

John 2:12-22
Key Verse John 2:17

Zealous for the House of God

A very zealous soul-winning young preacher recently came upon a farmer working in his field. Being concerned about the farmer's soul the preacher asked the man, "Are you laboring in the vineyard of the Lord my good man?" Not even looking at the preacher and continuing his work the farmer replied, "Naw, these are soybeans." "You don't understand," said the preacher. "Are you a Christian?" With the same amount of interest as his previous answer the farmer said, "Nope my name is Jones. You must be lookin for Jim Christian. He lives a mile south of here." The young determined preacher tried again asking the farmer, "Are you lost?" "Naw! I've lived here all my life," answered the farmer. "Are you prepared for the resurrection?" the frustrated preacher asked. This caught the farmer's attention and he asked, "When's it gonna be?" Thinking he had accomplished something the young preacher replied, "It could be today, tomorrow, or the next day." Taking a handkerchief from his back pocket and wiping his brow, the farmer remarked, "Well, don't mention it to my wife. She don't get out much and she'll wanna go all three days."

Tolerance indicates where your love is.

Christ models how we are to deal with Sin. So, whatever he tolerates, we too should tolerate, and what he does not tolerate, neither should we.

This does not mean that we should look to be intolerant. Jesus never looked for opportunities to be this way.

The world wants us to believe that when we become intolerant, then we are the aggressor. However, this is not the way Jesus approached this issue.

Notice the situation... Jesus notices a wrong, he turns away from it, goes and makes a whip, and then comes back in with an eye for business. He has come back to right a wrong.

Jesus never argued within himself about whether it was his place... he wasn't a Levite, so caring for the temple wasn't his business... He was not a priest, so caring for the sacrifices was not his duty. He did not wring his hands and wonder why no-one was doing anything. He did not go talk to someone who could do something.

No, Jesus got up, and did something about it!

I. The Permissive Leaders

A. An emerging demand

1. Temple worship was still in full swing, and point of fact, at this time in history, there was a sort of revival going on in regards to the temple worship.

Temple worship required paying a half shekel. Every Jew was required to bring this payment in order to be admitted to temple worship and it HAD to be in temple

currency.

Travelers came from all over to worship. During the passover feast, there would be approximately 1 million people present at the temple for worship and sacrifice.

The sacrificial animals to be offered were to be ceremonial approved. As people would bring their animal, there would be one appointed to inspect the animal that was to be offered. Keeping in mind that there were people from ALL over who would come, if a man from as far as damascus would come to the temple, he would have to travel over 130 miles. He would not have a cattle trailer to make sure the animal remained safe during the journey. While he may have chosen the absolute best from his heard to take to sacrifice, by the time it arrived, it may not be in the best of conditions.

To get a better understanding of what distances people may have come, look with me at **Acts 2:8-11**. This was approximately 50 days after passover. The time of pentecost would not have been quite as busy as the time of passover. This lets us see just where everyone would be coming from... **SHOW MAP**

The blue lines are identical at 200 miles, and the red lines are identical at 400 miles. I wanted to give an understanding of what was going on with those who would be there to sacrifice.

2. This same diversified crowd would be at the temple at the time of the passover. Now, not only would the animals have to be brought this long distance, but so too would the travelers be carrying currency from their own country. Coming from Rome, Egypt, Crete, etc... they would have brought money from those places.

B. Practice Instituted

1. So, here is the problem that many were faced with. How would they get that beast 500 miles, and it still be suitable for sacrifice? How would this Grecian arrive without temple currency and still be able to pay their half shekel? Intro: Money changers... Now, when talking about buying souvenirs, you can reject the current exchange rate. However, there was not another temple just around the corner... It was not like choosing which motel to stay in. For lack of a better word, they had the monopoly on this. These money changers knew it!
2. Look back with me to Deuteronomy 14:24-26. Here we are given the provision for those traveling long distances to pay their tithes.

Now notice what this is saying... if you can't carry your tithe which is a calf because it takes up too much room in your luggage, sell the cow before you leave, make the journey, then buy something when you get to the fest with the money. If it isn't a cow, don't feel like you are slighting God...it is still the tithe... As long as the tithe goes to the Lord, eat with a clear conscience.

Illustration: **Screen Capture Picture**

I remember when I went on a mission trip to Hungary and Romania. There were vendors there that would take various currency. In Budapest, there were people that would tell you a price in Hungarian Forint, but if you were to offer them Romanian

Leu, they may altar their price because they did not value the Leu as much. If you offered them Euros, they would give you a little better of a deal. However, if you offered them an American Dollar, they may give you an even better deal. At the end of it all, they were not helping you... they would watch the currency values and wait till the Dollar was up, and then trade their money for whatever currency was worth more. While you wanted the best price right then, they would wait for the best price later.

If you try that at your local Sunoco, you won't get very far. If you want Gas there, you had better be able to pay with plastic, or Green Back Dollars. Not sure you will get very far with 1000 Forint!

II. The Tolerant Crowd

A. The System Justified.

1. Now, people may have viewed this marketplace as a good thing, and in some respects it was. For the man who was traveling long distances, he could sell the best of his herd and take the money with him to purchase something at the temple market. According to Deuteronomy he could do so with a clear conscience.
2. Some could even argue that it took away anyone's excuse for not going to the temple. If they did not have the doves to offer, they could arrive and buy what was needed.
3. Some may even argue that it brought people into the temple. Perhaps the priest would allow this to be some form of outreach. Those who did not know what was going on could come and learn. They could be taught what is acceptable sacrifice.
4. Perhaps they viewed this as a way to have everyone serving. You may not be able to preach, witness, perform certain duties, but you can help change money... you can help sell doves... I am sure it all started with good intentions, but one thing led to another, and before long people were making money hand over fist.

B. Complying with Custom.

1. Those who could not afford to bring a lamb, could purchase 2 doves... but at this point, they had raised the price so much that it was causing people to have to pay more for less. The people coming with Roman or Egyptian money had to exchange theirs for temple currency. Where else you going to do this? They could sell that shekel for any amount they wanted... if you wanted to be allowed admittance for worship, you had to pay it!
2. People had come to the place where this was accepted. Perhaps someone would come to the temple after traveling 200 miles with their lamb for offering only to have it not pass inspection. Then, they were faced with the issue of having to go home without formally worshiping, or paying for the overpriced sacrifice.
 - a) How many of us would have turned around and said "Forget it! It isn't worth it."
 - b) Would you have been willing to pay double the price for a lamb to offer to God?

III. The Zealous Love

A. Respect for the sacred.

Jesus comes in to the scene and sees Man editing the practice that God had instituted.

1. Whenever outside practices are introduced to God's ways, you are in for trouble...
 - a) I have heard preaching against everything from men wearing sandals, to women cutting their hair, and everything in between! **FULCRUM PRINCIPLE**
 - b) There is this doctrinal fulcrum of sorts going on right now. Many in our culture are concerned that because there was a blasting of certain issues in yesteryear, then

there needs to be a blasting of that preaching and an allowance. So, you have this emerging group of people that preach a sort of “anything goes” type of philosophy.

- (1) We have gone from it being a sin for a woman to wear pants, to immodest attire at best.
 - (2) We have gone from men being expected to look like men to where it is now applauded for a pastor to look “metro” which is simply a modern day term for girly!
 - (3) We have gone from people being cautious in their media choices, to inviting the devil’s sound right into the sanctuary!
2. Many times, the issue is not that it is a sinful practice, but that it does not belong in the House of God!
 - a) There are certain allowances we may have to ourselves at home, but this is not to be brought into house of God.
 - (1) So many people are more concerned with their personal feelings on an issue than what the Bible says!
 - (2) Whenever we come to an issue God’s house, we MUST view it in light of being God’s House.
 - b) The worship of God cannot be overshadowed by the preference or convenience of man.
- B. A Portrait of Passion (Verse 18-22)
1. Jesus goes right into the statement of destroying the temple... i.e. His Body!

The Jews were so worried about the practices in the temple. They were more concerned about WHAT they were doing that they had lost sight of WHY they were doing it.

- a) What you are doing... Sunday Service, Bus Ministry, RU, Choir, Tithes and Offerings... etc.
 - b) Why you are doing... Worshipping GOD!
2. The temple was only **the place** where men could meet with God. Jesus told them that the temple was to be destroyed and He would raise it up again in 3 days...

Jesus was saying... You are so wrapped up in this place... Worship of God is MUCH more important. My death and resurrection will usher in a new era where men and women can worship anywhere!

- a) This truth ought to spur us to actually worship! This is not a truth we should use to justify missing church. No! It is one that should make us thankful for the opportunity to worship Him anywhere, and excited to take the opportunity to come together for corporate worship!
- b) Accepting of Jesus’ sacrifice and payment for your sin makes you yourself the temple of the Holy Ghost!

In Conclusion:

- Have we allowed some convenience to have prescience over worship?
- Are we justifying some practice rather than confronting it?
- Do we have respect of God’s house?
 - This can be seen in how we treat the time here.

- This can be seen in how we allow 1 thing to pull our attention away from the message of God's Word.
- This can be seen in how we are more concerned with our personal preference for the way we worship rather than the object of our worship.

Jesus' death offers to ALL the ability to worship our very creator:

- without inspection of your offerings.
- without having to pay a certain payment.
- without worry or fear of rejection by others.
- without fear of trickery.