

Text: John 2:13-22

Theme: Not Nice Jesus

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, as well as those watching online, the text for our meditation this morning is the Holy Gospel according to Saint John chapter two verses thirteen through twenty-two.

Boys and Girls, how are you today? Good? Excellent! I have two pictures here that I would like you to take a look at. One of them is of a happy and smiling Jesus, happy as He is healing the people of their sicknesses and hurts. The other is an angry Jesus with a whip knocking over a table with money as well as driving out people and animals. Which Jesus would you prefer? I am sure that most of you would go with the happy Jesus one, as that is what most of us think of when we think of Jesus. We think of a happy Jesus who is always smiling, kind, and loving. If you ask anyone, I am sure that this is the type of Jesus that they will desire. Yet, is that the Jesus that appears in our text? No! Jesus is mad. He is not in a good mood. Jesus is angry. Why? Listen to the rest of the sermon and let us see why together.

Jesus is angry. This is not an emotional outburst of sudden anger but rather a calculating and patient type of anger. He enters the Temple and sees the money changers and those selling animals. This angers Him to the point that Jesus takes the time to fashion and make a whip, literally a scourge, out of cords before putting it to use. He uses it as a symbol of His authority as He drives out the animals, cows, sheep, and pigeons, as well as those people who are exchanging money. Why? Because He is angry over what they have done and turned the House of God into.

God required that animals be sacrificed at the Temple in place of the people, for a multitude of reasons, for thanksgiving, forgiveness of sins, as a sign of purity after the shedding of blood, and many more. While if you are traveling a long distance are you going to take your sacrificial animal with you the whole way? Imagine if you had to leave here, and walk all the way to the northern tip of Alaska. Would you take your animal with you or would you just buy one when you reached Alaska? More than likely, you would just buy one when you got there. It is what makes the most sense to do. It also makes sense to exchange your currency from the currency of Rome into the currency of the Temple to pay the Temple tax, with a higher exchange rate for the convenience of course. All of this makes sense, and is good to do. The issue, is the place that all of this selling and bartering is done. It is done in the very most outer court of the Temple, in the Court of the Gentiles. In the place where all of the nations are to gather in the presence of God, they are expected to worship while bartering, haggling, the crying of animals, and the clinking of coins is going on. Jesus is mad because they have taken the House of God and turned it into a marketplace! Even worse, what are the Gentiles going to think? All of this trading and selling, they might get the thought that they have to pay some kind of price, some kind of tax, in order to meet God. Rather than what the Temple is really about, and what the Temple, and all of its sacrifices, points forward to: That God pays a price to meet us.

God pays a price to meet us. He is incarnate in Jesus Christ. The price He pays is the shedding of His holy innocent blood. Thus why Jesus, who will be scourged with a whip Himself, scourges and kicks out the money changers and sellers first, to cleanse the physical temple of its impurities. Jesus then uses this event to point to Himself as that which the Temple pointed forward to. This is why He says,

“Tear down this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.” Jesus speaks of His body as the Temple, which was in truth the temple of the living God for all times, though He Himself is the great sanctuary of mankind for all time, and His body comprises the mercy-seat and all the other sacrificial appointments of the true temple for the believers of all times. Jesus will be scourged, beaten, mocked, spit upon, crucified, and die on our behalf in order to, just as He cleansed the physical Temple, would cleanse us as well from all of our sins and reconcile us back to God once again, free of charge, the price has been paid and we can approach the throne of grace without fear.

Is Jesus angry? Yes, but this is a good anger as He points us to Himself as the true Temple, cleanses it of sin, just as He cleanses us by His death and resurrection from the dead, and turns us not towards what we do, but what He has done, and continues to do for us every day.

May the Peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.