

Introduction: Pg. ____

If I were to ask you who Jesus is, how would you describe him? What words come to mind? What qualities did he possess? What was his primary mission? I've discovered in my personal journey as well as my years of being a pastor, that people possess a significant tendency to limit their view of him according to their own preferences and experiences. For example, some people view Jesus as . . .

CEO Jesus - All business. Follow his leadership and management principles and watch your empire grow.

Hippie Jesus - Everything is relaxed maaaannnn. You can live however you want to. Jesus don't care.

Hipster Jesus - If you want to reach people, everything has to be cool.

Guru Jesus - We just come to him for advice.

Get Rich Jesus - Jesus wants you to be materially wealthy. That's why he came after all...

Gumby Jesus - This Jesus can flex and adapt to fit any cause under the sun.

FCF: Here's the point: We all tend to see Jesus through our own experiences, desires, and self-centered lens. When we do that, intentionally or not, we truncate our view of Jesus. We reduce him to someone he is not.

Our goal should be to allow him to define himself. He is who he is. Not who we want to make him to be...

Whenever we see Jesus in the Gospels, we are looking at a man on fire, a man of tremendous focus and determination. He knew who he was and he knew what he was called to do.

In this story, we see his zeal and passion on full display.

T: And in *John 2:12-22*, we see his zeal in unique light.

"Zealous for Glory" **John 2:12-22**

Story

- Jesus and his disciples traveled "up to Jerusalem" (because it sits at a higher elevation than Galilee) to one of the most important Festivals of the Jewish people: Passover.
- This marks the first in a series of references to Jewish Festivals throughout the Gospel of John that will peak in chapters 5-10 .
 - As we mentioned last week, celebration is central to Christ and Christianity. We saw Jesus at a wedding, now a festival.
 - To come to Christ is to come to an endless celebration. Jesus does *not* invite us to boredom, dullness, or monotony. He invites us to a land of a million different colors, to a land of a million unanticipated surprising, and an experience of literally infinite joys and reasons to throw a party (feast, strike up the band, be merry, laugh, and enjoy!)
 - As Chesterton says: THIS IS the "achievement of Christianity." We are brought into something both strange and secure, that contains both welcome and wonder!

T: Now, what was going on at this festival?

Setting:

- When Jesus arrived at the festival, he entered the outer courts of the temple and there he found people selling oxen, sheep, and pigeons.
- This was because people made extensive pilgrimages in order to participate in the Passover, and many would not have brought their sacrifice with them, due to the length of their journey. That's why animals were made available for people to purchase.
- Jesus also saw the outer courts filled with "money-changers."

John 2.12-22. Zealous for God's Glory

- When you travel abroad, you have to exchange money. When we flew into Delhi last year, one of the first things I did was go over to the currency exchange office to get \$200 worth of Indian Rupees.
- That's what's going on here. . .
- The "money-changers" were necessary because of the "temple tax" and for the purchase animals for sacrifice.
- So what's the problem? The issue is where they were placed. FOR CONVENIENCE
- The temple court was supposed to be a place reserved for prayer, not for herds of animals with people gathered around ready to make transactions.

This set Jesus off: He drove out the animals, turned over tables, poured out the coins of the money-changers and declared that they were desecrating his Father's house. He must have created a chaotic scene. ?This might have made the local news? The anger of Christ though, was not uncontrolled, but calculated and intentional.

This is the biblical Jesus. . .

- Willing to sit down at the table with sinful people and willing to turn over tables.
- Willing to welcome people in and willing to drive people out.
- Jesus was a Revolutionary! He did not come to bring simple reforms; he came to fulfill and perfect the entire religious system: the sacrifices, the priesthood, how we access God, how we experience God, the entire thing, upside down!

T: Now, why would he do such a thing? Our answer is found in *verse 17*. Look at that again . . . "Zeal for your house will consume me."

I want to share three encouragements with you from the words of Christ.

I. Be zealous (2:12-15).

When it comes to the things of God . . .

- Would you consider yourself a zealous person or a person of indifference? Do you live with passion or passivity? Are you full of life or are you lifeless?
- People who truly know Jesus should be the most passionate people on the planet!
- As Paul instructed the Romans: "**Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.**" (Romans 12:11, NIV)
- We see this all throughout the Scriptures . . . [Psalm 27:4; Psalm 63:1; Acts 20:28; Phil 1:21; Phil. 3:8; 2 Corinthians 5:13]

What is ZEAL?

- **Zeal ignites intense focus.**
 - The zealous person has a strange kind of single-mindedness about them. They are marked by seriousness and urgency.
 - There may be a lot of good things in life, but *nothing* compares with this!
 - Zeal is not easily distracted. That's why passion can help us calibrate. It helps us discern what to say yes to and what to say no to.
- **Zeal equips us with great energy.**
 - Zeal keeps going. Zeal produces great determination. It is resolute and relentless.
 - When others get tired and bow out of the race, the zealous catch a breath and keep running!
- **Zeal produces abundant enthusiasm.**
 - There is an excitement and enjoyment about what we are pursuing.
 - My dad (HS Basketball Coach) . . . "Enthusiasm makes the difference."

John 2.12-22. Zealous for God's Glory

- I knew what the word enthusiasm meant at six. But I didn't need him to define it for me with his words, because my dad defined it for me with his life. You didn't have to talk him into being excited about basketball.
- **Zeal moves us to do what believe what few will believe and attempt what few will attempt. ZEAL.**
 - The zealous person always wants more: never content, never satisfied, always striving, always improving.
 - *Zeal causes a person to expect great things and attempt great things. Zeal can absolutely take someone over, in the best possible way; it can consume them.*
 - The irony for Jesus is that his zeal would lead him to be consumed in another sense of the word: his passion would lead to his ultimate passion of suffering, to the point of death.

Listen: passion doesn't have to look the same for every person. In fact, it won't look the same. It used to get on my nerves to be around what I thought were dispassionate people, but then I started hearing how they spoke of God and I saw what they were doing for God, and I was challenged by the depths of their love.

- Q: In comparison how intense if your love for Christ in comparison to your other loves?
- [And this zeal is grounded in reality. We guard ourselves against "zeal without knowledge." That's no good. It's of no use. Zeal for zeal's sake is fanaticism... Zeal on the basis of something true, beautiful and good, zeal on the basis of something truly glorious, is a gift from God.]

T: The zeal of Jesus was driven by a great desire to protect the purity of God's fame and name and glory!!
Temple represented glory...

II. Be zealous for pure worship to the Father's glory (2:16-17).

Let's get to the heart of the issue. Jesus was bothered; he was provoked (Acts 17:16ff), because these people were treating the glory of God with a sense of levity.

What he says in *verse 16* explains it . . . "*Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.*"

This is a picture of holy love that moved him to a holy anger. There can be a kind of anger that is righteous in nature. BUT we should be very careful when we sense anger rising in our hearts. Why? Most of the time, our anger is self-centered, not God-centered. Most of the time our anger is aimed at retaliation and vindicating our name, not vindicating God's name. The reason Jesus is turning over tables, provide the same reasons why we can see he is righteous in his anger.

For starters, **Jesus possessed a deep desire for Pure Worship**

- We need to understand the temple in 1st century Jewish context. The temple was "a symbol of Jewish national and religious identity."
- The temple was a place where people came to meet with God and experience his glory.
 - The outer court was supposed to be a place of prayer and worship, not a marketplace.
 - Remember, the issue is not the buying and selling of animals, nor exchanging currency. The issue is that these things were being done *in the temple*.
 - The people were using it as a convenient marketplace. Jesus viewed as a place for complete devotion in worship.
 - As D.A. Carson explains: "Instead of solemn dignity and the murmur of prayer, there is the bellowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. Instead of brokenness and contrition, holy adoration and prolonged petition, there is noisy commerce."
 - App: Jesus wanted to clear away any obstacle to their worship. What about you? What barriers can you clear away in your worship of God? Let me suggest two:
 - Spiritual: The first and most obvious barrier to worship and an intimate friendship with God is our own sin. We must pursue a holy life every day, which enhances our experience when we come together to worship on Sunday.

- Physical: Get enough sleep. Go to bed early enough to be rested and wake up early enough to get your mind focused on God and your body here at 10:25! :)

Jesus [also] possessed a deep desire for the Father's Glory.

- “The temple, Jesus claimed, was his Father’s house. God is his Father, and the temple authorities had allowed God’s house to become a house of merchandise, thus dishonouring his Father.” - Kruse
- The temple was a place for God to be known and revealed.
- Great detail went into it’s construction. Just go read the end of Exodus to get details on the tabernacle, which was a portable precursor of the temple (an unbelievable mobile tent, essentially). And then check the details on the construction of the first temple in 1 Kings 6-8.
- The temple was all about reflecting the glory of God.
- The Psalmist says: **“For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” (Psalm 84:10)**
- So Jesus, with his “supreme zeal for God’s holiness and purity,” sees these activities as desecrating his Father’s glory!

The effect on his disciples (whether on the spot or at a subsequent point - it’s hard to discern) was to remember the words of Psalm 69: “Zeal for *your* house will consume me.”

- To see Jesus act so courageously and decisively, with “no apparent concern for the consequences” (Kruse) must have left an indelible mark on his disciples.
- In Psalm 69, David cries out to God because of fierce opposition from his foes. He is portrayed as one who will suffer, which certainly matches this text.
- All of Jesus’ actions, by the way, are pointing us to the reality that Jesus enjoyed a special relationship with God. No one else comes into the temple and acts like this and speaks like this. “My Father”

T: Be zealous . . . Like Jesus . . . & Be zealous . . . Like Jesus . . . For the Father’s glory . . . That’s the what. But how can we, should we be zealous for God’s glory?

III. Be zealous for the Father’s glory by seeing the glory of Christ’s resurrection (2:18-22).

So let me show you how this shows up in this passage . . .

- The Jewish leaders are upset. They want an answer. Quite natural I think. Someone comes into your house and starts turning over furniture: “Hey! What’s going on here?”
 - So they say: What is the sign, Jesus?
 - Jesus: Something so much more glorious than the glory you see. That would be *the glory of ME*.
- But they didn’t get it. They *misinterpreted his statement: Verse 20*
- But the *true interpretation* is found in: *Verse 21*
 - This is the first prediction of Jesus’ violent death (from his own lips)
 - BUT it’s not the first indicator! (John 1:29, 1:36, not to mention 1:11, “his own did not receive him,” ultimately seen, at its heights, in his crucifixion; AND not to mention his own mention of the hour in 2:5 . . . Which does not explicitly point to his death, but implicitly does the same.)
 - This is also the first prediction of Jesus’ glorious resurrection.
 - This is one huge Spoiler Alert!!! He gives away the outcome at the beginning! The Messiah is going to die. The Messiah is going to rise!
 - Why? Already familiar with the synoptics and the Jesus story...
 - But a spoiler alert can be the greatest kindness in the universe.
 - We actually benefit from the spoiler alert. Big picture. This is where this whole thing, universe/life, everything is heading. Jesus is ALIVE.
 - The worst thing I could do from you or anyone is to withhold that information.

Here’s what is happening in John 2 . . .

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- Jesus saw through the glory of the temple, to the greater glory of his Father and the greater glory of himself. That's the sign. And that is what he wants us to see as well! When we see something glorious, it moves us to embrace and live for that glory in an intensely zealous way.
- Probably my favorite sentence outside of the Bible comes from the pen of a 17th century pastor named Thomas Watson. He explains this entire sermon and hopefully my entire life/our entire lives with five words: **"Glory renders us intensely zealous."** Glory moves us to passionate action, but we must first see his glory! We must *behold* his glory.

Jesus is glorious because he is the True and Greater Temple.

- Tabernacle > Temple > Destroyed > 2nd Temple > Destroyed > True and Greater Temple > Indestructible
- True & Greater Temple . . .
 - Temple language has already been applied to Jesus (John 1:14)
 - This is what we find in the very end (which is really the very beginning). At the end of the last book of the Bible, in **Revelation 21:22-23**, it says: **"And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb."** (Revelation 21:22-23)

Jesus is glorious because he brings the death of death in his resurrection.

- You want to escape death? Get in with Jesus.
- He is indestructible. In the words of **Hebrews 7:16**: **"who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life."**

T: Don't you want in on that? What is holding you back? Look at how the disciples responded in *verse 22* when they saw the reality of Jesus' resurrection. They believed!

**CONNECT CARD . . . Now is a great time to explore . . .

Conclusion:

So as we bring all of this to a close: I HOPE YOU SEE: What moves us forward, what motivates us to a greater zeal for God's glory, is GLORY itself.

- Be zealous *for* glory *by* glory. Glory motivates our pursuit of glory.
- **"Glory renders us intensely zealous." - Watson**
 - I find that when my passion grows weak . . . I'm not beholding the glory of Christ.
 - How can we look at him, and settle for mediocrity? We can't.
 - How can we see the resurrected Christ and not be willing to give up everything? We can't
 - How can we see him dying on a cross for our wrongdoing and not be willing to forgive our neighbor? We can't.
 - If we are lethargic, lazy, and uninterested when it comes to the things of God, we are not beholding the glory of Christ.

So here's the invitation: Come and See and Believe and . . .

The Point: Live a life intensely zealous for the glory of God.