

St Nicholas Sighthill Parish Church
Sermon 8th March 2015:
Exodus 20:1-17 & John 2: 13-22

Exodus 20: 1-17 The Ten Commandments

20 God spoke, and these were his words: ²“I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.

³“Worship no god but me.

⁴“Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth. ⁵ Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the LORD your God and I tolerate no rivals. I bring punishment on those who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.

⁶ But I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.

⁷“Do not use my name for evil purposes, for I, the LORD your God, will punish anyone who misuses my name.

⁸“Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. ⁹ You have six days in which to do your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work—neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. ¹¹ In six days I, the LORD, made the earth, the sky, the seas, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That is why I, the LORD, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.

¹²“Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.

¹³“Do not commit murder.

¹⁴“Do not commit adultery.

¹⁵“Do not steal.

¹⁶“Do not accuse anyone falsely.

¹⁷“Do not desire another man's house; do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.”

John 2: 13-22 Jesus Goes to the Temple

¹³ It was almost time for the Passover Festival, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ There in the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons, and also the moneychangers sitting at their tables. ¹⁵ So he made a whip from cords and drove all the animals out of the Temple, both the sheep and the cattle; he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins; ¹⁶ and he ordered those who sold the pigeons, “Take them out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!”

¹⁷ His disciples remembered that the scripture says, “My devotion to your house, O God, burns in me like a fire.”

¹⁸ The Jewish authorities came back at him with a question, “What miracle can you perform to show us that you have the right to do this?”

¹⁹ Jesus answered, “Tear down this Temple, and in three days I will build it again.”

²⁰ “Are you going to build it again in three days?” they asked him. “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple!”

²¹ But the temple Jesus was speaking about was his body. ²² So when he was raised from death, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what Jesus had said.

Sermon and Introduction

Do you lose your temper?....Have you ever been angry?.....Do you think Jesus ever lost his temper?....After all, many of us claim that he lived without sin.....with perfect purity. Here is a scripture that tells you Jesus was apparently angry but how he handled such anger.....anger management is a topical subject today. As ever, we can learn from Jesus.

It was the first Passover after Jesus’ baptism that had probably taken place about 6 months earlier. John the gospel writer takes notice of all the Passovers that Jesus attended subsequently. There were four in all, the fourth at which he suffered his crucifixion (three years after this one).

Jesus taught us by his example to observe divine traditions, and to be diligent in attending religious services. As far as we know, Jesus had kept the Passover at Jerusalem ever since he was twelve years old, showing obedience to the Law;

But now that he had entered his public ministry as the Messiah, his followers would expect something more from him than before, and that is exactly what happened:



The Purge:

He purged the temple of the money changers and the merchants, [v. 14-17](#).

¹⁴ There in the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons, and also the moneychangers sitting at their tables. ¹⁵ So he made a whip from cords and drove all the animals out of the Temple, both the sheep and the cattle; he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins; ¹⁶ and he

ordered those who sold the pigeons, “Take them out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!”

Christ came to be the great reformer; and, accordingly he showed that people’s hearts and minds were wrong

What were the corruptions that the merchants and money changers had done that was so wrong that caused Jesus to show such apparent anger?

First, they sold oxen, and sheep, and doves for sacrifice; which we assume was not for common use, but for the convenience of those who came out of the country, who could not bring their sacrifices with them;

This market perhaps had been kept by the pool of Bethesda ([ch. 5:2](#)), but was admitted into the temple of the gentiles by the chief priests. Great corruptions in the church often owe their rise to the love of money by the priesthood.

The money changers changed money, for the convenience of those that were to pay a half-shekel every year, for the service of the tabernacle ([Ex. 30:12](#)), and where money and taxes are involved, corruption usually thrives.

Jesus had seen these people in the temple during previous visits to Jerusalem, when he was a private person; but now that he was in his public ministry, he drove them out of the temple.

He did not complain to the chief priests, for he knew they allowed such corruption to take place.

Jesus himself drove out the sheep and oxen, and the merchants who sold them, out of the temple.

He made a whip of small chords, probably from what had been left on the ground that had been used for sheep and oxen in bringing them to the temple in the first place. He used the whip not to attack the offenders but only to drive out the cattle and sheep.

In over-throwing the tables, he showed his displeasure against those people that had put commerce ahead of worshipping God. Money-changers in the temple were often money swindlers. Jesus drove them all out. And by overturning the tables, he threw out the trade too.



Jesus Action: Anger or with Sensitivity:

Note how Jesus carried out his actions. When he drove out the sheep and oxen, the owners might follow them; when he scattered the money, the money changers could gather the money up again. For the sellers of the doves, he told them to take them away because if he had scattered the birds they would have flown away but he insisted that God's temple must not be made a pigeon-house.

You see Jesus was not exhibiting uncontrolled anger but the zeal of showing what was right in God's temple.

Discretion must always guide and govern our zeal. We should not do anything unbecoming when representing God and that is what Jesus did here. All possessions were still owned by the merchants, and could be recovered by them.

Jesus gave them a good reason for what he did.

Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

Here the reason given by Jesus people should not profane the temple, because it was the house of God, and not to be made into a house of merchandise.

Merchandise is a good thing in the exchange, but not in the temple.

Results of Actions:

By his actions Jesus demonstrated that the purpose of the Temple and sacrifices was to honour of God; not to debase the place of worship. Hence our first readings about the 10 commandments which included:

³ "Worship no god but me.

⁴ "Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth. ⁵ Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the LORD your God and I tolerate no rivals.

The presence of animals and the merchants disturbed and distracted worshippers in services, in which men were expected to be solemn, serious, and intent.

It was particularly an affront to strangers in their worship to be forced to herd themselves with the sheep and oxen, and to be distracted in their worship by the noise of a market. Jesus showed that worshipping God was not to be subservient to secular interests e.g. the sale of animals.



Therefore he had a zeal for the purging the temple: "It is my Father's house, and therefore I cannot bear to see it profaned, and Him dishonoured.

Jesus carried out his actions without the assistance of any of his friends. It would not have been difficult to have raised the mob, who had a great veneration for the temple, against these profaners of it. But Christ never countenanced anything that was disorderly, that is to say, he did not organise a riot and put people's lives at risk.

Jesus purging of the Temple was done without the resistance of any of his enemies, neither the market-people themselves, or the chief priests that gave them their licences, and had the temple guards at their command opposed him and this showed how people responded to his authority.

The disciples observed all this and remembered that the scripture says, "My devotion to your house, O God, burns in me like a fire."

The word of God and the works of God mutually explain and illustrate each other.

The Disciples of Christ stored their memories with scripture truths, by which they were furnished for every good work when the time came to pursue their ministries.

All the graces that were to be found among the Old-Testament prophets were eminently in Christ, and particularly his zeal for the house of God, which he loved and was always concerned for its honour and welfare.

And although the Jewish authorities did not stop Jesus from purging the Temple or arrest him they challenge him verbally with a question:

The Jewish Authorities' Response:

¹⁸ The Jewish authorities came back at him with a question, "What miracle can you perform to show us that you have the right to do this?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered, "Tear down this Temple, and in three days I will build it again."

²⁰ "Are you going to build it again in three days?" they asked him. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple!"

Being devout Jews, they should have stood by Jesus, and assisted him to vindicate the honour of God and their temple; but, instead, they objected to his actions.

When they could object nothing against the action itself, they questioned his authority to do it: "What **right have you to do this they said**

They looked upon it as an act of jurisdiction, and that he must prove himself a prophet. The irony was that the purge itself should have been a sufficient sign for his questioners?

Surely, Jesus' ability to drive so many from their posts, without opposition, was a proof of his authority; and showed he was armed with divine power.

Christ's answer to this demand, [v. 19](#) was not to work a miracle but to convince them of what was to come and hence the sign he gave them was his own death and resurrection.

¹⁹ Jesus answered, "Tear down this Temple, and in three days I will build it again."

Jesus foretells his death and resurrection, not in plain terms, as he often did to his disciples, but in figurative expressions: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

²⁰ "Are you going to build it again in three days?" they asked him. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple!"

Jesus answer here proved such a stumbling-block to the Jewish Temple authorities that it was produced in evidence against him at his trial to prove him a blasphemer.

[Mt. 26:60](#), [Mt. 26:61](#) .

Had they humbly asked him the meaning of what he said, Jesus would have told them.

²¹ But the temple Jesus was speaking about was his body.

²² So when he was raised from death, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what Jesus had said.

But they would not be convinced because they were set against him and rejected him even when they knew he was right to purge the Temple since it had become a market and a den of thieves.

So what we should always ask in response to scripture???

²² So when Jesus was raised from death, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what Jesus had said.



And that is what we are asked to do, to believe the scriptures.....that Jesus really did live with perfect purity.....even during the purging of the Temple....his zeal was not uncontrolled anger but he showed the traders how they had not honoured God by allowing this market to take place in the Temple.

And what about us? Do we believe in the Jesus of perfect purity, who made amazing claims, carried out many miracles and through his crucifixion died for our sins and through his resurrection gave us new life after death.....?

Wow.....such a statement should turn the world upside down.

And that is what you have to do here when Tom joins you to turn Sighthill and beyond up-side down by showing that the word of God is as relevant today as ever....

And we should always have reverence for his church – his temple keeping it free from corruption and honouring His word in the sanctuary. Amen (1827 words)

There in the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons, and also the moneychangers sitting at their tables. ¹⁵ So he made a whip from cords and drove all the animals out of the Temple, both the sheep and the cattle; he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins; ¹⁶ and he ordered those who sold the pigeons, “Take them out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!

