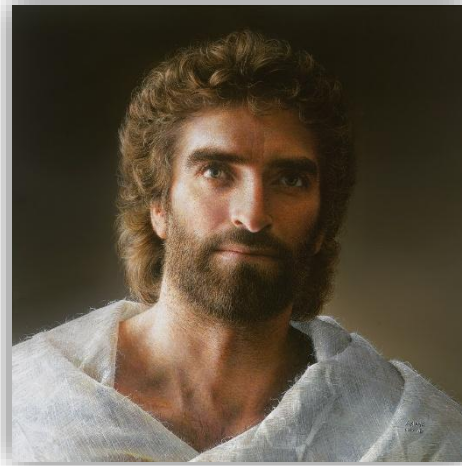


What Temple?



John 2: 13-22

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 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. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. 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.

During Passover time, Jesus went to the Temple. And there we see Jesus becoming consumed with a fiery passion. Why? What did he see? He saw this big marketplace inside the Temple. The market was originally located in the Kidron Valley. The religious leaders of the Temple brought them to the Temple inside. What was the purpose? Money!

The sellers should pay sales taxes and location taxes to the Temple. Not only that - all pilgrims from other countries had to exchange foreign money to purchase the sacrificial animals. It was a great amount of money. It didn't end there. All of these market activities took place in the outer court; the court of Gentiles, where Gentiles got to know God, worshiped God, and met God. Gentiles searching for truth found themselves in the loud marketplace after a long pilgrimage to the Temple of God. In such an environment, it was impossible for them to have any sort of communion with God.

The Temple market system was saturated with the spirit of greed. It was a hypocritical religion covering the insatiable love of money in the name of God. Jesus cried out, "Do not make my father's house into a marketplace!" Jesus came into the world to show the infinite love and worth of his Father and to honor the Father!

Let's think of our day: What is the typical modern-day spirit that blocks our communion with God? Symbolically it is Santa Claus' spirit. Santa Claus is singing and dancing in the modern-day sanctuary with his moralistic legalism and a sack full of false treasures.

You better watch out,
You better not cry,
You better not pout,
I'm telling you why,
Santa Claus is coming to town.

It means performance-oriented false Christianity. It is not the Gospel; it is not the good news for us. What do you worship? You can choose what Temple. Is it Jesus' temple where you can come and rest by abiding in Him and yielding the fruits of the Holy Spirit? Or Santa's temple, where you can give all your human effort and be restless in fear?

Grace and peace,

Pastor Hae-Jeong