

The Lord's Living Temple
The Third Sunday of Lent: 4 March 2018

The Gospel of John 2:13-22

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."

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 forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. 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.

Hymn 287 from "Singing the Faith"

*V3. See from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down;
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

Jesus was the ultimate faithful servant to His Heavenly Father. He led a life pleasing and honoring to Him in all aspects. The promised long-awaited Messiah, fulfilled the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. It is Him that we read about in book of Isaiah: 42:1:

*"Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations."*



In the text, according to John chapter two, we come across one story where Jesus delights the heart of His Father who is Holy and full of Light. By contrast, in the very house of His Father, there was complete darkness and wickedness due to the immoral acts of the religious leaders.

Jesus, in all His authority and zeal, cleansed the temple from both spiritual and physical wickedness. Not only did He cleanse the temple, but through doing so, He was preparing His followers to look at things from a different perspective. He desired for them to understand what it meant to keep the Lord's temple sacred and holy.

Paul defines this further in 1 Corinthians 3:16 when he states: *"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"* With this understanding, Paul compels us to think of our bodies as the temple and a place of dwelling for the Lord and His Spirit.

Thus, as faithful followers of the Lord, we ought to keep ourselves sacred and holy before God: our bodies, souls and spirits should reflect His divine Holiness. The things that try to defile our bodies and souls are plentiful, however when we are close to the heart of the Lord, when we listen to His voice and obey him, we will know how to maintain pure vessels from the inside and the outside.

The words of the Lord about destroying the temple and Him building it up in three days were fulfilled through His death on the cross on our behalf, buried for three days and resurrected gloriously bringing us forth into a victorious life.

As we reflect on Christ's work on our behalf during this season, let us be reminded afresh that we have a calling and a responsibility to present ourselves blameless before the Lord and others. We ought to also believe that everything the Lord said shall come to pass as we follow His steps, we must put our complete faith in Him.

Whilst many people, at this time and beyond, cling to the earthly temple of Jerusalem, or the remains of, our hearts pray for a renewed vision for anyone who has not encountered the Master of the temple, Jesus Christ. Only then, shall this land experience true peace and justice.

Let us pray: Lord, whom we serve, whom we follow and to be only present where He is. As He commanded us, let us not love our lives, but love Him...so when the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it will bear much fruit.

The church in Egypt has offered thousands of wheat grains to the work of the Kingdom. As the church there is flourishing, we pray for our own church in the Holy Land, Lord revive these dry bones and place your spirit in them! Let your resurrection be real in our hearts and testimonies. Amen.

Picture Credit: "God's Holy City" Taken by Lauren Frey, Jerusalem

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