that in Jesus' anger, he doesn't sin.

Unfortunately for me, and possibly many of you as well, that's not always the case.

So, while this passage shows us about the right way to handle anger, there is also more than meets the eye.

Our big Idea Today is that.

**Jesus enables true worship.**

**We are going to break it up into 2 sections**

Our best attempts at worship are tainted without Jesus vs13-17

Even our worst attempts at worship can be made right with Jesus vs18-22

So let's dig into this first section

**Our best attempts at worship are tainted without Jesus vs13-17**

Jesus finds himself at the temple

and as it was close to the Passover festival it would be safe to say that there was a higher than normal volume of people visiting Jerusalem.

Jews and believing gentiles would come from all over to visit the temple at this time of the year.

The temple was the epicentre of the Jewish faith

Because this was the place where you could meet with God. This was where God chose to dwell on this earth.

It was truly holy, it was sacred, it was beautiful, it was designed by God himself and built with the intention of glorifying God and honouring him in every single detail.

The most important function of the temple was that this was the place where God would deal with the biggest issue of his people. Sin.

Their sin was dealt with through an array of sacrificial worship. Animals would be taken to the altar every single day to deal with the problem of sin.

God's people would come to the temple to learn more about him, to pray to him, and to be as close to God as they humanly could.

See, we get to worship God as Christians corporately right now.

We can draw close to him in prayer together, draw close to Him in song and in the teaching of His word.

And to be clear, we could do this at a school, in a field, Individually, in a small group in our homes or at a cafe. We have this freedom because of the work that Christ has done.

But the Jews didn't have that ability.

There was a veil or a curtain that prevented them from meeting with God.

Their sin separated them from a holy and just God and therefore prevented them from knowing God the way that Christ allows us to. See, the sacrificial system pointed to something better. It wasn't perfect, but it was a God-given temporary solution to the problem of sin.

Which is why the temple for the Jewish people was an incredibly important structure. As this was the place that God chose to dwell with his people and cleanse their sins.

See, I'm sure Jesus entered the temple that day, as a Jew, expecting the place that God had intended it to be.

But as we read on we discover the temple courts were filled with cattle, sheep and doves, and the hecklers selling them  
as well as people exchanging money.

Now as I mentioned earlier, animal sacrifices were a huge part of worship for the Jewish people.

They were also required to pay a kind of tax to the temple that could only be made with a certain kind of silver, which meant that people would need to exchange their Roman money to the appropriate currency.

So really, what Jesus came upon in the temple courts... this little business seems all above board, right?

They are literally helping Gods people worship.

These people kind of seem like Koorong. A small business that offer a service that's helping believers know God better.

So Jesus' problem isn't as much what they are doing but rather where they are doing it.

He Says to the people selling doves.

“Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!”

These entrepreneurs, at one stage, had set up this market over the valley on the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

But this set up wasn't nearly as convenient as setting up right inside the temple courts.

Location, location, location. As a real estate photographer, I have photographed some absolute dumps but because they have the view or they are close to the city, the price tag doesn't reflect the condition of the house.

Location is important.

The location of your business still to this day can often make or break a business.

And I suspect that business was much, much better in the temple courts than on other side of town.

The location of this set up was important to the business owners. And it was important to Jesus as well.

Setting up shop where they did means that a portion of, most likely the outer courts or the court of the Gentiles was to be rezoned from place of worship to place of commerce.

The outer courts were open to Gentiles that had faith in the one true God. That's me and most likely you as well.

These faithful men and women would come from all over into the court of the Gentiles to be as close to God as they were allowed by law.

And, unfortunately, after their long journey they entered the temple courts to realise that their place to worship God had been turn into the Rocklea Markets.

## JESUS' RESPONSE

Jesus sees this and without a word he makes a whip of cords.

I'm not going to stand up here and say that I've never been upset, frustrated or angry at some point in my life, or even at multiple points this week.

But I can honestly say that I've been so mad, so livid, that I would quietly go to the corner of the room, sit down and make my weapon thinking and contemplating about what I see in front of me. Then, after I had made my weapon of choice, go out and take action.

The fact that he is so calculating makes it even more full on.

It's very clear that Jesus was upset, right?

Last week we saw a different Jesus;

He was the life of the party, He made water into wine. In my many years as a wedding photographer, I never once saw a party trick like this.

This week, however, we see a contrast. We see a picture of authority, power, and His righteous judgment.

Jesus says at the end of verse 16 that the temple was His Fathers. And it was!

By every right he had the authority to restore order to the temple courts

Jesus is just and right in His response because of who he is.

He is the God Man, the one that God sends to be the mediator between Him and man.

The thing that makes Jesus upset in the situation is clear.

See, I think Jesus' reaction to this event seem quite harsh compared to Jesus' reaction to ethical sins that he would come across in his ministry.

His reaction to lying, prostitution and adultery, seem disproportionate to his reaction to some savvy entrepreneurs.

Jesus hates all sin and so should we.

But his reaction to sin is ultimately displayed in His deep love and sacrifice on the cross.

See, Jesus wants people to be right with God.

He wants people to be able to truly worship God.

He knows that sin is a part of this world and has been a part of this world from the time Satan lied in the garden of Eden.

Jesus's anger in this instant doesn't seem to be a response to some particular sin in someone's life.

His anger seems to be in response to people turning a place of worship, a house of prayer, turning the place where people could come and have their sins dealt with, into something else.

These business owners, although seemingly trying to help God's people, were actually blocking faithful men and women and most likely gentiles, from worshipping God, from coming to prayer with His father.

Carson says it like this. **SLIDE**

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.

How dare you turn my Father's house into a market! he exclaims.

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.<sup>1</sup>

Friends, let's not be like the characters in this story that make it difficult for people to have a personal relationship with God.

I think it's appropriate to look at our lives, our words and actions and continually work on making sure that we are not a stumbling block to Non-Christians knowing God.

Unfortunately, more often than not, non-Christians are hesitant toward Jesus because of the actions and words of people who claim to be Christian but don't live their lives the way Christ commands.

They are hesitant towards His authority because, unfortunately, some Christians have made a mockery of it in the way they live their lives.

They are hesitant towards His grace because Christians weren't gracious and loving toward them.

We need make sure that our words and actions reflect the person and work of Jesus in the workplace, at home, with our kids, and with our friends.

I want to be really clear, I know that we won't get it right all the time.

And you and I are not the ones responsible for building His church. Jesus has been doing that since his death and resurrection.

But at times, we get to share these truths. And as children of God we should have a desire to lead people to God through Jesus, and not be a stumbling block to those people God puts in our lives.

I want to encourage you to have zeal and passion for what is right and just as Jesus did in the temple.

To have a zeal and passion for true worship of God, the kind of worship that can only come through Jesus.

Now, **Anger**

Before we go any further, let's spend some time thinking about anger.

This is a go-to passage when we look for what the Bible says about anger.

Christians use it to say, "Look, Jesus was perfect and he was angry, so not all anger is bad."

So, we reason, there must be two categories of anger – righteous anger and sinful anger.

And guess how this works out in practice?

Whenever I get angry, it's righteous.

I only get angry when it's justified.

And when someone's angry at me, it's sinful.

Sometimes we think that it's the way we express our anger that makes it okay or not.

We all express our anger differently.

Some kids will punch it out and shout at each other on the playground.

Others might talk behind your back, gossip, and bully on social media.

And things don't seem to change as we grow older.

Neither way is more righteous.

However we express our anger, what Jesus does in the temple isn't a justification to get angry at your kids, colleagues friends or enemies because it's 'righteous'.

Jon Bloom from Desiring God wrote an article depicting the difference between the 2 types of anger.

Here are some of the highlights.

Righteous anger bears redemptive fruit,

Whereas Sinful anger doesn't .

Righteous anger should move us toward acts of faith, love and true justice, therefore, it is not arrogant or rude or stubborn or resentful. It doesn't want revenge.

Sinful Anger is characterised by the self-oriented grief of self-pity,

And it produces a cancer of cynicism that eats away at faith leaving us with an exasperated frustration and often produces a sour feeling in the pit of our gut

Righteous anger is actually an expression of love, a deep displeasure over the way evil defames God and destroys people,

Sinful anger moves us toward acts of selfishness things like withdrawal, irritability, rudeness, obstinacy, and bitterness.

And finally righteous anger should move us toward prayer whereas Sinful anger erodes our desire to pray.

Look...We have all been angry even if you managed to keep it to yourself.

But what was the point of your anger?

Did you see fruit come from your anger?

Were you arrogant rude, stubborn or resentful in your anger.

Were you moved towards acts of love and faith and true justice in your anger.

And I've got to admit, that often, the only time I'm moved to prayer in my anger is to ask forgiveness for how I've got it wrong. That's not the prayer he is talking about.

I suspect if you're anything like me, you often have to answer no to all the characteristics righteous anger.

Because I suspect that most of the time your anger comes out of selfishness, pride, and just generally getting annoyed far too easily or perhaps you're just hangry. Like, that seems to be a completely acceptable excuse these days.

So next time anger presents itself, it might be worth NOT GETTING ANGRY. Maybe grab a cup of coffee or tea. Seek Godly wisdom. Sit down make something like Jesus did.

And ask the questions

How's my pride at the moment. Am I self-righteous?

Am I arrogant, rude, stubborn or resentful in my anger?

Is my anger truly an act of love, faith and true justice?

Is the outcome of my anger going to bear redemptive fruit?

Jesus righteously got angry at the merchants and money changer because they were turning the temple into a market. A place to meet God and Worship Him into the CBD.

But our anger too often falls into the sinful side rather than the righteous side. So let's slow down a little in our anger.

The merchants were trying to make it easier for God's people to worship Him. Their efforts were missing the mark of true worship because they were looking in the wrong direction.

See friends. Even our best attempts at worship are tainted without Jesus.

And our best attempts at righteous anger are tainted without Jesus at the centre. Without the Gospel, our worship our good deeds will fall short.

Jesus is the key, He is the way, He has come to be the better temple.

That leads us to our second point

## **SLIDE**

### **Even our worst attempts at true worship can be made right with Jesus**

The Jews seem to let him do his thing.

Like, it would have taken a bit of time to herd the animals out and make a mess of the money changers.

Jesus sorts out His Father's house and the Jews seem to allow this to happen.

And then they respond to his actions with a question.

A really fair question. They say 'what sign can you show us to prove your authority to do this.'

That doesn't seem like an unreasonable question, does it?

I'd be curious.

And Jesus, the king of answering questions indirectly says.

'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days'

Ok, you know what the Jews were thinking.

This guy is crazy.

They respond with sarcasm,

This is an architectural wonder that has taken 46 year to build and, in actual fact, wasn't even finished at this point. And YOU, as they look down their noses at him, could do it in three days.

They don't forget this claim, in fact, they still think it's a joke as He hangs on the cross for them.

Mt 27:39–40

Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

It's safe to say they missed the point Jesus was making. Even His disciples missed it at the time.

The penny did drop eventually for his disciples.

And thanks to John's account we aren't left guessing

V 21 says

"But the temple he had spoken of was his body."

See, the Jews were thinking in the physical and natural.

They wanted to see a cheap party trick something that would prove to them that he had Authority over the temple.

Last week we heard about a miraculous sign. Where Jesus turns water into wine.

It's possible they wanted to see something like this.

But let's face it, Jesus isn't a circus clown who will go on show to prove Himself.

NO

He's the giver of life. He would later show them a sign, a miraculous sign that would change the way the world would worship God but they weren't ready to hear that.

So in their eyes, it was crazy for him claim to build a temple like this one in 3 days.

But Jesus was talking in the spiritual, which was probably even more crazy.

They were talking on completely different dimensions. In fact, he was talking about a dimension that they didn't even know existed.

That the temple would soon be null in void. The temple as they know it would no longer be necessary

That instead of going to the temple to worship God, to wash away their sins, they would go to Jesus who enables true worship.

Jesus would restore our relationship with God. He would deal with the problem of Sin.

He tells us that He is the temple. He is the meeting place for sinners like you and me to enter in the Family of God and enter into true worship.

**He is saying that I enable true worship.**

And he does this by destroying the temple,

that is dying on the cross and rising on the third day so that we too can rise from a dead to sin state

to an alive in Christ state.

Friends, Today in the 2nd chapter on John Jesus reveals his rescue plan for those who put their trust in Him.

We discover that Jesus is not simply the life of the party. He is not meek and mild, He is not only friend and teacher. But he has come with righteous judgment and the necessary Authority, enabling us to enter into true worship of God.

### **Conclusion**

So let me ask you, Are there things in your life that need driving out? If there are, and to be clear, there are, run to Jesus.

Run to His cross. Seek his truth. Let it soak into you bones so that it transforms your heart.

See, we often deal with our sin the wrong way.

We use willpower, strength of mind, we punish ourselves.

These tactics often not only lead to failure, but as a result, can lead to depression, anxiety, worry and overwhelm.

All of which are far too prevalent in our society.

See, our sin is replacing the true worship that Jesus has made possible for us.

Friends we are NOT alone in our sin, both physically and spiritually.

Physically, There are about 100 people here today who also struggle with sin.

Talk to each other, you might be surprised to find out that they struggle with the same sin.

And if someone is vulnerable with you, love them, be a good listener, forgive them as Christ has also forgiven you, show grace, pray for wisdom, point them to Christ, encourage them in God's word.

And reap the blessing of Gospel friendship.

I really want to encourage you all to ask heart-revealing questions of each other.

Because we are not alone, we have one other and we should tap into that resource a little more eagerly.

We are also not alone spiritually,

Friends your willpower will never defeat Satan.

He is a cunning, divisive, lying presence that Christ has already defeated. So run to Jesus and let your false worship turn to true worship.

Your mind is not as strong as the strength Christ displayed on the cross. He has endured false accusation, torture, tormenting, pain, and the punishment of death on our behalf.

So run to Jesus, for he is your strength, and enter into Godly worship.

Friends, don't beat yourself up, don't punish yourselves. Run to Jesus for he has already taken the punishment needed for your sin so that we can truly worship God.

See, Jesus cleansed the temple so that people could worship God properly and then, when Jesus went to the cross and rose three days later, He replaced the physical temple with his body, so that no matter where you live, what family background you come from, how bad you think you have been, we can run to Jesus, who enables true worship.

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<sup>1</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 179). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

## Discussion Questions.

- 1} What was the temple used for? And what had it become when Jesus entered the temple?
- 2} Why was Jesus so upset? Do you think that his actions were justified?
- 3} What do we learn about Jesus' character in this account?
- 4} Why is it important that this side of Jesus is revealed? What Gospel implications are revealed?
- 5} What does Jesus mean by saying that He is the Temple? What does that mean for us today?
- 6} How would you use this passage to share the Gospel to a colleague or friend or family member?