



SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Friday, September 16, 2022

Scripture: John 2:13-17

TITLE: Driving Out Religion

An apologist once said, "Sin is meeting a legitimate need in an illegitimate way." He was right. We have a way of taking something that is good or well-meaning and turning it into something unholy and destructive.

Jesus came upon such a scene in John 2. What did Jesus see? What did He do? This is what John records in John 2:13-17.

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 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 remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Chances are you are familiar with this story. It is the Passover. This is the time of remembrance when God led the Israelites out of Egypt. This marked a time of remembrance where faithful Jews would celebrate Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

There is some debate if Jesus cleansed the temple once or twice. In the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), the writers mention a temple cleansing at the end of their writings. Here, in John, it's recorded near the beginning. I'm inclined to think He did this twice.

In the temple, He finds the gross exploitation of the people coming to sacrifice and pay their temple tax. Now, two things need to be mentioned here. First, the temple isn't a church. The temple was unique. It was the dwelling place of God. It contained the holy of holies. It was sacred. Today, the church is the body of believers, not a building. God doesn't reside in the church building. He resides in us: His temple. So, this was serious to turn the dwelling place of God into a gross religion.

Second, these money changers and animal merchants were exploiting the people. Today if you go to a concert or sporting event, you will understand this. A bottle of water is 5 bucks. A hot dog and chips are \$15. Well, the people in the outer court were using the game of religion to stick it to the people.

Jesus had none of this. So He displays His righteous anger and drives these people out of the temple. It's pure chaos, but to turn the holiness of God and the sinfulness of people into a

moneymaking scheme was offensive to God. Luther was disgusted with the selling of indulgences because it made a mockery of God's grace.

Jesus came to destroy the game of religion and be the sacrifice no one could afford.

So here's my challenge for you today: drive out your own religious exploitations. The game of religion is all about what you can do to earn or keep salvation. Jesus came to die and rise again; to do what you could not. The moment you take away or add to Jesus' gift and sacrifice, you offend God.

So today, drive out the religious exploitation and rest in God's grace.

When you do, you will win the day!