

Morning Sermon Outline / September 11, 2022

“Christ’s Zeal; Christian Zeal” John 2:12-22

“Zeal is a mixed affection, a compound of love and anger: it carries forth our love to God, and our anger against sin in an intense degree.” Thomas Watson

I. Note the setting –

¹² After this, He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days. ¹³ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. John 2:12–13 (NKJV)

1. The words “**After this**” in verse :12 tell us that the events described in this chapter happened chronologically, and shortly after the wedding at Cana. Jesus is with His mother, brothers and disciples, moving from Nazareth to Capernaum. This move marked the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. This wording solidifies what to me is a FACT, Jesus cleansed the Temple, at least twice! What do we learn from this? Even Jesus’ actions, short of His death on the cross, did not eliminate sin.

2. Knowing they are at the Passover tells us a lot:

A. The place would be crowded!

B. It was an important, commanded Holy Day and should have been treated as such –

¹² Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² “This month *shall* be your beginning of months; it *shall* be the first month of the year to you. Exodus 12:1–2 (NKJV)

¹⁴ “So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance...” Exodus 12:14 (NKJV)

The Passover was a celebration of the passing-over by the Angel of Death, the first-born who would have been otherwise killed, but because they had the blood of lambs on their doorposts, God’s people were passed over. It was a celebration of redemption because after this plague, which destroyed the first-born of Egypt, Pharaoh finally relented and let God’s people go (free from bondage). For us, it is a foreshadowing of God’s redeeming us from slavery to sin, therefore Jesus is called our Passover –

⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 1 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

C. It had become a money-making opportunity–

¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. John 2:14 (NKJV)

The Jewish people attending would need perfect lambs for the Passover. These, along with other things, were supplied at a price.

II. Jesus’ righteous zeal –

¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves, “**Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!**” ¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “**Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.**” John 2:15–17 (NKJV)

1. Jesus’ zeal was premeditated. He took the time to make a whip!

2. Jesus’ zeal was physical, and violent, and likely loud - :15-16

3. *Jesus' zeal was righteous, it was zeal for God's house and its proper use - :16*

Jesus' zeal divides true and false Christians, preachers and teachers! Many will say that Jesus sinned when He got angry, and that this passage is proof Jesus is not God!

I would say the opposite is the case. Jesus' anger is righteous anger, He would have been wrong not to be angry at misuse of the Temple.

Additionally, I would say those who count Jesus somehow wrong to be angry, especially about "religion" are WRONG themselves! God is angry with sinners –

¹¹ God is a just judge, And God is angry *with the wicked* every day. Psalm 7:11 (NKJV)

² God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; The LORD avenges and *is* furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves *wrath* for His enemies; Nahum 1:2 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Revelation 6:14–17 (NKJV)

4. *Yet, Jesus' zeal, anger expressed here is not final judgment wrath, but cleansing ZEAL, this is a positive, perfecting thing –*

¹⁷ For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ Now "*If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?*" ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to *Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. 1 Peter 4:17–19 (NKJV)

⁹ Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me. Psalm 69:9 (NKJV)

5. *Jesus' zeal is an example for all of us, we are to be zealous too –*

A. *Some would say "zeal" should be reserved for Jesus only, because righteous anger is rare among men.*

This is true, at least to a degree, so we should be careful with angry ZEAL –

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:19–20 (NKJV)

B. *Yet, an ungodly world would silence righteous zeal, speaking against sin they call "hate speech."*

Righteous zeal is especially needed in a sin-filled world, because many are zealous for their sin. The Sodomites were ready to break Lot's door down to satisfy their lusts. The Devil walks about, like a roaring lion –

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV) *There is no lack of zeal on Satan's side of things! Even in this passage it seems efforts to make money off the Temple & the Passover seem to have been a well oil MACHINE -*

"In the middle of this holy festival was a rigged business operation that was enmeshed in the whole ecclesiastical apparatus and controlled by the high priest. Every Jew over nineteen years of age had to pay his yearly temple tax of a half-shekel, the equivalent of two days' wages. The Gentile coins from Rome, Greece, Egypt, and even Palestine were too unclean for this "sacred" tax, so they had to be exchanged for a half-shekel. The hidden cost of this exchange equaled another day's wages. Then there was also the cost of purchasing a sheep, ox, or dove for the sacrifice, which must be without blemish. These came from the temple herds or flocks and were outrageously overpriced. Little wonder the temple coffers were full and overflowing. Barclay has pointed out that when Crassus captured Jerusalem and raided the temple treasury in 54 BC. he made off with almost ten million dollars without anywhere near exhausting the treasury." Fredrickson & Ogilvie Commentary on John's Gospel

If well-oiled big business, or not? God's temple was meant for PRAYER not profit!

C. *It is better to be consumed by righteous “zeal” than devoured by the devil. Zeal for God’s Word will keep you from forgetting it –*¹³⁹ **My zeal has consumed me, because my enemies have forgotten Your words. Psalm 119:139 (NKJV)**

D. *Zeal for Christ’s church makes us men and women of prayer; concerned for God’s glory and the spiritual welfare of brothers and sisters in Christ -*

¹² Epaphras, who is *one of you*, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. Colossians 4:12–13 (NKJV)

“Zeal in Christianity is a burning desire to please God, to do His will, and to advance His glory in the world in every possible way. It is a desire, which is not natural to men or women. It is a desire which the Spirit puts in the heart of every believer when they are converted to Christ. However, a desire which some believers feel so much more strongly than others that they alone deserve to be called “zealous” men and women. This desire is so strong, when it really reigns in a person, that it impels them to make any sacrifice to go through any trouble to deny themselves anything—to suffer, to work, to labor, to toil, to spend themselves and be spent, and even to die—if only they can please God and honor Christ.” J. C. Ryle

III. *Jesus’ zeal was for more than just a building, it was for God’s honor and the church –*

¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “*Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.*”

¹⁸ So the Jews answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?”

¹⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**”

²⁰ Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”

²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²² Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said. John 2:17–22 (NKJV)

1. *Jesus’ cleansing the Temple was the right thing to do. Notice, no one challenges Him on whether or not He was right to do what He did.*

2. *Instead, the Jews, those running the temple, ask for a sign :18, they are asking Him to prove He has the Authority to do what He has just done.*

3. *He gives them an answer, a true answer, but one they did not understand –*

A. *They thought he was speaking about the building*

B. *What He was talking about was His body –*

4. *Jesus’ body was the Temple, the true Temple –*

⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; Colossians 2:9 (NKJV)

5. *Yet, now, we are the Temple –*

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19–22 (NKJV)

6. *He purchased us with His blood for this purpose -*

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s. 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)

7. *Bought at a price is Christ’s blood –*

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like silver or gold*, from your aimless conduct *received by tradition from your fathers*, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 1 Peter 1:18–19 (NKJV)

8. *Christ's passion is shown in how He has cleansed the church –*
⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, Revelation 1:5 (NKJV)

IV. *We should aim to be zealous Christians –*

1. *Zealous for what is right and good –*

³³ **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.** Matthew 6:33 (NKJV)

2. *We need the “anger” part of zeal without sin –*

²⁶ **“Be angry, and do not sin”**: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil. Ephesians 4:26–27 (NKJV) also James 1:19-20

A. *Zeal can be shown with sadness as well as anger -*

¹³⁶ Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because *men* do not keep Your law. Psalm 119:136 (NKJV)

B. *Zeal is shown with fervency of prayer -*

¹⁶ Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, **fervent** prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16 (NKJV)

Confession of sin is because we are against sin! We confess to each other because we desire each other's prayers! The battle against evil must start for each of us, within ourselves!

“He has no greater struggle than he who labors to overcome himself.” Thomas A Kempis

²⁹ **If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.** ³⁰ **And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.** Matthew 5:29–30 (NKJV)

C. *Yes, zeal sometimes requires ANGER, EXTREMES –*

⁵ So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor.”

⁶ And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁷ Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; ⁸ and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. ⁹ And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹¹ “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. ¹² Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; ¹³ and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.’ ” Numbers 25:5–13 (NKJV)

D. *In the NT we do not find a call to kill, but still a willingness to die, for Christ, for what is right –*

¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Revelation 12:11 *Jesus calls us to another EXTREME to love our enemies, now this does not mean loving their sin –* ⁴⁴ **But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,** Matthew 5:44 (NKJV)

Romans 12:9 ⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies. —
Martin Luther King

Evil happens without effort, naturally, inevitably; good is always the product of skill. — Charles Baudelaire
Not skill only, but the fruit of Holy Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23