

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Des Moines, Wash.  
March 8, 2015**

***John 2:13-17***

**Cleaning House!**

**Hymns: *Lamb of God* - 115 – 109  
Closing: 111**

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

***John 2:13-17 –***

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”

<sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

Picture the scene: Jesus entered God’s house and what did he see?

- There were people distracted by their work
- There were people who were completely consumed with making money so that they could fund their materialism.
- There were people there to feel good about themselves.
- There were people who were there just to witness the spectacle which was taking place.

That unbelievable circus was the scene described for us in John 2:13-14. The temple in Jesus’ day was a hub of religious activity. Standing at the center of Jerusalem, it was the

epicenter of Jewish Old Testament worship life. Worshippers came from all over the nation of Israel, flooding into this temple each and every day to bring their offerings and sacrifices to the LORD. And though it was a place that was constantly buzzing, it was far from what God wanted his house to be.

Long before this day, in the days of Moses that we heard about in our lesson from Exodus, God had given his people commandments. “You shall have no other gods before me,” said the Lord. “Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy,” was the decree. Those commandments were given to instill honor and respect for God, his Word and his house amongst the people of Israel. But from the scene that we are given in John, it was clear that those commandments were not being kept; it was clear that zeal for God and his house was not in the people’s hearts. The temple, and accompanying worship life in Israel had turned into a money making haven of business where greed and dishonesty were rampant.

Based on all that was happening there in Jerusalem, those people desperately needed Jesus to walk into the temple that day.

First and foremost, they needed Jesus to walk into the temple that day because they needed a Savior. Through his attitude and his actions, he would obey as they never did. When Jesus walked into God’s temple in Jerusalem, the place that was supposed to be the center of worship and devotion to God; we are told that zeal for his Father’s house consumed him. This heart-filling love, respect, and honor for God and his House are what God had in mind when he gave the commandments to his people. And though that consuming zeal was never found in his people’s hearts, it would be found in their Savior’s heart and his perfect obedience to the Father’s commands would be given to them.

And that zeal led Jesus to act. Moved by righteous indignation at the lack of respect being shown for God and his dwelling place on earth, Jesus would clean house. As he drove out livestock and cleared out bankers, Jesus was living as the obedient Savior of the world that these people needed. He was showing God’s house the respect that it warranted. He was

giving God and his Word the temple home that they deserved. He was following the commandments with the perfection that the people of Israel needed their Savior to have.

In addition to obedient Savior, Jesus was also acting as the Good Shepherd who corrects straying sheep. Though in God's house, we mentioned that the people there were missing devotion to the Father. Though in God's house, the people were also about to miss the Messiah who was right there in their midst. He was the One who all of this temple worship and sacrifice were supposed to be pointing them to.

And so, while Jesus came to physically clean God's house, he was also there at the start of his earthly ministry to clean people's hearts. He was there to make sure that the people that he came to save might see the love of the Father as it was displayed before them. He was there to remove distractions that would cause them to miss the fulfillment of God's promises which would take place through Jesus' work.

Zeal consumed Jesus as he stood in the temple of Jerusalem amongst the people of Israel; and it led him to obey as Savior; it compelled him to correct as Shepherd.

Picture the scene once more: Jesus enters God's house and what does he see?

- Thoughts distracted by work, or family, or a host of other issues?
- Hearts consumed by materialism and selfishness?
- People more interested in socializing than worshipping?

Jesus comes into God's house here at Holy Trinity and in every one of us, he sees people who need a Savior, because he sees people just like those that he saw in the Jerusalem temple who fall way short in their zeal for the Lord.

- He sees members who forget that God's church and his work are to be the central focus of their lives.
- He sees leaders with excitement for the Word that doesn't always match what God prescribed in his commandments.
- He sees people who too often forget what a privilege it is to be able to gather in God's house surrounded by God's people listening to God's Word

while proclaiming God's work and praising God's name.

And to those who need a perfect Savior, he is just that. He is a worshipper whose "zeal for God's house was consuming." He is a student of God's Word whose fire for learning and growth never fizzled. He is a child of God who was perfectly dedicated to God his Father. He was obedient to those commands of God of which we all fall short. And in his obedience, we are given our Savior, just as God sent him to be.

And as the perfect substitute who was the Father's answer for sinners, Jesus wants to be sure that we too see him amidst all of the activity and distractions of our lives.

And so, Jesus also comes to us today, just as he did in Jerusalem, ready and wanting to clear hearts that are so often cluttered. With driving whip in his hand and zeal in his heart, what impediments that keep you from God's house would Jesus drive from your lives? What distractions from the Word would Jesus overturn and cast to the side? What in your life would cause Jesus to exclaim, "Get this out of here because it is keeping you from your God?"

As Jesus came to the temple that day in Jerusalem he also comes to us, ready to clean house, ready to clean hearts. But remember how he comes, remember why he comes. Fueled by a desire to turn hearts to God, filled with love and passion for his people, consumed by a zeal to carry out his Father's will, Jesus comes to clean house and hearts that you might more clearly see your loving Father and all that he has done through his Son, your Savior Jesus.