**John 2: 13 - 17 W & LB am 7/3/21**

The Bible teaches us that our God is the God of 2nd chances.

To try to be positive that could have been what Jesus was doing when He turned over the tables in the Temple. Giving those who had disgraced the temple a 2nd chance. A chance to give up what they were doing and try a different way.

In this passage it is easy to see the emotion of Jesus. This is not the only time when we see the emotions of Jesus coming to centre stage.

But this is slightly different from other times when Jesus allowed us to see his emotions, there is only one way to describe it, on this particular day….Jesus was angry.

I’m sure all of us have been there. Something stirs us up, our emotions flare up and suddenly our anger spews out. But we need to clear about an important truth here.

It’s not being angry that is a sin. It is what we do with our anger that really matters, and what we direct it at.

We know that Jesus was without sin, and yet here we see him in this story showing what seemed like uncontrolled anger at the sellers and money changers, and actually driving them out of the temple.

It seems His emotion took over, but it was for a reason.

The temple was being used for the wrong purpose, a bad purpose. This was not so much about the buying and selling that was taking place, it was about how and why it was being done.

It was the time of the Passover which meant that Jews who were faithful, and able to, headed to Jerusalem to celebrate. So Jesus went too, but when He got there things were not as they should be.

You may remember that in the Old Testament, God required the Jews to celebrate the Passover to remind them of how God had delivered them out of Egypt.

To preserve the life of their first born they would need to kill a sacrificial lamb and apply the blood of the lamb to the door post.

When the messenger would see the blood then he would pass over the house and the child would be spared.

They were also told that (if possible) they were to go to Jerusalem to make this sacrifice. So this is why Jesus and His family were there.

I want you to imagine if you will, what they saw when they got there. The Jews had greatly multiplied by this time so hundreds of thousands of Jews would have flooded the city. Like some major convention, or perhaps like the Olympics had come to town. And all of that attention and the size of the crowd meant one thing to the Priests and the Pharisees. Money. The economic impact was huge. The merchants, and the priests and temple leaders, would clearly make a lot of money.

When Jesus arrived at the temple He saw immediately that it had been turned into a giant marketplace. But worse than that was how they were selling, they were certainly charging far more than they should.

In other words they were ripping the people off. Most of the people who came to Jerusalem for Passover had traveled a very long way. Travel was already tough but imagine trying to travel with the animals for their sacrifice. Almost impossible.

Depending on what type of offering you were making that would decide the type of animal you needed. It could be a big as bull, or a small as a dove ... but in addition for Passover everyone was required to bring, or purchase, a lamb.

So it would be a real struggle to bring them any distance. Even if you decided to bring your own animals they had to be perfect, no spot or blemish. And you were not the one who got to decide. The priest was.

Many, no doubt, brought their own animals only to have them turned down by the priests. The priests were sharing the merchants profit so they turned many of them down. Then you had to purchase one at their prices.

They had a monopoly going and anytime there is a monopoly, people will take advantage of it. And they did. They charged high prices because the people had no choice but to pay it.

So here were those who sold the cattle, doves, lambs and right by them were the money changers, you see you couldn't just use any money, it had to be specific coins that were needed to be used, and most people would not have them. So merchants and money changers were taking lots of money from people who simply came to worship their Lord, and probably couldn't afford it.

And there they were when in walked Jesus.

Jesus the man who worked in a carpenters’ shop with His Father Joseph, a man who is healthy and strong and He storms in and basically destroys the place. Animals, people, money, scattered everywhere.

Not surprisingly the the leaders of the Temple began to demand some answers from Jesus.

Basically they were asking Jesus “who do you think you are?” If you are so important do something to prove yourself. They demanded that He give them some kind of sign, a miracle to show he had authority.

And how did Jesus answer them? He said, “An evil and adulterous generation looks for a sign.”

Could this happen today? Of course it could, and it does.

Have you ever said, I’ll go to church Lord, if you will just heal me. OR Lord if you will just get me out this problem I’ll live like I should OR Lord if you will just answer this one prayer, I’ll do whatever you ask.

The Jews asked for a sign. Instead of giving them a sign Jesus simply answers their question.

But they didn’t understand, but then, neither did the disciples at that point.

Jesus said, “Destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it up.” They were confused. They all thought He was talking about the building they were standing in.

Jesus was, of course, talking about Himself. His crucifixion. And these very same Jews, led by the priests, merchants and money changers, were going to be responsible for having Jesus crucified.

The Priests and Pharisees didn’t get it. They didn’t want to get it because they knew they were in danger of losing their authority….their power, and most of all, their source of lots of money. So they chose not to believe.

The disciples saw how Jesus reacted to the sins of the moneychangers in the temple. They eventually twigged and saw it in the same way that Jesus did.

But in fact the Bible tells us that it was not really until after the resurrection that they truly believed. It was only then they fully understood what Jesus had meant.

What does it take for you to believe?

When you face trials or you face a time when God is testing you how do you respond?

Do you stop and remember. Remember what God has done for you. Remember your blessings, and give Him thanks.

Or do you start to try to make a bargain with the Lord. God if you’ll do this for me then I will do this for you.

Or do you remain skeptical saying to yourself, I have to see it to believe it.

Or do you simply accept His discipline, learn from it and begin to grow again.

Perhaps God is trying to do something in your life right now to get your attention, God sometimes does that.

God tried to get Jonah’s attention and he ran.

God tried to speak to Moses and Moses got angry. His anger kept him from ever getting into the Promised Land.

So what is the best thing you can do when God tries to get your attention?

You will all probably have your own answers, but I think the Bible tells us:

Just say yes Lord, what do you need? What can I do?

And then listen!!