

"He Drove Them All Out" (John 2:13-17)

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Introduction: Our Lord Knew Exactly What He Was Doing

- A. We should never get the impression that our Lord made His best diplomatic effort to reach people, but that things somehow got out of control and as a result He was unexpectedly rejected, persecuted, tortured, and then crucified.**
- B. No, our Lord knew exactly what was going to happen to Him and the beginning of His public ministry proved it. Not only did He immediately confront the devil in the wilderness, but He then entered into Jerusalem to confront the most serious signs of our sin.**
- C. In a marvelous prophetic picture of the Passover Lamb Jesus coming into the celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem, the Temple (Jesus) who would later rise in three days came into the Temple in Jerusalem, we see that Jesus wasted no time in facing His mission to shed His blood and to rise again in order to bring salvation to the world.**
- D. He did what had to be done knowing that He was going to make nothing but enemies. But He did not do it with reckless pride or with selfish ambition – indeed He was never out of control – and He certainly never sinned, but did what He did to show the zeal that would save you from sin and death!**

Past I: But So Much For the Popular Image of Jesus That Implies Gentleness to the Extent of Weakness

- A. The Word of God is given so that you would know your Savior. Yes, He is all-compassion and yes, He is gentle...He is what we poor sinners need in our fragile condition that Isaiah portrays as a "bruised reed (Isaiah 42:3)," but this is not the whole picture.**
- B. Our Lord Jesus Christ is also bold and strong to stand up against the enemies of God and the enemies of His precious people. He is a Savior who fights. He will not condone rebellion. He will not tolerate what threatens to cover His Word or take away from the worship of the Heavenly Father; He will not permit anything in the world to destroy what you need to be saved.**

Part II: There were Good Reasons for His Actions in the Temple:

- A. Verse 15: He drives out with a whip those selling cattle and sheep and of the course the animals themselves.**
- B. Verse 15: He scatters the coins of the money changers and overturns their tables.**
- C. Verse 16: He ordered those selling the pigeons to get out of His Father's house.**
- D. Of course all of these thought they had good reason to be in the temple: the animals were used for offering worship sacrifices; the moneychangers were**

providing the acceptable coin for the Jewish offering for the temple, but at the end of the day they were actually committing a terrible and arrogant sin:

1. It was not simply that the place of worship was being turned into a market so that making money replaced worship, but all of this was trying to stop the prophetic Scriptures!
 2. The outer court where this occurred was the only place Gentiles could come to worship God. Zechariah 14 contains the prophecy that all nations would come to Jerusalem to worship. But how could they with the outer courts becoming a market place?! Gentiles were actually being cut off from being able to worship in fulfillment of the Scriptures!
 3. But He wasn't defending the Bible for the sake of the Bible, but for the fact that in interfering with the Word, the Heavenly Father was not receiving the worship He was supposed to receive. Jesus was therefore consumed with a holy anger or what Luther called zeal that was "an angry love or a jealous love...His anger does not arise from hatred; it springs from...love toward God (AE 22:233-34)."
- E. For these holy reasons, Jesus did what He did and He knew the consequences.
 - F. His actions would later remind His disciples of the Word of The Lord from Psalm 69: "Zeal for your house will consume me." He loved His Father so much that it would consume Him, that is, it would "eat Him up," or "destroy Him." It would lead Him to be crucified!
 - G. That is, Jesus was willing to take on a death-sentence so that you could worship God, because without that worship: 1) faith would not exist and you would die in your sins; and 2) the Father would not receive the worship of His true children, all of you. For these reasons, Jesus said, "Yes, I will take on this burden; yes, I know that this action is going to lead to my cross, but it is more than worthwhile, because my Father will be worshipped and my people will be saved!"
 - H. Surely at that moment and time, no one resisted Him because His zeal was a divine anger, God's anger; He said "Get out of here!" No one had any choice but to obey. God was shouting!
 - I. But again, the action would be the death of Him.

Part III: But This Is Why He Is Our Savior!

- A. There was no negotiating with sin! He could not compromise and gently approach sinners in active rebellion to try coaxing them into taking a different approach with their crass commercialism.
- B. There is a time and a place for counsel, and there is a time and place for taking a stand. Jesus knew the time and the place to be forceful and to have this holy zeal at the right place and time.

Part IV: But Our Sin Does Not Want Jesus To Be This Way!

- A. We would prefer the hyper-gentle Jesus who just puts up with our confused priorities.

- B. So often we are like the ones who made the temple courts into a market; we want to define what is really important: not the proper worship of God, not the keeping of the Word, but treating the things of this world as our priority.
- C. Let's face it, those in the temple were taking care of business, and in our sin we are the same way: we are willing to use the things of God – even worship – to make a profit.
- D. The things of religion and spirituality – not at all necessarily the saving faith – are so often the basis for selfish ambition and making money.
- E. And how often while we take comfort in calling ourselves people of God or Christians, we are willing to constantly put the “real priorities” of those things we want and think we need ahead of the worship of God and the Word of God in our lives.
- F. When Jesus shows zeal -- angry love -- against our materialism and wrong priorities, we suddenly don't like Him as much as we use to because such a God will not put up with our trying to make His grace cheap.

Part V: But Christ was Zealous and You are Called to Be Too!

- A. St. Paul in Romans 12:11 commanded “never be lacking in zeal.” Remember that Jesus was zealous at the right time.
- B. Ours is not an impotent faith and because our God is a God of power, His people also know a powerful zeal when it is appropriate to show it.
- C. There is a time and place to be zealous for the Lord:
 - 1. We are called to speak the truth. The Ten Commandments in our Old Testament reading are not the Ten Suggestions. If you were asked point blank: do you believe in the Ten Commandments as absolute moral standards what would you say? Would you back away? You are called to be zealous. These commandments mark the life of the One who knows they are saved by grace!

Back in Houston, Texas, I led my congregation to get involved in Life Ministry supporting Lutherans for Life and taking part in a local effort to witness at the largest Planned Parenthood in North America. There was a man who would help our effort who showed up with a shofar and he would stand at each of the four corners surrounding the building and blow this ram's horn and then pray in a loud voice for the innocents. He was like a messenger from heaven. He was not mean-spirited, he was not obnoxious, he was sincere and powerful, he was zealous for God and zealous for the babies. He took a stand and was unashamed. We are called to be this way with or without a shofar.

- 2. And what about the our Epistle for the day? 1st Corinthians 1 teaches that Christians consider Jesus Christ to be the power of God and the wisdom of God (verse 24). Nothing is to be more important than Jesus Christ in your life. And “nothing” means nothing! But is this the case? How easily do you break the First Commandment?

Conclusion: But All of This Reminds Us As To Why We Needed Our Zealous Savior

- A. There was a reason as He did.**
- B. He knew that you and I could never make it alone. We do not have the strength or holiness to keep the commandments as we ought to; and we are too much into our worldly priorities to treat God as most important. We just don't and for such sinners, the wages of sin is death.**
- C. This was precisely why Jesus cut to the chase about His coming. He was not going to dance around the fact of His coming: He came for sinners...He would eventually die on the cross even for those He drove out of the temple...even for you.**
- D. Being zealous for the house didn't stop at that Passover in the Temple.**
- E. He was zealous also to give up His own body, His temple, on the cross of Calvary in order to drive away your sin and death.**
- F. He did so by taking it on...taking your sin and taking your death. He was zealous to allow nothing to keep Him from shedding His blood to cover your sin; zealous to fulfill the Scriptures that His holy death would lead to His conquering resurrection to give you eternal life.**
- G. He was zealous for you! In Christ, let us be zealous!**