

Lent 3 07/03/21 10-30am Zoom Talk Based on John 2:13-22. Fr Terry

That passage from John's Gospel sees an angry Jesus, and don't you think that's refreshing? We are so used to thinking of Jesus as meek and mild as the old hymns describe. BUT! Was Jesus having a bad hair day, or was it an early version of the reset button? Consider the purposes of the Temples and Churches and Chapels ..somewhere that provides a place where people can come into contact with God and maybe experience His grace and His love. True! we can experience God's grace and love in almost, if not, every situation we might be, but Temples, Churches, Chapels, Cathedrals etc provide those special places where we can gather with others or simply be there on our own ...to give thanks to God for all that He does for us ..where we can seek His forgiveness...where we can hear the Word of God ..where we can receive guidance for our livesand this Pandemic has proved one glaring fact to me ...our Temples are still a vital important support in our lives ...the whole aspect of our faith is fellowship ..fellowship with God and fellowship with others ..and that's certainly not that easy to develop in isolation . The Temple represented God's Presence, His availability to all who would seek God...His love for all who called upon God, but this particular day something happened to this good place, something to turn it into a place where it became difficult to hear God and experience His goodness...and let's not forget the Temple was where people offered sacrifice in accordance with the Law ..sacrifice is and was an important ingredient in a life of faith sacrifice reveals the depth of our sincerity...it shows that we put God first before our own prosperity, first ahead of our own needs. ..This is just what the dealers in the Temple precincts were exploiting ..those strict terms & conditions as to what animals or parts of animals could be sacrificed ..and not just that only the Temple currency could be used to buy them, and if you don't have the special money, don't worry you can change your Roman money into Temple money ...So here we have it 24/7 service at the Temple easy access to God get your salvation here .John tells us that Jesus walked into this environment, he sees people selling all manner of sacrificial items, money changing hands, no doubt pretty generous exchange rates for the traders ..you can imagine the noise...bartering, boasting, the noise of the animals and birds, the smells, is it any wonder he got angry? ..all these things on tap for the salvation of God's people ,,, "What have you done? Get these things out of here, what right have you to turn my Father's house into a den of thieves? GET OUTIt's not a bad thing, to sometimes take a fresh look, to see just what has been done to the Holy things of God, to those things that are meant to help us to meet God .Everything that Jesus rejected in the Temple, was put there in the first place with the best of intentions, put there to enable people to seek God's will for their lives and thank Him for all that He did for them...what initially was good, become something that was evil the Temple became a place where people were exploited in their need for salvation, rather than bringing them closer to God...It's not hard to think of places where Jesus would be provoked into that same anger today ...places that would need some "driving out" of the things that prevent us from meeting Goddid you ever as a younger person feel like re-directing road signs, just for devilment (a few nodding heads) yet I wonder how many people have been sent on the wrong road, by other people misrepresenting the Christian faith? Like with any other product or commoditythere are those who will cash in on good nature, and people's need for forgiveness, people's need for love. The Temple merchants, are easy to spotthose who misrepresent our faith and seek to guide us down the wrong path . That's the million pound question and it's not multi-choicethere are times when we need to clear things from our lives, if we are to truly meet God in the temples of our own bodies ..and of course in the Temples of bricks and mortar, but we cannot reduce faith to some sort of commercial transaction. Sure, it's important what we give in time, money and talents, but it doesn't take care of everything . It's the Cross of Jesus that saves us not our rituals ...it is the Resurrection that redeems us ..not our inadequate obedience ..no-one understood Jesus when he said "Destroy this Temple, and in 3 days I will raise it up" it was only after His Resurrection that the penny dropped, that Jesus is the Temple that it's in Jesus where we meet God, talk to God, experience His love and forgiveness ...they would recall His healing touch on people, how He fed the hungry, gave peace and joy to those who came near Him...They knew then what Jesus meant when He said "I am the way the truth and the life" Are there things in our life that prevent us from meeting with God? sure...we can learn from our Bibles and in our Rituals and Worship together, but to know His power and Presence we need that encounter with the Living Christ which we can only have through faith and trust and openness to His Spirit ..so let us pray for Christ to clear our hearts as He cleared the Temple and ask that He may guide us in God's waysTBTG