



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Zeal for God

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John 2:13-22

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*<sup>13</sup> The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." <sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."*

*<sup>18</sup> So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup> 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.*

*(Pastor Prays)*

As we go along with John, you will see that he is doing what he said his purpose was. Do you remember his purpose? His purpose is shown to us in John 20:31. <sup>31</sup> *but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.* That's what the miracle is about in John 2:1-11. At the wedding at Cana, the wine ran out, and Jesus's mother convinced him to do something. He changed the water into wine, and notice what John tells us in verse 11. <sup>11</sup> *This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.*

In this story that I've just read, when we get to verse 22, it says, after his resurrection. His disciples remember this event and believed. In verse 23 it tells us that many believed in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. This is the story of Jesus cleansing the temple. He launches his public ministry with force and purpose and pandemonium. It's the Passover. John will record three of them, and people from all over the diaspora are coming to Jerusalem to worship. They're making a pilgrimage, and so they are traveling as light as possible, but when they get to Jerusalem, at the temple, they don't have the right kind of money and certainly don't have oxen or sheep or pigeons for the sacrifice. And so, as a matter of convenience and a facade of helpfulness, in the temple courts, you could get what you needed to participate in worship. And it sounds very reasonable, and helpful, and acceptable, but you read this story, and you realize there's something really bothering Jesus. Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, is nowhere more inaccurate or unhistorical than right here. Let's read verses 15 and 16. <sup>15</sup>*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.* <sup>16</sup>*And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."* What's going on here? In the same story, Jesus makes a wild claim in verse 19. <sup>19</sup>*Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* And John tells us these things happened to awaken belief. His zeal should burn our hearts for genuine worship That creates changed lives. This story is centered around the worship of an almighty God, and I think that's why this is the only time you see Jesus act like this. What was once holy, beautiful, and filled with meaning had been trampled on, and he hates it. Worship that is irreverent or self-indulgent or superficial or hypercriticized or distraction-filled, worship that is cold and lifeless and ill-prepared or worship that is theologically sloppy; he hates it. Your worship must be seen in your life, or it's not real. Romans 12:1 says, **12** *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* In this passage, Jesus changes the nature of worship. Let's talk about how he does it, and we can make some applications as we go along.

### **Jesus Passionately honors God**

That's what this seems to be about. When he came into the temple courts, what he saw appalled him. Verse 14 tells us that inside the temple court, a place for prayer and reflection

and meditation and other acts of worship, he found people selling all kinds of stuff under the thin veneer of helping people worship. The money changers and vendors had entangled money and religion and found out it's quite profitable to play on people's devotion to God. They promised some sort of blessing, if you will, sow money into their ministry. The airwaves today are full of heretics and hucksters living in multimillion-dollar homes that were built on the backs of desperate people treating a donation like a lottery ticket and hoping that this time the jackpot might be hit. Do you want to know why we teach like we do, with doctrinal fire? It's so that your worship honors God.

James says in James 1:27, *<sup>27</sup> Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*

Selflessness. This is giving yourself to someone or something that can't pay you back. In verse 16, Jesus tells them that they have made his father's house into a flea market bazaar. This house is about knowing, loving, and worshipping God. Here, sins are forgiven. Here, lives are healed. Here, hearts are mended back together. Here, people meet with God. As Jesus' passion honors God, is that what your life is about, or is it about money? Is it about how much money you can make? Jesus passionately honors God.

### **Jesus aggressively confronts sin**

Look at the disturbance caused here. In verse 15, Jesus makes himself a whip. One year, we bought the boy's bullwhips at Tweetsie and sent them outside to play. That was probably not the best parental decision we've ever made, but it was a lot of fun to watch. Read the pandemonium in verses 15 through 16. *<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."* Jesus loves honoring the Father, and love of one thing presupposes hatred of another. If he loves giving honor and glory to the Father, then he hates with a holy hatred anything that dishonors God, especially in worship. There's something we can be sure about. Jesus always confronts sin. He confronts it in several conversations in the Bible. He confronts the woman at the well. He confronts Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, and the rich young ruler. He confronts the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees. He did it with Judas, and he does it with you. But when he confronts your sin and awakens your heart to your sin in your

life, and all that sin deserves, he doesn't scream at you and tell you how terrible you are. He goes and stands in the road in front of the oncoming judgment of God, and absorbs all the punishment, and gives you forgiveness and reconciliation with God. We shouldn't try to rationalize our sin, but we need to own it, confess it, and then receive life. Paul says it like this in Colossians 2:13-14.<sup>13</sup> *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,* <sup>14</sup> *by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.* Jesus gives us changed lives. He passionately honors God. He aggressively confronts sin.

### **Jesus perfectly fulfills scripture**

When Jesus drives the money changers out in a zealous rage, verse 17 says,<sup>17</sup> *His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."* That's a quote from Psalm 69:9 that says, *For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.* That is a messianic song that is used six times in the New Testament, and Jesus fulfilled it perfectly. In fact, when you get down to verse 22, Jesus steps out of the chronological order of events to give us some necessary comments. <sup>22</sup> *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.* Verse 22 gives the picture of the atoning work of Jesus. It is based on the authority of scripture. It delivers the power of the gospel that saves sinners. It is predicated on the necessity of faith; you must believe. All of this centers around my next point. He passionately honors God. He aggressively confronts sin. He perfectly fulfills scripture and...

### **Jesus sacrificially gives life**

In the middle of all this mayhem, look what Jesus is asked in verse 18. <sup>18</sup> *So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?"* They are saying, give us some proof. This is the same thing they asked him in Matthew 12, we want to sign, and that's when he said I'll give you the sign of Jonah.<sup>40</sup> *For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* Jesus says, you want to sign? My death is your sign. Here in John 2:19, Jesus says, <sup>19</sup> *Jesus*

*answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* They didn't understand. John tells us in verse 21 that he was speaking about the temple of his body, but he was using double speech and making an audacious claim that will forever change how God is worshipped. He was claiming nothing less than the reconstitution of God's people and how they worship. He said the same sort of thing to the Samaritan woman when she tried to sidetrack the conversation about her sin. Jesus said to her, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem where you worship the Father, the hour is coming when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Real worship won't be attached to a place. Real worship is attached to Jesus. In Matthew 12:6, Jesus says, *<sup>6</sup>I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.* He was talking about himself. This temple, that took 46 years to build, will be destroyed. But when they destroyed the temple of Jesus's body, he builds it again in three days. In John 10, Jesus says, I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. Jesus becomes the new place where everyone may meet and fellowship with God. He lays down his life for our sin when he takes it up again for our joy, forgiveness, and worship. Jesus says whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. Jesus's body, offered up in sacrifice and raised in power, will be the new temple where God and humanity, creator and created, meet face to face. Jesus said, whoever has seen me, has seen the Father. Today, Jesus Christ invites you to come see the Father, turning away from your sin in repentance and turning to Jesus in faith. Join me in prayer as we go into our invitation.

*(Pastor prays)*