

'The Son of God and the Lord of Glory Series'

Sermons in the Gospel of John

Message 21 - 'Zeal for Your House' John 2:12 - 22



Following on from the miracle at Cana, we consider here an account of an action of the Lord that was in great contrast. The Lord physically cleansed the temple twice in His time on this earth, the occasion at the beginning of John's Gospel, and then during the week before His death. Some brand Jesus as a revolutionary in an earthly sense, He was not. The message of Christ was revolutionary, but it was a message that people did not, and still do not want to hear. Despite this sign of power and authority, they did not heed the words of Christ, or see Him for who He really was. We can see the following:

The Righteous Anger of the Lord (v12-17) - The righteous indignation and outburst of Jesus was not the action of a revolutionary, rather, it was the righteous anger of the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus went up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. Jerusalem would have been crammed with people, vast multitudes of Jewish pilgrims from around the known Roman world. It was an opportunity for big business. Imagine as the Lord Jesus arrives and surveys the scene, the stench of the animals, the disordered confusion of all that was taking place, exploitation, and the destruction of true worship. Zealous for the purity of the house of God, Christ erupts with righteous anger. Making a scourge of cords, he drives them out of the temple. We must not underestimate the intensity of Christ's anger, there was zero tolerance of anything that hindered true worship. The Lord reveals the intimacy of the relationship of the Trinity, 'my Father's house', it made clear His deity, and the reality that He was the Messiah. The zeal that Jesus displayed, the clarity of purpose, and the strength of fervour was undeniable. The righteous judge of all the earth was here showing His righteous indignation that flowed from a total commitment to God's holiness. The Jewish leaders would never forget the assault that the Lord made on the very core of their religious practice, enterprise, and power. Christ not only cleansed the temple on two occasions, but also regularly identified their hypocrisy in their lives and dealings. They needed no other motivation to seek His death, and pursue it fervently.

The Request of the Jewish Authorities (v18) - What is certain is that the Scriptures are the only key to understanding spiritual truth. The Scriptures underline clearly and throughout, that even miracles will not lead men to understand and receive God's Truth unless they themselves are illuminated by the application of the living Word by the Spirit of God. The authorities are livid, and come to confront Jesus, and please do not misinterpret this question and request for a sign as being the desire for more information, or an opportunity to believe. They were challenging His authority. Their hard-hearted unbelief saw the Jewish leaders ask for signs time and time again, but they would not accept the ones they were given. They knew that their greedy corruption, their commercialisation of the temple and temple worship was wrong, but they would not admit it. They did not want to hear the message. They had not listened to the Scriptures although they knew them, even though God speaks to man through His Word. So it is, when they are faced with the Eternal Word, they will not hear Him.

The Reality of the Situation (v19 - 22) - The Lord gives a very straight reply, yet the authorities do not understand the significance. The statement veiled the truth from hostile unbelievers, and their spiritual blindness was founded in their unbelief and hardened rebellion against God. Unbelievers not understanding the Lord's message is a theme that runs through the Gospel of John – Nicodemus and the Woman of Samaria. The authorities respond and are astonished by such a reply. How could Jesus possibly accomplish in three days, what had already taken forty-six years and was still not complete? They completely miss the point of what Jesus is saying, and as such, they also use it to accuse Him at His trial. John makes sure that we are not guilty of the same, as he makes it clear that the Lord is speaking of the temple of His body. He was pointing to the greatest miracle of all, His atoning death, and glorious resurrection.



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs