

## **God Is In Me ASSF March 7 2021**

Gospel passage: John 2.13-22 (This passage is known as Jesus Cleanses the Temple).

**Title: God Is In Me.**

**Themes: Temple is now us: as the Body of Christ.**

*Ref: Mike from Interrupting the Silence*

It was business as usual at the temple that day. Various animals were being bought and sold, coins were being changed... All the usual people had their usual places and usual roles. People were making a living off all the comings and goings, profits were being made, pilgrims were being fleeced, while attending for the upcoming Passover festival.

At first glance, when we read this passage, we might see this as a story where Jesus gets angry. But if we get stuck on that we are missing the point.

What we should observe in this scene is the "busyness" ..all around the temple, just as Jesus would have observed: Not a surprise to him... He grew up following the usual Jewish traditions, and so he would have been on pilgrimages to the temple before, to attend those big festivals.. He knew how it worked, and that this was business as usual.

What IS an important point in this passage, is that Jesus is disrupting business as usual.

*Verse 19. Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in 3 days.*

Why is he disrupting business as usual?

Because the Jews at that time had lost the plot!

Their rituals of purity had become rituals of discrimination: Jews in the Inner Court, Gentiles keep to outer court. Men in this section, women in that; sacrifices the poor could afford, sacrifices the rich could afford.

They had forgotten that they themselves were the true temple of God.. It was all about the BUILDING and the PROFIT to be made.... They had forgotten that God was more interested in them than in their festivals. God wanted them more than their offerings and ceremonies.

Look back at Micha 6:7-8: *7Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

We too know about business as usual:

In Britain a good news headline is a gloomy one

In America, They say the pledge of allegiance every single morning in school. Bit like North Korea.

In Canada, we use tumble dryer drums to line fire pits

Just about everywhere, if someone says they are successful we think they are referring to their bank balance.

It's just the way it is. We lose the plot.

Even our churches can become slaves to tradition...Have you heard about the church who only uses 100% beeswax candles? Why? Nobody could remember until one day, an elderly lady came back to visit, and remarked on them: She could remember the day when as a child, her Sunday School class had used up all the candles and forgotten to replace them – The only ones available were some beeswax candles from the local hardware store - She was so surprised they were still using them!

Sometimes we just soldier on, going about the business of survival, and obliging habit for habit's sake. It's true that when times are tough it can really help to put your nose down and just keep following life's patterns. The danger is that we get stuck in them.

Why might we get stuck? What makes us start to unconsciously creep away from the target and then one day, inevitably, start to realize that life seems rather pointless?

- Might it be fear? Are we afraid that we might lose something of ourselves or our lifestyles, our "set-up", are we afraid of the uncertainty that the future holds in store? Is it a strong sense of self-preservation that makes us grab on to anything that helps us feel secure, and keeps life predictable?

Because that's just an illusion, really.

- Could it be that we are so busy and worn out making a living, fulfilling our duties, that life can turn into a relentless treadmill, propelling us on to complete one task after another, one appointment after another, a never-ending to-do list? No time to think?
- Could it be that most of us just don't like change? Of any sort?

It can be so easy to miss the point. And lose our sense of gratitude, wonder, mystery, spirituality: Then there is no ROOM left for us to experience ....God in us!

REMEMBER:

We really are the temple of God's presence.

ALL of creation is where God lives.

Whatever direction we might turn, there is the face of God gazing upon us and his love resides within us..

God Is In Us.

*Verse 21: The temple he had spoken of was his body.*

3 days after he was crucified, died and was buried, he rose again, and to cut the story short made us all his Body.

It was a prophetic message, wasn't it? Not really understood by the disciples until much later, after his resurrection. Jesus was prophesying that soon the temple would not be the focal point of worship, but that he would be replacing it. With his body, in the form of the Holy Spirit.

When we read John's gospel, we see how it goes:

The word became flesh so that the temple might become human.

And then over and over again, Jesus is interrupting, disrupting, overturning and throwing out anything that has turned into business as usual.

As disciples of Jesus, it begs us to reflect:

- In what way might you be carrying on with business as usual? Could it be time to review and unclutter some daily habits? What really matters?
- How can you clear the temple of your heart to provide more sacred space for God today? We can believe wrong things for so long that we get used to them and think they're right. But in fact they are discriminatory. We can believe wrong things for so long that we reject the truth because it appears different and we've never heard it before. Open your mind to the church's new initiatives, where we explore relationships and look at how to live in love and faith.
- How do we show a white-hot zeal for worship like Jesus showed on that day? Not through ritualism, that's for sure! God wants us to walk humbly and worship him purely. True worship is worked out Monday to Saturday as we care for the vulnerable and the weak and the hurting, as we bear witness to the Good News of God's love with our neighbours.

Just to be clear, I am not asking about what needs to happen so that you and I can become holy or become the temple, because you and I already are!

And I thank God, that He IS in us and not only inside our church buildings – what a desolate year we might have had. Because he is in us, we have been able to worship and support each other as the Body of Christ.

Yes, *God is In You*, because Jesus has made it so.