

SLIDE-- 2008 #4 GOSPEL OF JOHN- TRUE WORSHIP

JOHN 2:12-25

Today we look at the importance of worship in Jesus view,
He stressed our need to keep our lives clear and uncluttered.
And how sometimes it takes a person outside to guide and help us.

A man was walking in the street when he heard a voice. "Stop! Stand still! If you take one more step, a brick will fall down on your head and kill you." The man stopped and a big brick fell right in front of him. The man was astonished. He went on, and after awhile he was going to cross the road. Once again the voice shouted: "Stop! Stand still! If you take one more step a car will run over you and you will die." The man did as he was instructed, just as a car came careening around the corner, barely missing him.

the man asked. "Who are you?"

"I am your guardian angel," the voice answered.

"Oh yeah?" the man asked. "And just where were you when I got married?"

SLIDE-- Jesus has just come from the wedding in Canaan of Galilee.

And the disciples have just witnessed Jesus first miracle
of changing the water to wine.

Now Jesus was going to Jerusalem to celebrate
the Jewish Passover as the law required,
The Passover commemorated the last plague God sent
to Pharaoh to let his people go.

SLIDE--- The last plague killed all the first born of Egypt and the .

Only way to escape even for the Jews

Was to sacrifice a lamb,

Rub the blood on the doorpost of the house

And stay inside under the its protection

Until the angel of death passed over.

Jerusalem would be crowded with thousands of visitors
And the **temple** mount would be particularly crowded,
For this was where the Pharisees and scribes were
doing business in the outer courts.

I. THE TEMPLE WAS CLUTTERED AND CROWDED

SLIDE

¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. John 2:13-14

Most of us are glad for crowds,

We enjoy crowds at ball games, theater performances, musical events.

We were happy about the large turn out at our Blessing for Hunt night.

But sometimes we can miss the point in the crowds.

Jesus found the temple cluttered and crowded
with money changers, sheep, cattle, and doves.

Two women were sitting on the bus when they started talking about a trip to
Switzerland. The first passenger asked the second whether she had enjoyed the beautiful

scenery of Switzerland? "Not really," came the reply. "I couldn't see much because of all the mountains in the way."

Why did Jesus find this offensive?
Most of the stuff was used in the sacrifices,
doves, lambs, cattle, and money changers.

It wasn't that they were not needed,
But that the Pharisees and temple changers
were using outlandish interest,
excessive exchange rates,
and high fees for animals.
Not unlike the financial companies of our day who
Who sacrificed the security of America's economic system
To satisfy their greed.
And the booths and cages, corrals, and money tables,
were in the outer courts of the temple
The only place where the Gentiles could worship.

SLIDE --- Jesus said: My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers. Matthew 21:13

He drove them out

Jesus warning here is clear that we do not allow
The world to clutter our lives,
That we lose our perspective to Worship.

On Sunday morning are we more interested in
entertaining the goats than feeding the sheep?
I have had more than one person say:
This new music just isn't what I want in worship.
Or I don't like the old hymns and creeds.
It might not be our preference,
But I want to say: worship is not about you.
It is about God.

We can get sidetracked by the parking, and the crockery demolition,
The tuckpointing, and landscape, and music style, the overhead projectors,
We forget what we are about, we lose our focus.

Or we can get so sidetracked by the fear and financial insecurity of our day,
SLIDE--- About what happened in the stock markets, bonds and capital gains,
That we need Jesus once again to drive out the bear and bull?
Sometimes change takes drastic measure.

That is what happened to a young man.

Who had been dating a woman a very long time.
He forgot why,
The woman thought she had been very **patient,**
through a long period of dating with no talk of marriage.
One night he took her out to a Chinese restaurant.
As he looked over the menu, he casually asked her,

"So... how do you want your rice? plain or fried?"
She look at him and said: "Thrown."

Jesus is reminding us that our relationship with God Is of first importance.
And our relationship with our neighbor is second.
And if we don't clean up the clutter of our lives,
Our kids and our neighbors
Will never see our need for the lamb of God
Which takes away the sin of the world.
And they begin to believe that they too can get along in life without Jesus,
Without a surrendered heart.

What will Jesus find when he looks into your heart?
There is nothing laughable about this.

**SLIDE --- II. THE TEMPLE NEEDED CLEANING
JESUS TAKE UP A WHIP TO CLEAN IT OUT**

SLIDE --- So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" John 2: `5-`6

Jesus demonstrates the importance that God sees in his house of worship.
That his house should be called a house of prayer.
Where broken people can come for healing.
Blind people can come for sight
Lame can come to walk,
The sinner can come to be cleansed.
Jesus wanted to show the world that
Nothing else but God alone can made it happen.

Jesus did physically in the temple of Jerusalem what
We need to do spiritually in the temple of our bodies.

SLIDE --- Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. I Corinthians 6:10-20

God in us is the hope of Glory.
And if God is going to dwell in us,
Then we had better clean out the clutter.

Adrian Thomas took drastic change in his family owned drugstore in Meyersdale, PA, In the winter of 1992 he came to a decision after he had seen too many of his friends die of lung cancer and heart disease. For ninety-six years, his family had sold tobacco products. On that day, Thomas, his family, and his employees boxed up all the cigars, snuff, and pipe-tobacco products and piled them in the middle of the parking lot. Thomas then struck a match and used his state tobacco license to start the fire. A crowd gathered and Thomas told the local media he could no longer put profits ahead of the health of his patrons. He said: "I know that this won't change the smoking habits in society and others will pick up the profits, but this decision was not based on economics, but on my own sense of integrity." (from God's Little Lessons on Life for Dad, Honor Books)

Sometimes takes drastic action to drive out the merchants of our lives.
Jesus shows us that any change is not easy.

The merchants had permission of the Pharisees,
They had rented the temple space and
Since the temple got its cut on everything.
This was a win- win for the merchants inside and outside the temple.

SLIDE --- Jesus made a whip out of cords, which he tied together.
He did not do it in a flash of anger.
This whip was made either from the cut strips
of the hides of beast slain in the sacrifice,
Or cords used to lead the cattle into the temple

Why didn't he use his walking staff?
One commentary said,
The Jewish law forbids one to carry his staff
Into the temple or place of worship.
Jesus made this whip not for force,
but to intimidate the violators of the holy place
It takes drastic measures to make a change.
It takes continual maintenance.
That's why we must be obedient daily,

A distraught senior citizen phoned her doctor's office.

"Is it true," she wanted to know, "that the medication
you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?"
"Yes, I'm afraid so," the doctor told her.
There was a moment of silence before the senior lady replied,
"Then I'm wondering if my condition is so serious,
why my prescription is marked, NO REFILLS!"

This picture of the clutter in the Temple,
Is a picture of us.
Maybe you have never allowed Jesus to cleanse you
Or maybe you have been a Christian but have allowed the world to clutter you,
All God asks to start the cleansing
Is for you to give him the nod.
A small desire in the hands of God is enough.
To clean up your act for eternity.

SLIDE --- III. OUR LIVES NEED THE ULTIMATE CLEANSING

SLIDE --- Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

SLIDE --- The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. John 2: 18-21

God was telling these Jews that he loved them so much,
That the price he was willing to pay to cleanse

their bodies and souls, was his own death.
He was the Lamb of God.

SLIDE --- Willing to be slain for the sin of the world.

John began this chapter with the miracle of *conversion* (changing water into wine).
Then he shows Jesus with a work of *cleansing* (tipping tables in the temple).
This is the process of salvation: first **Conversion**, and then **cleansing**.

Isn't this true of our lives as well?
Its one thing to accept Christ,
Its another thing to clean the sin out of our lives.
That is when the going get tough.

You can't do that on your own.
Because we are incapable of cleansing our own temple.
No self-help program could rescue it.
We can't climb Mount Messiah on our own.
There are some mountains only God can climb.
Because when it comes to facing our own grave
our own guilt?
our own sin?
And the addictive clutter of our lives.
We just Need Jesus.

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Its not that you are not welcome to try,
Some of us think we can,
The hustler of the world sits in the middle of your temple,
Your heart, and guards his domain.
The only way to freedom,
Is to take Jesus hand,
And let Him drive out the clutter.
Maybe we have already turned our hearts over to Christ,
we are converted,
But we have never turned our bodies over to his control,
our thoughts, our deeds and action.
We haven't been cleansed.
The lamb of God came to convert and to cleanse
When we give him access to our lives.
Will you let this be your prayer today:

SLIDE - Lord Jesus, do for me what I am unable to do for myself

Thank you Lord Jesus, for coming to die to set us free. For cleansing our bodies, minds and spirit that we can live free. Let us receive the cleansing you have to offer with an open mind and heart as we come to your communion table today. I pray this in Jesus name. Amen