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The passion for My Father's House consumes Me!

John 2:17 & Psalm 69:9



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Listen to this hymn; centre you thoughts on Christ who calls us to follow Him.

LISTEN Bless the Lord! O my Soul!

REFLECT on these WORDS (from Tearfund Lent Reflection):

There are two kinds of power on display in our world: the power of domination, and the power of God's dominion.

The latter is a different kind of power. Kingdom of Heaven power.

Worldly kingdoms dominate; God's heavenly kingdom liberates.

Worldly kingdoms marginalise; God's heavenly kingdom includes.

Worldly kingdoms control; God's heavenly kingdom serves.

Worldly kingdoms are centred on the self; God's heavenly kingdom pours itself out for others.

Refuse the power of domination, which exercises the love of power.

Trust in God's dominion, which extends you His power of love!

PRAYER

Come into the presence of Eternal God. Pause. Breathe deeply, with intent.

Pray:

Yahweh, You are The Great 'I am',

Created by the One who made the Heavens and the Earth, I am.

Inspired by the One who breathed His life into all human beings, I am.

Rescued by the One who gave Noah the blueprint for the ark, I am.

Confident in the One who kept the promise to Abraham, I am.

Appointed by the One who gave Joseph purpose, I am.

Freed by the One who broke the chains of injustice in Egypt, I am.

Enabled by One who makes it possible to defeat giants with a sling, I am.

Restored by the One who brought Israel back from exile, I am.
Forgiven by the One who cries out forgiveness from the cross, I am.
Awakened by the One awakens the dead, I am.
Renewed by the One who will renew all things, I am.
Made in the image of the One called, 'I am who I am', I am.

AMEN.

HYMN Great is Thy Faithfulness

PRAYER for OUR WORLD

Listen! The footsteps of the One now standing in the doorway, then walks slowly, picking up broken rope, and braiding it into a whip. He cracks it once.... and there is absolute silence. He cracks it again, the tables overturn, scattering silver and gold and precious coins all over the floor. Bulls and sheep run helter-skelter, sacrificial doves fly out from gilded cages. The sound of freedom is the song of loud Hosanna! **Listen!**

Remember those who love precious silver and gold, who find it difficult to share and who unable to cope with its loss.

Remember people imprisoned by injustice

Remember people silenced by fear

Remember people mourning, uncertain where death leads

Remember people weary of life watching the candle of Hope die out

Remember those robbed of Love; pray they experience the Love of God.

Jesus of Galilee, the Son of God, is coming to claim His throne
and ALL creation will rejoice!

Pray this for your family and friends; pray this for those who cannot accept Jesus is coming soon: *Open their eyes to see God around them; open their minds to know Him, and open their hearts to accept Him without condition.*

Listen! God's presence is near. Tell the world, He will receive all who are His, and invite them into a relationship with Him. In the Name of the One Who is coming soon, Jesus the King! **AMEN**

HYMN

God's Spirit is in my Heart

READING

Gospel of John 2:13-25 (J. B. Philips)

After this incident (at the wedding in Cana), Jesus, accompanied by his mother, his brothers and his disciples, went down to Capernaum and stayed there a few days. The Jewish Passover was approaching and Jesus made the journey up to Jerusalem. In the Temple he discovered cattle and sheep dealers and pigeon-sellers, as well as money-changers sitting at their tables. So he made a rough whip out of rope and drove the whole lot of them, sheep and cattle as well, out of the Temple. He sent the coins of the money-changers flying and turned their tables upside down. Then he said to the pigeon-dealers, *“Take those things out of here. Don’t you dare turn my Father’s house into a market!”* His disciples remembered the scripture—*‘Zeal for your house has eaten me up’*

As a result of this, the Jews said to him, *“What sign can you give us to justify what you are doing?”*

“Destroy this temple,” Jesus retorted, *“and I will rebuild it in three days!”*

To which the Jews replied, *“This Temple took forty-six years to build, and you are going to rebuild it in three days?”*

He was, in fact, speaking about the temple of his own body, and when he was raised from the dead the disciples remembered what he had said to them and that made them believe both the scripture and what Jesus had said.

While he was in Jerusalem at Passover-time, during the festivities many believed in him as they saw the signs that he gave. But Jesus, on his side, did not trust himself to them—for he knew them all. He did not need anyone to tell him what people were like: he understood human nature.

MESSAGE

Having introduced us to the pre-existing Jesus, who was with the Father, before the Creation of this world, John now establishes Jesus credentials. As with the Father, everything the Son does is a miracle, *signs* that point beyond

themselves. At the wedding in Cana, the host had run out of wine, Jesus' act of turning water into wine was highly symbolic: First, an encounter with Jesus transforms us; we are not changed, we are transformed into a new person, which is to be celebrated. Second, this miracle provides a framework to understand the interdependence between the old and new Covenant; water represents the old covenant with God; wine represents a new covenant in Christ. Water was a sign of God's judgement, wine is God's sign of gladness and joy for the work being accomplished in Christ. The old covenant is not withdrawn, nor done away and replaced by a new one. To believe this to believe God changes His mind! God is in the process of "making all things new"¹, which is *Transformation* and Jesus is the transforming "agent"; the ceremonial vats contained water for external purification (washing - v.6) required under the old covenant, now contained wine for internal transformation, the visible fruits of which are gladness and joy.

The wedding celebrations now over, Jesus travels to Capernaum for a few days with His birth family (mother and brothers) and His "new" family, His Disciples. John is going out his way to make these comparisons, to illustrate (and at times demonstrate) changes taking place. After a few days, they travel to Jerusalem, when it was "*nearly time for the Jewish Passover*".

This is the first of several times through his Gospel, John uses the phrase "...of the Jews" or "Jewish", an indication that he was writing for a wider audience that included Gentiles and others who might not have been familiar with Jewish feasts and customs.

For those who question the length of Jesus' active ministry, John uses the "Jewish Passover" or "the Passover of the Jews" as a time-stamp. The start of Jesus' ministry is time-stamped here in chapter 2; the end of the first year of His ministry is time-stamped in chapter 6 (v. 4); the end of the second year is time-stamped in 11:55 and the end of the third year which ended with Jesus'

¹ Isaiah 43:18-19 and 65:17; Ephesians 2:15 and 4:24; Hebrews 8:13 and Revelation 21:5.

crucifixion, starts at 12:1 (“*Six days before the Passover*”) and ends at 19:14, “*Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover.*”

The narrative that follows is familiar - Jesus enters the Temple, is upset and furious that His Father’s house has been turned into a marketplace, fashions a whip, cracks it and clears the Temple court of traders. Please note, Jesus did not hit anyone with the whip; he would have cracked the whip as a circus master would, to show who is in charge. There is no reference, actual or implied that anyone or animal is injured or hurt.

Clearly, what Jesus saw upset Him, that His Father’s house was being used in a profane manner that “*lacked respect for things that are held to be sacred, which implies anything inspiring or deserving of reverence, as well as behaviour showing similar disrespect or causing religious offence*”.²

Jesus is drawing the line - that which is Holy (God’s Temple where He met the High Priest on behalf of the people), and that which is un-holy. Jesus’ action is NOT condemning the market place; that’s how many people make a living. Jesus found three things abhorrent:

1. Foreign exchange dealers who made whatever margin they could when pilgrims exchanged their coins which had Caesar’s head stamped on it, to buy Temple tax coins.
2. Sheep and Cattle dealers who knew pilgrims had to bring an offering of livestock to the Lord from the herd or from the flock, charged what they could depending on a buyer’s circumstances and ability to pay
3. Those who sold doves, the appropriate sacrifice by the poor. Those who could not afford even doves or pigeons could bring a measure of flour instead³ mostly from their homes. (This is God’s concern for the poor, that they shouldn’t be denied the privilege and honour of an offering to God.⁴)

² "Definition of profanity". Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English – online. Retrieved 11 September 2014.

³ Leviticus 5:7-13

⁴ see 19:9-10 and chapter 25

These merchants, traders and sellers were cluttering the outer courts of the temple, the only place where Gentiles could convene and worship. The noise, hustle, bustle robbed them of tranquility and calm to worship.

We draw two lessons from this passage, and both stand in stark contrast.

The first is to acquaint ourselves well with the **ENTIRE** Word of God. Jesus Disciples did this and it enables them to “remember” prophecy (older Testament) and connect it with Jesus’ teaching (2:17); it also reminded them of God’s consistency (2:22). Knowing the **ENTIRE** Word of God strengthens our faith in God, and we work with Him towards the fulfilment of His plans.

This stands in contrast with the *many began to trust Him (Jesus)*, but Jesus did not trust them; He knew their conviction was veneer thin because it was based **only** on the “miracles” they saw. John’s closing line says it all, *No one needed to tell Him (Jesus) about human nature, for he knew what was in each person’s heart (25)*.

Are you waiting for a miracle to convince you about God? You could be waiting a long time! God invites you to acquaint yourself with His **ENTIRE** Word, from Genesis to Revelation, and at each “right time”, He will remind you of what it says, to nourish your faith, to underpin Hope, and strengthen your resolve to, *love God with all your heart, soul and mind, and your neighbour as yourself*. The Kingdom of God needs you. So be prepared to be made Holy to be used by God in His work!

AMEN.

LISTEN His Name is Wonderful

BENEDICTION

'The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:26)

Read this blessing out three times:

once for yourself,

once for someone you care about, and

once for someone you struggle with.

May the blessing of Light be yours!

The blessing of sunlight that draws stranger and friend to you.

The blessing of moonlight to calm you at the end of a tiring day.

The blessing of candle-light set in the window of your home,

bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm.

May the blessing of rain be yours!

Beating upon your Spirit to cleanse it of all that is impure and unholy

May the blessing of God's earth be yours to enjoy!

yielding you plenty for yourself, your family and those in need

And may the Lord bless you in every way, and keep you safe.

AMEN.

HYMN Sing We The King Who Is Coming To Reign

LISTEN Kim Collingsworth play Hymns