John 2:13-25: When Worship Loses Its Way

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John

Introduction

- https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn05dd4pz0jo - The mistreatment of something valuable - something to be appreciate. They became so focused on taking a picture they wanted that they disregarded the artwork in front of them.
- We can bring that same self-centeredness into our relationship with God. We approach Him thinking primarily about what we want, while giving little thought to the honor He deserves.
- The temptation to neglect or distort the worship of God is real. We're regularly tempted to live as if God exists to serve us rather than living our lives to serve God.
- John 2:13-25 confronts the way we worship, and this passage might reveal to you that when it comes to living for the glory of God, you've lost your way.
- This passage confronts us personally and as a church, because how we worship together reveals what we believe about God."
- From this text, I want to show you two realities about worship we must remember.

We need to remember why we worship.

- Jesus has come to give us joy! That joy comes as He deals with our sin through His death and resurrection. The same Jesus who supplies the

wine also overturns the tables. As we follow Him, He confronts the sin we've tolerated and calls us to recenter our lives on the glory of God.

- John 2:13 - After he was in Capernaum with his disciples, Jesus made his way to Jerusalem for the Passover.
- John records this cleansing early in Jesus' ministry; the other Gospels record a cleansing during His final week. Many understand these as two separate occasions. Some argue that John is taking the cleansing that happened in Jesus' final week and putting at the beginning of his gospel to remind us of who Jesus is.
- Jewish men were commanded to travel to Jerusalem three times a year - for Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Booths - times of worship to remember what God had done for His people.
- You come bringing sacrifices to offer at the altar in the temple. Jews lived throughout Judea an Galilee. Some Jews would come from many miles away. Not convenient to bring extra animals with you for sacrifices.
- Deuteronomy 14:22-27 - The Law made provisions for people traveling from far away. The Law allowed distant worshipers to convert their tithe into money and purchase provisions at the place God chose, but that did not authorize turning the temple courts into a marketplace.In the past, merchants had set up their stalls across the Kidron Valley on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. (Carson)
- Not only were animals sold, but money had to be exchanged. The temple tax had to be paid in shekels, but people traveling from other regions of the Roman empire, had to exchange their money for the temple currency.
  What the money changers and vendors were doing was normal practice. What wasn't normal was where they were doing it - in the outer courts of the temple. Mark 11:15-19 - they were set up in the Court of the Gentiles

- the closest place to the holy place where Gentiles could gather to pray and worship.

- A holy place turned into a marketplace. Imagine the chaos, the crowds of people, the animals, the haggling back and forth - it didn't feel like a sacred place of prayer.
- For those coming to worship, perhaps it was about convenience . You could exchange your money, buy your animal, quickly make your way into the temple, offer your sacrifice, and get on with your day. Ecclesiastes 5:1 - Guard your steps… Not much guarding of the steps. Instead, haste and chaos.
- Jesus angry. God to be revered and honored, and He didn't see much reverence and honor. He made a whip out of cords, drove the animals out, an overturned the tables.
- These people gathered at the court of gentiles had forgotten the purpose of worship:. They were there to honor God and draw near to Him and reflect on the sacrifice that was made on the altar as a sacrifice of atonement.
- Jesus' anger was not an overreaction. His disciples remembered Psalm 69:9: "Zeal for your house will consume me." In Psalm 69, David describes the hostility he experienced because of his devotion to God. Now, the disciples are seeing the devotion of Jesus. Ultimately, Jesus' zeal for His Father would consume Him to the point of suffering at the hands of people a brutal death on a cross.
- Jesus took His Father's honor seriously, do we? How do we take His honor seriously? Are we zealous for the right worship of God? There are direct applications from that confront how we gather to worship as the body of Christ.
- **We don't gather to hastily go through the motions.** Our time of worship is NOT just another weekly obligation that we're just trying to

get through. Did you take the time to prepare for worship? Did you walk in late? Do you leave early? Life happens, and sometimes it's unavoidable. But, coming late and leaving early can also be an indicator of careless worship. Did you allow your mind to be distracted by all the things you need to do? Slow down. Remember why you're here.

- **We don't gather to cater to our needs.** God meets real needs when we gather, but our preferences are not the standard by which we judge worship. Worship about God's honor, not yours. Do you leave frustrated because we didn't sing the songs you like? Or, the sermon didn't give you enough life advice? Or, someone didn't dress like you think they should dress for church?
- **We do gather to remember and respond to what God has done for us.** Every Scripture we read, every song we sing, every message we preach is helping us to remember the greatness of our God and what He has done for us in Christ Jesus. When we remember what He has done, we are compelled to respond.
- Practically - As I remember, how do I respond?
- I confess.
- I give.
- I forgive.
- I obey.
- I worship.

We need to remember who we worship.

- In a moment, Jesus had run out the merchants and moneychangers. If you were a Jew who witnessed this display of righteous anger, you were asking "Who is this? What gives this man the right or authority to run people out of the temple?"

- vs. 18 - “What sign will you show us for doing these things?” Or, “You’re displaying authority - show us a sign that you are in authority.” The Jews questioning likely wondering if Jesus is a heaven-sent prophet. A miraculous sign in their minds would validate that Jesus was heaven-sent. (1 Corinthians 1:22-23)
- vs. 19 -20 - Jesus’ response didn’t make sense to those questioning. “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.”
- In Jesus’ day, the temple was beautiful. It had been built by Zerubabel and completely rebuilt and expanded by King Herod. It was likely his most notable accomplishment.
- Jewish rabbis saiid that “whoever had not seen Herod’s building has never seen a beautiful building in his life.” (Lexham Geographic Commentary on the Gospels)
- But, Herod did not build it for the glory of God, he built for his own political ambitions and to gain favor among the people.
- It was a lengthy project. The Jews reminded Jesus it took forty-six years to build. How could Jesus rebuild it in three days?
- vs. 21 - Jesus wasn’t speaking about the physical temple that Herod had built. He was speaking of his body. (John 1:14) The physical temple that stood in Jerusalem was symbolic of heaven meeting earth. Jesus is the reality that the temple pointed to. Heaven meets earth in a person. He is the center of all true worship.
- At the temple, sacrifices took place. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice. The One who is the temple would be the ultimate sacrifice who would atone for all of our sins through His death on the cross. Three days, after His death, the One who is the true temple would rise from the dead.
- Those questioning Jesus needed to take their eyes off of the physical temple. The temple was a type and shadow of what was to come. The temple anticipated something better - God among us in the flesh. Jesus

is the full manifestation of the presence of God. And, since He is God, He is in all authority. He had every right to overturn the tables in the temple.

- vs. 22 - In the moment, the disciples were probably just as confused as those who were questioning Jesus, but several years later, when the disciples witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, they remembered what Jesus said. They believed.
- vs. 23-25 - Jesus continued performing signs in Jerusalem, and many believed in His name. But Jesus did not entrust Himself to them because He knew their hearts. They were impressed by His power, but their response was not the genuine trust He calls for. John uses the same word for their “believing” and Jesus’ ‘’entrusting”. They believed in Him, but He did not entrust Himself to them.
- Jesus didn’t come to merely impress people with His miracles. He came to show us that He is the eternal God who is in all authority who has the power to save us from our sins by dying in our place and rising again from the dead.
- Not all faith is saving faith. You can be impressed by Jesus and know true things about Him without surrendering your life to Him. Saving faith is trusting our authoritative Savior to reconcile us to the Father through His death and resurrection.
- We know why we worship to honor the God who has saved us through His Son. Jesus is the object of our worship because He is God who has come for us and saved us from our sins. Philippians 2:9-11.
- Worshipping Jesus is far more than being impressed by His miracles or His teachings. Worshipping Jesus is what we do when we gather when we honor Him as a body of believers. Ultimately, worshipping Jesus is laying down our lives in surrender to His Lordship. A life of worship is how we live out our saving faith in response to His grace.

- If Jesus is in authority, and He is worthy of your worship, you need to ask yourself this question:
- **What needs to be overturned in your life?**
- Or, where are you resisting the authority of the Jesus you worship?
- Does a sinful habit that you keep excusing need to be overturned?
- Does a sinful attitude that's keeping you angry and bitter need to be overturned?
- Does a misplaced priority need to be overturned?
- Does a sinful influence need to be overturned? A relationship that's encouraging disobedience to the Lord?
- How do you overturn it? Confess it to the Lord. Confess it. Bring it to light by telling a trustworthy believer who can pray for you and hold you accountable. Replace it what's dishonored the Lord with obedience and pursuing Him. Instead of bitterness, practice forgiveness. Instead of wrong influences, surround yourself with faithful believers. Instead of a misplaced priority, make Jesus the priority.
- This morning, if you are a follower of Jesus, this passage should cause you to look deep within to see if your worship is hindered by sins that need to be overturned.
- If you are not a believer, this passage is a call to believe. Jesus is God who has come to set you free from your sins by dying in your place only to rise from the grave so all your sins could be forgiven and you could be given new life. He is worthy of your worship. Repent of your sins and believe in Him today.