



Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

Jesus Is in Charge Here! March 7th, 2021

John 2:13-22

John 2:13–22 (NIV) ¹³ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!” ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.” ¹⁸ The Jews then responded to him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?” ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” ²⁰ They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” ²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

1. What’s your favorite Bible story about Jesus? Why? **Answers will vary.**
2. Briefly retell the story of the Passover (Exodus 29:1-12). Why did God want his people to commemorate this event each year? **In the tenth plague, God commanded his people to slaughter a year-old male lamb and put the lamb’s blood on the sides and top of their door. When the Lord saw the blood on the doorposts, he passed over that home. No destructive plague touched that household. Where there was no blood, the firstborn in that household died. God commanded the Israelites to commemorate this event each year to remind his people of his past faithfulness in freeing them from slavery and as a sign, foreshadowing the saving word of the promised Messiah.**

3. In what way is Jesus our Passover Lamb? (1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:29) **Jesus is our Passover Lamb whose blood has covered our sins so that God does not see it. For Jesus’ sake, God’s wrath passes over us, spares us so that we have life with him now and forever.**
4. Evaluate this statement: When we are distracted from worship, we pass up the opportunity to be freed from the burdens that are at the heart of those same distractions. **Agree. When we are distracted by our worries and concerns, we are not listening to the Word by which God strengthens our faith and removes those same worries and concerns. It’s a vicious circle. Distracted worshippers set themselves up for more worries and concerns which threaten to continue to distract them from the Truth that matters most.**
5. Agree or disagree and why? Worship is something we do for Jesus in exchange for all he does for us. **Disagree. While it’s true that in worship we acknowledge that God is worthy of our thanks and praise which we give him in words spoken and sung, there is no exchange of favors taking place. We are not giving God to get something from him. Our praise and thanks come from a grateful heart that realizes it cannot begin to earn God’s goodness or repay him for it.**
6. Agree or disagree and why? It’s dangerous to think of Jesus as a handyman we call to fix our problems. **Agree. While it’s true that Jesus invites us to call upon him in the day of trouble, it would be very dangerous to begin to think of him as nothing more than a helpful friend that we call upon to solve this or that problem. This way of thinking could lead to a failure on our part to recognize the greatest thing that Jesus has done for us. Jesus does more than fix our problems. He has paid for the sin in us and around us that is the cause of all trouble and heartache in our lives. When we think of him only as a “fixer” of problems, we could actually become frustrated and disillusioned with him when he decides to use the problems to bless us rather than take them away (See 2 Corinthians 12:1-7). If we don’t keep Jesus main work of salvation in mind, we may decide that he doesn’t care about us as we deal with the troubles in our lives.**
7. Agree or disagree and why? Jesus’ zeal for God’s house is zeal for us. **Agree. God’s house is more than a building. God’s house is made up of believers. Peter calls us “living stones.” (1 Peter 2:5). Jesus’ concern for the temple was concern for those who came to worship there. He did not want the livestock and money changers to distract**

the worshippers from the temple's purpose of connecting God's people to God's promise to save them from their sins.

8. Why did Jesus speak of his body as God's temple? The temple was the place where God came to dwell among his people. Sin had separated sinners from God. By his grace, God "tented" among his people in the wilderness in the tabernacle, the portable temple that they carried with them. The temple was a picture of Jesus. In the body of Jesus, God was present with us (Immanuel means "God with us."). In fact, in John 1:14, God tells us: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." In the Greek it says that God "tented" among us in the body of Jesus.
9. How is Jesus' resurrection the "sign" that all is right between God and us sinners? Jesus' resurrection is the proof that God accepted Jesus' sacrificial death as "payment in full" for the sins of the world. If this were not the case, Jesus would still be suffering in our place. On Good Friday, Jesus said of his saving work, "It is finished." (John 19:30). On Easter Sunday God the Father gave his stamp of approval to that truth and Jesus' work by raising his Son from the dead. Paul writes in Romans 4:25: "[Jesus] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for [because] our justification." In other words, God raised Jesus because he completed his work and earned our justification, our "not guilty" status before God.
10. Agree or disagree and why? Christians have peace even in the face of trouble. Agree. The peace that Jesus earned is the peace between God and sinners. God is not angry with us because Jesus is our sin payment. This peace does not mean that we will live a trouble free life (John 16:33). Instead it assures us that the troubles we have are not the result of God's anger toward us. In fact, in his love God promises to make the troubles of our life serve our eternal good (Romans 8:28). Peace with God allows us to live unafraid. In fact we have joy not in spite of our troubles but because of them – because of the blessings God works in us through them (Romans 5:3-4).
11. Agree or disagree and why? Christian hope is a "sure thing." Agree. Christian hope is not wishful thinking. It is an eager anticipation of future blessings of life with God, blessing based on the sure and certain promises of God, granted to us for the sake of Jesus.
12. Discuss some ways in which we can better prepare for worship.

Answers will vary and may include: Taking time to pray that God bless our worship. Taking time to read the Scripture lessons prior to the start of service. These are listed in "Mount Olive Connected" emails that are sent out on Thursday or Friday. Those same emails usually contain a video message from the pastor in which he introduces sermon thoughts. It's important to remember that worship is not entertainment. It's something in which we must actively participate. Some of our members find it helpful to take notes during the sermon or listen to it a second time by watching the sermon video after they get home.

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

John 2:12–13

¹²After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Following the wedding, Jesus went down to Capernaum, accompanied by his family and his disciples. He probably visited the home of Peter and Andrew (Mark 1:21, 29; Matthew 8:5, 14) or James and John, who carried on a fishing business in the area. Later Jesus moved to Capernaum himself. The trip was literally downward since it began in the hill country and ended down at the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. There Jesus stayed a few days until it was time to leave for the Passover in Jerusalem.

Jesus' brothers were with him. Since early times the church has speculated about how these brothers of Jesus were related to him. Some say they were sons of Joseph by a previous marriage. Others say they were probably cousins because the Greek word for brothers can also mean cousins. Finally, some assume naturally that the brothers were sons born to Mary and Joseph after Jesus' birth. Any of the three are possible. Without compelling reasons otherwise, it seems reasonable to think of natural-born children of Mary and Joseph. (See Mark 6:3, where four brothers are named and sisters are included. The

conspicuous absence of Joseph here and later may suggest that he had died already.)

Jesus soon left Capernaum for the Jewish Passover in Jerusalem. All Jewish males 12 years old or older customarily made this pilgrimage at the Passover. They came to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt (see Exodus 12). The celebration lasted seven days and included the killing of a year-old male lamb, without blemish, for the feast. The participants recalled how the blood of the lamb at the first Passover had spared the firstborn Israelites from the angel of death. Now the very Lamb of God was attending that feast.

John 2:14–16

¹⁴In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”

When Jesus arrived at the temple in Jerusalem, he found serious distractions from the sacred festival. It was like opening day at the county fair. Some were selling animals and birds for the sacrifices. Others were changing money for the foreign visitors, who needed to pay their temple tax with a specified Jewish coin (Exodus 30:13–16).

The noise and confusion were distractions enough. However, the whole business was liable to gross abuses as well. The sellers had a corner on the market much like vendors in a theater or stadium today. From every indication, they exploited the people. Greed gathered wealth. Reverence played the pauper. The practice subverted the worship purpose of the temple. Many surely came with sacrifices not pleasing to God because their hearts were not with God (Isaiah 1:11–17; Hosea 8:13; Psalm 51:16).

Jesus reacted with uncharacteristic indignation and took corrective action. He made a whip from cords and used it to drive out the cattle and sheep along with the marketers. He scattered the coins, overturned the tables, and ordered those who sold the doves: “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”

John 2:17

¹⁷His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

The Lord came to his temple. He came as a “refiner and purifier” in the spirit of Malachi 3:1–4. He declared himself the Son of the heavenly Father. His disciples watched, no doubt frightened and awestruck. Being well-versed in Scripture, they recalled one of David’s psalms that spoke of the Messiah and applied it to Jesus: “Zeal for your house consumes me” (Psalm 69:9). Significantly, that same psalm predicted some of the rejection and suffering that lay ahead for Christ. For now, it gave the disciples another sign that Jesus was the Christ, and maybe it left some fear of what was to come.

Jesus had taken his stand against turning his Father’s house into a marketplace. What can we learn from this episode for today? The Word does not say that all selling by the church is sinful. From what is described, we might rather conclude that whatever detracts from worship, whatever distorts the church’s mission, whatever cheats God’s children should be driven from the church like the cattle from the temple.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke also record a cleansing of the temple by Jesus. They, however, report a cleansing near the end, not the beginning, of Jesus’ ministry. Some who feel the event is the same as John’s account are quick to suggest a contradiction. But why? To begin with, as Luther also notes here, the gospel writers do not always follow the same chronological order. The accounts do not always claim to give a strict historical sequence. Even more likely, however, Jesus cleansed the temple twice, once

at the beginning of his ministry and again, three years later, at the end.

John 2:18–19

¹⁸Then the Jews demanded of him, “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”

¹⁹Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

The Jewish leaders reacted in a guarded way to Jesus’ actions. They did not try to arrest him, perhaps because they knew of the excesses and unpopularity of the market. But they missed the point. Instead of addressing the faults Jesus had exposed, they asked Jesus for a sign to prove his authority to clear the temple. They implied that if he did a miracle, they might recognize him as the Messiah, but likely only as someone to lead them against the Roman oppression.

They asked for a sign. He offered one. But, as we shall see, it wasn’t the kind of sign they wanted. “Destroy this temple,” Jesus said, “and I will raise it again in three days.”

John 2:20–22

²⁰The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” ²¹But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

The Jews then became argumentative. The reader might visualize them sneering as they responded: “This temple has been 46 years in the building, and you are going to raise it in three days?” They were incredulous. Jesus, however, was not talking about the temple he had just emptied of sellers. He was talking

about the temple of his body. He was saying he would die and rise again.

The image of the temple for Jesus’ body was significant. Just as the presence of God was manifest in the temple for God’s people, so in the Word become flesh was God manifest among the people. He fulfilled in person what the temple only foreshadowed. To destroy Jesus was virtually to destroy the temple.

Unbelief does not recognize a true sign when it’s pointed out; instead, it becomes a sign of judgment. So these Jews later tried to use Jesus’ words against him at his trial (Matthew 26:61). Even when Jesus rose from the dead to fulfill this sign, these Jews hardened their unbelieving hearts to the truth. The disciples, on the other hand, “recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.”

Notice how a disciple’s faith grows. There is no hint here that the disciples understood what Jesus was saying any more than the unbelieving Jews did. They remembered Jesus’ words, however, and looked to Scripture for understanding and confirmation. They found Scripture that fit. Perhaps it was Psalm 16:10: “You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.” Then when they saw the risen Jesus, they believed.

Similarly, we today don’t always readily understand God’s Word to us. But following the disciples’ example, we remember his words and search the rest of Scripture for understanding and confirmation. In that way, the Lord reveals his signs to us, and we believe and live.¹

¹ Bauml, G. P. (1997). *John* (pp. 42–47). Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House.