

The Lord comes to His Temple

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[0 : 00] If you don't know me, my name is Niels, part of the staff team, and I'll be preaching in a moment. So yeah, in a moment we'll be turning to our Bibles and continuing to look at the Gospel of John.

But of course this is God who's going to speak to us. So why don't I pray before Margo comes to read and before I speak. Our Father, thank you for your words. Thank you that it's living and active. Thank you that we can see Jesus publicly portrayed in your powerful words. So we pray that we would listen. I pray that you would speak to each of our hearts.

We pray that by your Spirit, yeah, you would do a deep work inside us. Lord, we need you. We need your grace. And that comes to us, yeah, in a moment when we hear you speak to us through your words.

And then, yeah, would you take my words, which are just human words. But would you take what is right and apply it to our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen. Good morning.

[1 : 13] Today's reading is from John, chapter 2, verses 13 to 25. Please follow along in the bulletin. The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the temple, he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and the oxen.

And he poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, Take these things away. Do not make my father's house a house of trade. His disciples remembers that it was written, Seal for your house will consume me. So the Jews said to him, What sign do you show us for doing these things?

Jesus answered them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews then said, It has taken 46 years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?

[2 : 25] But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people, and needed no one to bear witness about men, for he himself knew what was in men. This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Margot, for reading. Now I don't know if you were surprised yesterday when there was suddenly a yellow rainstorm.

I don't know. I hadn't expected that. I thought it was just nice weather, and then suddenly there was this big rainstorm. Maybe you got caught walking outside. Actually, I really liked it. Why?

Because our car got a free wash. Right? It's one of those things, yeah. Okay, our car, you know, we have a car. It needs washing. But life is just too busy, right? And it's going to get washed anyway next time it rains.

[3 : 41] So I was really grateful for that, right? I mean, there's sometimes, you know, life is just full, right? Life is busy. We have so many things to do. Maybe there is this thing we need to fix at home, and, yeah, we should do it.

But we just leave it. Maybe we want to clean up our room. I don't know. A lot of teenagers are gone. But, you know, sometimes it's good.

You know, there's this mold growing. I would better do something about it, right? You wouldn't just want to leave it. And sometimes it's nice if things, if you really sort it out. But, you know, so often we're just too busy.

Now, how about our lives? You know, our lives would be wonderful if they are really clean and beautiful. Our words, our actions, our thoughts.

The thing is this often they are not, right? If we know ourselves, we know that there's this selfishness inside of us that just keeps coming out. We are not the people we want to be. The things we say, the things we think, they're not what we want them to be.

[4 : 43] And we'd love to change. The only thing is that life is too busy, right? We don't really know how to change. We're not interested. It's not really a priority for us.

Because even if you're here and maybe you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, I don't know what you think. I guess all of us would know. Okay, I'm not really the person, you know, I want to be, that I should be.

But, yeah, change is too difficult. And just like washing our car, we're just too busy with our jobs, with our families, if we have them, with all kinds of things.

It's just not a priority. Now, life is a struggle. And the only shining light often for us is, well, the good news of Jesus. Well, today's passage is going to speak to us about that.

Because today, if you were here last week, it's kind of part two of, again, something that John wants to say to us. If you were here last week, we saw Jesus at this wedding in Cana.

[5 : 40] And he changed water into wine. I mean, very famous miracle. And it's very similar in a way to today. Why is it similar? Well, Jesus did something really significant.

And then in verse 11, if you have a Bible, more than a bulletin, well, his disciples believed in him, right? Jesus did something significant.

His disciples believed. And as you heard in the reading, again, Jesus does something. And at the end of the passage, his disciples believe, right? That is the thing. So it's kind of two sides of one coin, two parts.

Okay, here is Jesus. And here is what he came to do. So it's similar. But at the same time, it's definitely different, right? If you compare it to last week and the wedding, the Jesus we see here is Jesus.

But it's a fuller picture of him. So that's what we're going to look at today. Now, you may wonder, Jesus cleansing the temple. And you've read the Gospels.

[6 : 38] And hey, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus cleanses the temple like five days before he dies. And now this is three years earlier, it seems.

We don't know. Did he do it twice, three years apart? That's possible. Maybe it's the same one and John just moved it forward as a two-part introduction. You know, back then, chronology wasn't the big point.

They tried to organize the material sometimes to tell certain stories, right? You read a gospel and you get all the miracles together. And then all the parables together. And then all the arguments with the Pharisees together.

That's just how they wrote the gospel. So the question is, what does John want to say through what Jesus did here?

Why does he include it? And I think just like last week, a big thing, well, yeah, this is what he wants to say, right? The Messiah arrives. Jesus is here.

[7 : 38] The Christ is here. I mean, this is basically his big point, as we've heard before, right? John wants us to see who Jesus is and believe in him. John 20, verse 31.

It's on the screen, right? These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in him, you may have life in his name. That we would believe.

But, of course, not just tick the box. Yes, Jesus is the Christ. Okay, what does it mean for him to be the Christ, right? The Christ and Messiah is the same thing. What does it mean? What is he like, right?

That is what he wants us to show. We don't want to believe in him. We need to know what he's like. And, well, that's what we're going to see here. So, it's Passover, the biggest Jewish feast, and he goes to Jerusalem, to the temple.

That's quite normal. But then what he does is not normal. Verse 14. Now, just so you have an idea.

[8 : 58] I think this is kind of what the temple would have looked like back then. It was a big structure. But the thing in the middle, that's kind of like the real temple with the priests and sacrifices.

But outside is this court. They called it the court of the Gentiles. And that is kind of where this took place, where they had the money changers and the animals. And, yeah, Jesus causes this huge disturbance where he drives them out and overthrows everything.

Now, what was wrong? Why did Jesus do this? Now, these were not illegitimate things. They were really things, you know, legitimate things that people needed.

You know, people needed to offer a sacrifice. Now, long ago, everyone was a farmer. Everyone had livestock. But now we are a long time later. And you have, if you're a blacksmith, you don't have your own cows, right?

But you have money. So you need to buy an animal and sacrifice it. That's not illegitimate, right? Money changers. You needed to pay a temple tax in shekels. But, you know, people come from all over the Roman Empire.

[10:05] Yeah, they don't all have shekels. They need to change money. These were good things. But Jesus doesn't want it. Jesus, it's not really greed, right?

Jesus says, don't make my father's house a house of trade. I think it's just simple. This is the temple, right? This place is for worship. This place is for prayer.

But instead, we have all this business going on. You know, how can people pray? How can people focus on God when you just have all this going on? Right? We're, you know, we're going to move to a new venue.

We want to raise funds. I don't know. Maybe we're going to have all this watermark clothing, right? Like hoodies and T-shirts and all this kind of stuff that we're going to sell. It's not a bad thing.

What would we do with here during the service, right? While I'm speaking or while Kevin is praying, you know, there's people walking around and buying stuff. Now, of course not, right? Hey, this is the service.

[11:01] Now we're worshiping and later you can buy the stuff. You know, these things were not wrong, but do them outside the temple, right? This is the temple. This is where people want to have deep fellowship with God.

And now actually that doesn't seem to matter, right? All these people, yeah. I mean, the temple has become a place to earn money. Not a place where you focus on God, but where you buy your animal and you go for the motions and you offer it and you go out.

And that is why Jesus says, no, that's, yeah, they're just destroying what the whole temple is about in a way. It's legitimate, but it's just the wrong place.

And so Jesus, well, he, yeah, he starts driving things out. And the disciples, they see something in Jesus, right? Verse 17. His disciples remembered that it was written, zeal for your house will consume me.

So they see Jesus' anger. They see how he's indignant about what's going on. They see how much he cares about the temple. And wow, that reminds us of the Psalms.

[12:05] Now the Psalms, they are, of course, prayers. Why does Jesus, why do the disciples go there? Well, the Psalms, most of them are by David. And it kind of shows what David was like.

David was the greatest king. And the Messiah would be his son. He would be a greater David. So everything that was great about David, you would see even more in his great son.

And so seeing that Jesus is like such a perfect picture of the Messiah in the Psalms, the disciples see, hey, that's him. Now, you might not think this is very special, right?

Here, this is not a miracle that Jesus is doing here. Still, how many people do what Jesus did? How many people care so much about the temple that they would get indignant, right?

I'm sure there were many pious Jews who came to the temple. How many of them would feel like this? But all of us, the world is full of injustice. To be honest, how many of us are angry about that?

[13:05] To be honest, most of us, yeah, we know it's wrong. But we don't care that much. Jesus really, really cares, right? He makes him angry.

We go, you know, why don't make my father's house a house of trade? It feels like a throwaway line, but he says God is his father, right? He claims to be the son of God.

And not just that he gets angry. He acts, right? Maybe other people felt indignant, but what did they do? Here is Jesus, and he makes a whip, and he starts driving cows and sheep and people out of the temple.

I mean, who would do that? And it's not like he's a revolutionary. And maybe some people, they see this. Oh, yeah, Jesus is a revolutionary. We should overthrow the establishment.

I mean, Jesus acts like he is the establishment, right? Hey, this is my father's house, and you don't do that here, right? He claims to be the son. If I go to Buckingham Palace and start kicking people out, okay, who do I think I am?

[14:10] Who does, you know, this action, it really shows something. Okay, this is not a normal person. This is a person who is either crazy or who has a very strange view of himself, that he is the son of God, that he is the king.

That's why this is such a big thing. Of course, people didn't believe him, right? So the Jew said to him, what sign do you show us for doing these things, right? You know, what sign are you going to do that you are, you know, have the right to do this?

The Jews, by the way, is the Jewish leaders. It's not an ethnic term. It's here. Yeah, the Jewish leaders. And all Jesus, okay, I'm going to give you a sign. Verse 21.

Sorry, 19. Jesus answered them, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. Which is, of course, a special thing, right? Building a temple in three days because it took us 46 years to build this.

How are you going to do this in three days? But, as John points out, but he was speaking about the temple of his body. Jesus, in a way, is the temple.

[15:18] The temple is where God dwells on earth. Well, at that time, 2,000 years ago, where could you find God on earth? In Jesus. And so when he rose from the dead, yeah, he, you know, here's the temple raised in three days.

And so it's talking about the resurrection. You know, you want a sign that Jesus really is the king, that Jesus really is the son of God. But Jesus says, well, look at my resurrection. Kill me and then I'm going to rise from the dead.

I think, of course, that's a miracle, right? The cleansing is not a miracle, but that is a miracle. And the disciples, after he rose from the dead, they got it. Wow, Jesus really is it.

Verse 22. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this. And they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. And they, the scripture is probably that verse from Psalm 69.

It's not the scriptures, the whole Bible. It's, you know, they, they could see it. They could see Jesus fulfilling this, yeah, this promise of the Messiah. They could see Jesus, yeah, his words come true.

[16:23] Anyway, you can see the big point, right? Here we get a picture of Jesus. We see his zeal for, for God's honor. We see his authority.

We see him act like the king. And he comes to his temple and he overthrows everything that's not good, right? He thinks he's in charge. He is, I don't know if, I mean, there's people here, you think Jesus is a good moral teacher who just tells people to love each other.

I mean, such people don't go to the temple and throw people out, right? That's not what teachers do. He, yeah, again, this guy is either crazy or maybe he is the Lord.

And if he rose from the dead, then maybe that is who he is. I don't know. I know there's some people here who struggle to believe that Jesus rose from the dead. That's maybe keeping you from committing to Jesus.

Actually, we have this seminar coming up in a couple of weeks about the evidence of the resurrection just before Easter. Come and see that. Come and hear why, you know, Christians think this is really true.

[17:27] And if this is really true, then maybe Jesus really is that king. And he is really this person with zeal, with authority, this king. But, of course, okay, this is who Jesus is and what he's like.

I guess the next question is then what has he come to do? We see this picture of Jesus. What does he come to do? I mean, last week, it was not just water into wine.

Okay, tick the box, Jesus is the Christ. Again, it showed Jesus came to do something, right? He came to bring the new age. He came to bring the great feast.

That's why he made all this wine. It showed he came to do something. But today is slightly different, right? It's not that he came to bring a feast. What does Jesus come to do?

He came to purify, to judge, right? He came to cleanse the temple. He froze people out who care more about money than about worship. He froze, yeah, he comes with the authority to do so.

[18:31] It's, in a way, a very uncomfortable passage, right? If Jesus would come here to church, I don't know what he would do, right? That is the scary thing. It's not just purify. I would say it's even judgment, right?

Because he says, destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days. Now, is he talking about his body, right? You know, kill me and I'll rise in three days. Or is he talking to the people there, kind of, you know, the authorities who are letting all this go on in the temple?

Does he say, well, if you're destroying this temple, I mean, I'm going to make a new one, basically, right? And so you're going to be gone. And in a way, that's an act of judgment, right? I mean, if your company, if your CEO gets replaced, that's kind of judgment on the previous CEO in a way, right?

That is what it says. Jesus, yeah, he's come to change things. And that means excluding some people if they don't want to get along, right?

That is what the Messiah here comes to do, which is, it's not something John makes up. I mean, it should have been part of people's expectations. I mean, John doesn't quote it, but I was thinking of this, these verses from Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament.

[19 : 47] Three verses, one to four. What did God promise? Behold, I send my messenger. He will prepare the way before me.

Someone will come, it's quoted about John the Baptist. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. And the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight. Behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

But who can endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.

And he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver. And they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. And then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and in former years.

This is, yeah, I mean, is this good news? In some ways it is, right? It's really good news. It's really good that there will be offerings of righteousness. That things will be pleasing again.

[20 : 48] That things will be right again. But it's going to be uncomfortable, right? It's going to be, yeah, he says. And that's what we see. Jesus is restoring things.

He is making things better. But that means a bit of, yeah, upset. A bit of tearing down. A bit of, right? I mean, I'm sure all the Jewish leaders would love the Messiah to come.

But now he's here. Do they still want him? And I think that's the question for us, right? Okay, we want to believe in Jesus. But if we see Jesus here, if we see what he came to do, that he wants to make, you know, a pure temple, a clean temple, a beautiful temple.

And that's what he's zealous for. That's what he's going to do. How will you respond to that? And when you see this, Jesus, if you'd stand before him, would you just say, okay, I believe you exist, tick?

No, right? We would really, we want to respond to him. So that's the question. Will you respond? Yeah? Because the temple authorities, I guess they should clean up, right?

[21 : 58] They would respond. Okay, Jesus wants to make this something beautiful. He wants to make it right. Well, we should get along with that. We should do something. And that was just the temple.

Of course, ultimately, Jesus is Lord not just of the temple, right? He's the Lord of the whole earth. He wants to make the whole world good. He wants the whole world to honor God. And that's what he's going to do.

Certainly, if you were here, you wouldn't call yourself a Christian. You would call for a response. But actually, this passage is mainly for Christians, right? It's a challenge to, you know, all those people in the temple.

They would claim to be believers. They want the Messiah. But Jesus is a bit of an uncomfortable Messiah. What do they want? And because look at those last verses.

We didn't read them yet. End of chapter 2, 23 to 25. Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.

[23 : 01] But Jesus, on his part, did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man. For he himself knew what was in man.

It says a lot of people believed in him. A lot of people, they saw the signs. And yeah, I want Jesus. But then he goes on and says, hey, Jesus wasn't sure about them, right?

Jesus entrusts himself to them. Jesus, you know, he knew their hearts. He knew that, you know, this was just superficial. He wants real faith.

And John is putting that here in a way to make us think, where are we at? Right? Jesus, if this is Jesus, again, how is it seen in our lives?

Last week we saw this wedding. And that was great. But as Kevin said, it should affect us, right? If you are going to the most wonderful wedding ever, it should give joy.

[24 : 00] Some kind of joy, right? Deep inside. It doesn't mean that we're always happy because life is hard, right? The wedding is later in eternity. It's not now. But just from the anticipation, right?

We should have some joy now. Well, if Jesus is this king, if he is going to make a beautiful temple, what does really believing that look like?

Because, again, it's not just something for 2,000 years ago. Well, what is the temple in the New Testament? Well, Jesus certainly, right? It says here he's the new temple. But then he builds this temple and we're part of that.

If you've read some of the epistles, Ephesians 2 talks about Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together by every joint with which it is equipped.

Oh, sorry. That's Ephesians 4. Anyway, Ephesians 2, right? You also are being built up to be a spiritual house. You are growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

[25 : 06] 1 Peter 2. As you come to him, the living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house.

Right? We are the new temple, which is like an amazing privilege, right? Where does God dwell? Not just in Jesus. He dwells in believers by his spirit.

You know, you think the temple, that's the special place, the holy place. Well, that is us, the church. That's amazing. Right? It's such a privilege that we are the temple of the living God.

But, yeah, it's the same time. He wants a beautiful temple, right? He wants to overthrow and drive out what dishonors God. He wants to purify and cleanse in his new temple, which is the church.

And so, I guess if we see Jesus and we want him, I guess we would say, yes, Lord, right? Will you say yes? Will you, would we ask him to come into my life, change me, drive out what dishonors you?

[26 : 15] You're the king. Be king in my life. I guess that is what this ultimately comes down to. And just to say, I'm not talking about being saved, right? This is not how you become part of the temple.

How you become part of the temple? Because Jesus died for you. He loved you. He died for you. He chose you. He included you. But now he wants to make you beautiful.

He wants to purify you. So that you're not just in status, but in practice, who he has made you, right? It's the most wonderful thing.

But the thing is, because of the cross, we find it so easy to take our sin lightly, right? I find it so easy to think, yeah, I know I need to change.

I know there is this thing in my life that, I know it shouldn't be there, but it's a bit like my car, right? It's going to rain and then it will get washed. You know, I'm going to die and then I'll be sinless.

[27 : 14] So I'll wait for that. That's so easy to think, right? Because life is so busy. We don't, we're happy to be mediocre. We're happy, you know, not much prayer, not much worship.

You know, it's okay because this is the most overworked city in the world. And, you know, life is busy. Life is full. So how much is this a priority for us?

But if we see Jesus here, that is his priority. He wants to change you. He wants to grow you. He wants to purify you. He wants to cleanse you, make you the church he wants, make us the church he wants us to be.

And will we accept that? What? If we believe he is the king, do we allow him to be the king and make us who he wants us to be? So I don't know.

Do we take time to reflect? Do we take time with Jesus and just, oh, Jesus, if there's something in my life that dishonors you, can you show me that?

[28 : 17] I want to change. And maybe he does. Maybe, you know, there's something you do at work and you don't think much of it. But as you read your Bible, you know, Jesus really points out to you that this is something that needs to change.

How do you respond? Is it kind of, yeah, I know, but you're not going to. Or do you? Yes, Lord, please help me. Please come into my life. Please help me love you more, that I love this less.

Please overthrow this. Please change me. Maybe Jesus messes up your life sometimes. He wants to grow you in patience and in self-control.

And so, you know, your washing machine breaks down or your child gets sick or some of those kind of things, right? It's always at the wrong timing. And I always get, why now?

I don't know if you know the feeling. Well, why does Jesus give me a lot of chance to be patient?

Because he wants me to be more patient maybe. So he, how do I respond?

[29 : 15] Do I get frustrated? Or do I open up? Lord Jesus, please. Yeah, I don't want this. Change me. I want to honor you. Help me to grow in patience. Maybe something in our church.

Maybe, you know, Jesus wants to change us. Maybe he wants us to be a church of prayer, right? And so often we're not. If that is something that he points out, do we want to grow?

Again, I'm not saying this is something we should do, right? We shouldn't think of Jesus just standing at the side, outside the temple. Okay, you guys clean yourself up and then I'll come in.

No, he comes in and changes us, right? That's the good news because, of course, we can't do that by ourselves, right? Sin runs so deep in me. I can never get it out.

But Jesus says, I want to come into your life. I want to overthrow things. I want to make you the person. I want us to be the church. I want you to be, do we let him?

[30 : 15] And that is the good news. That is the wonderful news in a way. It's not about how we come to him. But when we come to him, what do we want him to do?

Yeah. Yeah, I hope you see the point. I hope you have a bigger view of Jesus. I hope, of course, he's not just a savior. He is a great savior.

But he doesn't, but saving is not just getting you out of hell and to a great party. He wants you to be beautiful. And that is what he's going to do. So let's pray that we would let him.

I'm just going to give us some quietness for 30 seconds. I think there's some points here on what has God said to you through his words. What it looked like to respond to that.

After that, I'll pray. And then we're going to take the Lord's Supper together. But let's reflect now. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[31 : 41] Thank you.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, thank you that we can see you. We see your beauty.

We see your zeal. We see your purity. We see how you act for the glory of your Father.

We think it's beautiful, but it's uncomfortable because we know we're not the people who we should be, the people we want to be. Thank you that you want to change us. Thank you that you will change us.

And thank you you can do that now even. By your spirit, through your word, as we see you, as we grow more in love with you. Lord, would we have this great view of you.

[32 : 56] For each of us, open our eyes more and more to your glory. And would you change us? Would you make us the people you want us to be? Would you make our church what you want us to be?

Would you point things out in our lives? And then would you do your work? The work that we can't do, but that you can and that you will. You will build your church.

You will make a holy temple in the Lord. We will be filled with all the fullness of God. Thank you.

Lord, strengthen our faith. We know it means, you know, not closing our hearts to you, but opening up to you.

Coming to you. And we pray that we would do that. And in a moment, as we share the Lord's Supper together, would you strengthen us? Would you remind us of your grace, of your goodness when you died for us on the cross?

In Jesus, in your name we pray. Amen.