John 2:13-25

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[0:00] John chapter 2.

And we know that sometimes that can be a little bit tricky. There's sheets for little ones. But we rejoice. I don't want you to feel kind of uncomfortable if your little one's a little bit grisly. If your child is kind of losing it, which does happen, isn't it?
And the parent is losing it too. And there is a creche where you can go to. There's also a room out there. Please do feel free to take your little ones out there. We recognise that all of us have a bad week sometimes, don't we?
Yeah. Okay, John 2. And we saw two weeks ago the wedding in Cana of Galilee. John 2, it's a chapter of two halves, isn't it?
The first half recounts the wedding in Cana of Galilee. There's great joy. The joy of the Father gathered there. He rescues the Lord Jesus, the occasion, from being a social disaster.
[1:25] And then he brings to them this overwhelming sense of his power and life. He transforms it. He's the author of life.

And he gives this first miraculous sign. And we're told, aren't we, that the disciples saw this sign, saw the life, the new life that Christ brought.
And they are brought to faith in a new way in the Lord Jesus. But the second incident happens just a few days after. And it's shocking, isn't it? One of the most shocking incidents in the Temple of Jerusalem.
We call it, tamely, the cleansing of the temple. But I think it would be more accurate to really call it an earthquake hits the place. There's never been another day like this in the court of the temple court.
Think of the chaos that's there. Think of the noise alone. As Jesus drove the sheep and the oxen and their owners out of the house of God.
[2:33] Think of the scramble as the money changes. Grop around on the floor for their coins. Think of the paralysed shock as he cries out over the din.

Get out. Get out. Get out of my father's house. This place is a place for prayer. And you've polluted it.
You see, the Lord has suddenly come to his temple, hasn't he? And I think it's hard for us to grasp this morning just how dramatic an occasion it is. Jesus has gone up to Jerusalem in the Passover season with great crowds of Jews from various parts of the Middle East.
And when he arrives in the temple, what he sees first of all fills him with dismay. And then with indignation. And then eventually into clearly, openly expressed anger.
And it's a very important thing for you and I to grasp what it was that produced this response in Jesus. Because you seldom find Jesus like this as you read about him in the Gospels.
[3:47] Here is Jesus appearing to be a kind of raging inferno in the temple. Driving people out.

Turning over tables. It's so unlike him, isn't it? It's so unlike him. Let me fill in a little bit of the background to this temple building.
From the earliest days, the people of God, when the people of Israel were called out of Egypt, and God made his people, Israel, his distinctive home, that God owned them as his own, he began to lead them through the wilderness.
And there was a place, there was a place that God made where they would be able to go and meet him. The tabernacle, its whole purpose and significance of this place would be to remind them that the living God was dwelling at the heart of his people.
And later on, when they ceased to be a nomadic people and they became a settled people in Jerusalem, God permitted them in the days of Solomon to build a temple, which God clearly

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described and ordered.
[5:06] And as they built it, like the tabernacle in the wilderness, that temple had one solitary function. That temple was to remind them that the living God, the God of Israel, dwelt amongst his people.

And as they entered that temple, they would be reminded afresh of the kind of God he was. And at the heart and the centre of the temple was this place called the Holy of Holies, where God's presence was especially known.
There God dwelt in symbolic form in the temple. People weren't allowed to go in. Once a year, the high priest was allowed to go in, into this sacred area.
But the whole temple had a special characteristic. Over nearly every detail was written, holy unto the Lord.
There was something peculiarly set apart for God about the whole building. But here in Jesus' day, corruption has entered the life of God's people.
[6:15] Corruption began to display itself in almost open and shocking and astonishing ways with the way that people dealt with this building.

You'll remember, some of you who know your Bibles, that it was in the temple of the Lord that Isaiah went. And Isaiah saw the Lord high and exalted and lifted up.
And the Lord's train filled the temple. And the angelic beings, they cried to one another, he is holy, he is holy, he is holy, Lord of hosts. And the whole earth is full of his glory.
But here at this particular time, the decline and the decay of God's people are shown in the way that they used the temple.
What was happening was this, sacrifices were offered in the temple. And there was an inspection that was held so that every animal to be sacrificed had to be inspected by one of the temple guards.
[7:19] one of the temple priests, officials. The problem became that that guard, those officials became so crooked that when worshippers came to the temple, the only animal that would pass as acceptable were animals that had been bought from themselves.

They copyrighted the sacrifices. And so you could only buy an acceptable sacrifice from the temple courts, from the temple officials. There was a tax that had to be paid in the temple.
Every male Jew had to go up to the temple in Jerusalem and pay a certain tax. But the significant thing was you couldn't pay the tax in any currency. You couldn't go with your euros. You couldn't go with your pounds.
You couldn't go with your slotties. You could only pay the currency that was acceptable in the temple. It's a bit like when you go to the arcade, isn't it? You know when you go to the arcade?
I hope children, your parents take you to the arcade or the funfair. When you go to the arcade or the funfair, you can't just pay in pounds, do you? You have to go to this little booth and you give them the pound and then they give you the tokens which you can use on the funfair or the arcade.
[8:36] They rip you off terribly. And it's a bit like that here. You have to buy the temple currency. And so it was in the temple when Jesus comes.

They would exchange it. They'd exchange your currency but they would do it at an extortionate rate. It's like exchanging money at the airport.
You'd never do that, would you? Because you know they'll just rip you off because you're cornered there. And the temple would charge extortionate commission in order to change money into the currency.
And even if you would change they would tax you on the change so they made money even on that. Ordinary animals like the doves in verse 16 where Jesus says get out of you.
The doves could be bought outside of the temple let's say for 10 pence. But if you wanted a dove for sacrificial purposes the only one that could pass muster were the official ones.
[9:33] They would be the ones that you buy inside the temple courtyard and then they would be I don't know 5 pounds, 10 pounds. The word Jesus uses is the word emporium.

There's a little booth there's a little kind of run of shops called the emporium in Ealing Broadway. They're not the kind of shops you normally go into really. But it's just a booth it's a market.
Jesus says you've made my father's house into an emporium. You've made it into a marketplace. And here you would come to one of the stalls and they'd be selling the doves.
The ones that you could buy for 10 pence over the road you could buy for 10 pounds there. And so corrupt had the life of the temple become it was a place for racketeers.

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A place where there was absolutely no barriers or standards about behaviour. The only thing that mattered was making quick money.
[10:38] Self-interest. Enhancing the temple coffers no doubt but not for the glory of God nor for the benefit of his cause but for the benefit of the officials.

So there's dishonesty extortion sacrilege blasphemy of every description taking place in the temple. And Jesus arrives and it brings forth his undiluted anger.
We read don't we verse 13 the Passover of the Jews was at hand. It was almost time for the Jewish Passover and Jesus went up to Jerusalem and in the temple court he found men selling cattle sheep and doves.
He found others sitting at a table exchanging money. And so Jesus makes a whip out of cords and it's at this point Jesus begins to express his indignation and wrath against these people.
And some people just cannot cope with it can they? They say it seems so unlike Jesus. We can scarcely imagine Jesus doing that.
[11:53] And that is because we have formed a view of Jesus in the modern church which is contrary to the Bible's picture of who Jesus is. the New Testament has absolutely no problem combining his love and his grace and his tenderness and his readiness to draw about him sinners with a holy anger and a wrath that burns against this kind of dishonesty and sacrilege and hypocrisy.

it's a really interesting thing isn't it when you come to the last book of the Bible the book of Revelation where in many ways you get the fullest revelation of who Jesus is in the New Testament and you discover this remarkable phrase where these two qualities are brought together do you remember?
It speaks doesn't it of the wrath of the Lamb of the wrath of the Lamb Now why was Jesus so angry?
There is a certain distress isn't there still about the breaking of traditions you still find that I don't know if you remember in the summertime when the Australian cricketers had stumped the English batsmen and there was another incident where the Australian cricketers are walking through the long room at Lord's Cricket Ground and these MCC members they start shouting and we found out this week didn't we they've been banned for life they've been banned for life because it was sacrilege that they would shout in that room we know that happens in religious gatherings someone walks into the Orthodox synagogue in Finchley not wearing the right thing it would be a scene a woman walks in the wrong door of the mosque I promise you there'd be a scene it happens in religious gatherings tradition broken but we need to look really carefully this morning and see that what produced the indignation in Jesus was not merely that they were just breaking a tradition that isn't the issue that isn't the deal it wasn't that these money changers and tradesmen and sellers were not supposed to be there although they weren't it's something far far deeper so two areas where Jesus is profoundly angered
Jesus is profoundly angered first of all because the people were careless first of the honour of God's name that's the first point they were careless of the honour of God's name they were careless about God's glory and they were careless about God's holiness and since the Lord Jesus had a burning zeal for these things since as the disciples remember it was written in Psalm 69 isn't it that for your house zeal has consumed me and since Jesus lived for the glory and honour of his father and he could not bear that anything should stain that he finds himself when people are careless of God's glory rising up in anger against what's happening before his eyes you see they were sweeping aside weren't they everything that this temple was built to remind them of it was
[15:31] Herod's temple it had not been completed but a great deal of work had been done and what it was standing for primarily is that God the Lord is a holy God and when men and women come to him and they recognise his holiness to preserve the glory of his name to live in the light of that so that every part of their lives was touched by it and that is especially what they'd be professing as they approached him they should have had that at the forefront of all their thinking and the terrible thing was that these people were so distorting what this temple had been built for that they were turning the service of God to their own ends what were their primary ends personal advantage aggrandisement their own glory their own exaltation and so they took the name of the Lord

God almighty and they cast it into the gutter and they used this holy place these holy things for crooked trading and that is the primary thing that brought forth the wrath of the Lord Jesus and it

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always does of course you can never ever be careless about the holiness of God and the honour and the glory of his name without bringing down the anger of the Lord Jesus Christ do you believe that you can never be careless about the holiness of God and the honour of God and the glory of his name without bringing down the anger of the Lord Jesus Christ that's the first thing here's the second thing they're not only careless about the holiness of God they're careless about the souls of men and women they're careless about the souls of men and women and boys and girls let me explain to you it seems 99% certain that where this happened the particular area where this took place in the temple was the court of the Gentiles that's the non-Jews all the trading all the cheating all the dishonesty was going on where the place was being polluted by all sorts of misdemeanour that court was the court of the Gentiles it was the place where the Gentiles the non-Jews the nations were to come it was the place established by God as a place where the world could come and meet with God the
Jewish nation had glorious privileges they had been given a revelation that God gave himself and he had promised to them that he would be their God and they would be his people and why did God do that why did God choose the Jewish nation so that they would be a light to the nations that was his whole purpose that God's people that from them people would see the wonder and the God of Israel so you find quoted again and again and again in the New Testament that God chose the Jewish nation as his people he covenanted with them he chose them he privileged them beyond all measure but he didn't do it for their own sake he did it that they might be a light to the nations so that the glory of God would spread around the globe in other words he made them his people in order that they might become his missionaries to the
Gentiles and the court of the Gentiles was to be the very place where the Gentiles might come like Cornelius in the book of Acts did and that they would become God fearers that's how Cornelius is described do you remember that that's what the court of Gentiles was for that they might come near that those who far off might come and pray and that they might become fearers of God and the amazing thing that has happened is not only have they deserted their glorious calling but they've changed the court of the Gentiles into a marketplace and why why have they done that because they did not care about the souls of men and women and boys and girls and so in Mark 11 Jesus says is it not written that my house should be called a house of prayer for all nations but you've made it into a den of thieves and because they were careless of the souls of men and women and boys and girls the Lord
Jesus Christ was angry with them it displeased him profoundly and he drove them out because they defiled the Lord's temple as they did so as Jesus drives them out they asked don't they in verse 18 for a sign it's never a good sign verse 18 the Jews said to him what sign do you show for us for doing these things who do you think you are show us a sign to show your authority and Jesus answer in verse 19 is highly significant even though they misunderstood it he says doesn't he verse 19 destroy this temple and in three days I will rise it up of course immediately they think of the temple all around them they think how on earth can that happen Jesus says destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days verse 20 it's taken 46 years to build this temple and will you raise it up in three days but he was speaking about the temple of his body when therefore he was raised from the dead his disciples remembered that he said this and they believed the scripture and the word that
[21:49] Jesus had spoken of course the sign that Jesus is speaking about is the sign of his resurrection that he was crucified on Good Friday and he was raised again on Easter Sunday that God is planning to raise up a new temple and Jesus is going to bring in a new temple where the holiness of God will be demonstrated and that temple is not only his body but here's the thing you need to understand this morning it's not only his body but the body of all of those who will be raised with him you and me we've died with Christ we've been made alive with Christ we are raised with Christ and as the church of Jesus Christ we are the temple of the Lord and that is the sign that Jesus is giving to them and so if you were to meet the apostle Paul over coffee this morning and you said to the apostle

Paul where is the temple of God he would say to you are you in Christ because if you are you are the temple of God do you not know he would say that the spirit of God dwells in those whose temple you are and it is the resurrection of Jesus which is the sign of the beginning of that gracious purpose of God to build a new temple now one of the lessons we can learn for this let me point out two the first lesson of the cleansing of the temple is this Jesus Christ has a zeal for his father's glory

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Jesus Christ has a zeal for his father's glory and for his father's honour and that is what the disciples remembered when they thought of this incident zeal for your house will consume me that's a quote from psalm 69 and the whole of that psalm speaks of the messiah's coming and of his ministry and the point of it is this that
Jesus the messiah has a zeal for his father's glory and honour and wherever he dwells he will therefore express that zeal and desire to exalt his father now wherever he comes to a temple that is what the lord jesus christ is concerned with on the cross what is he concerned about he is consumed with zeal for his father's honour and for his father's glory father glorify your son that your son will glorify you that is his whole aim and concern the lord jesus christ greatest desire was for the glory and honour of his father and when he comes to dwell in his temple when he comes to dwell in the living temples which are his people that he has raised up when he comes to dwell in your life and mine the lord!
Jesus Christ has a consuming! zeal When he comes to make us his temple he has her fervor a zealous concern for the glory and honour of his father and so if you seek to use the temple of God which is your body for your own glory or for any other glory than the glory of the father you will have a major controversy with the Lord Jesus can you see that if you are the temple of the Lord which the apostle Paul says you are the dwelling place of God and if you will use your body for your own glory for the glory of any other than the glory of the!
you will have a glory and that is the principle that we need to grasp that with divine fervor the Lord Jesus is seeking his father's honour and his father's glory and when he comes to dwell within you by faith when he sees that he polluted the temple of God and abused the temple of God and defiled it and brought alien things into it he comes with his rod he comes with his wrath and that is something isn't it of a really uncomfortable truth and yet we need to take it on board Christ has a zeal for his father's glory and for his father's honour the second permanent principle as I finish is this Christ has a zeal to purify the temple in which he dwells and that's the glorious paradox of the gospel isn't it you cannot go anywhere in the gospel without seeing the kind of people that [27:06] Jesus draws to himself it's an amazing thing is that Jesus draws to himself all kinds of different people all kinds of people that know that they're sinful know that they're dirty he urges those who are sinners to come to him he doesn't say wait until you've cleaned yourself up and then come to me he says no come to me now come to me this morning don't improve yourselves but prostitutes sinners tax collectors he urges them to come to him porn addicts adulterers tax fiddlers come to me Jesus says just as you are and he's urged us to come to him just as we are but the one thing that we must never misunderstand is this we must never imagine that the Lord Jesus will leave us as we are because the Lord Jesus Christ has a consuming zeal doesn't he to purge and purify the temple in which he dwells what sign do you give us they ask the sign of the resurrection here's the glorious thing even though we've defiled the temple of

God and polluted it Jesus wonderfully says destroy it it's almost like a challenge destroy this temple and I will raise up a new temple in three days he says that by his divine power and the glorious thing that we may discover that however defiled however we've defiled however we've despoiled the temple of the Lord the Lord Jesus Christ who has a zeal for his father's glory is able to raise up a new temple he's able this morning to recreate you to rebuild to reform you in order that his glory may dwell within that's the power of the Christian gospel that's the sign that Jesus gave them they remembered after he was raised from the dead what he'd said the power of his resurrection is this glorious abiding permanent hope that this cleansing leaves with us
Paul says to you this morning if you've trusted in Christ you are the temple of God that is a glorious promise but it has implications which are very very far reaching for the one who dwells in his temple is the one who cleanses whatever he inhabits and he is ready to raise up a new temple in which his glory may dwell let's pray together!
go! to go! to go! to go! to go! to

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