



DATE: June 21, 2009

TEXT: John 2: 13-25

TITLE: John VII: Righteous Anger

Last week we saw Jesus at the wedding in Cana. This morning we see Jesus in Capernaum and Jerusalem. Let me begin by saying this is a perfect illustration of the difficulty of synchronizing Matthew, Mark and Luke with John. All four have this story of the clearing of the Temple.... however, in the Matthew, mark and Luke it occurs right before the crucifixion. In John it occurs at the beginning of his ministry. How do you explain this? Some have suggested that Jesus did this twice.... that is possible but not likely. This best explanation is this...John is introducing a topic here.... The spiritual battle between good versus evil.... especially in the religious community. By the way... this section ends and climaxes with John 3:16... **“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son... that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** That is next weeks sermon. John writes topically not chronologically.

In a minute we are going to see this confrontation between good and evil... between false

religionist and true faith. I want to begin with the final verses of our text this morning..... I

believe possibly one of the most important lessons taught by Jesus. *John 2: 23-25 states this*

**23Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. 24But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. 25He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.**

Here is the critical point... the people believed in Jesus... but did not become followers of Jesus. Our text says “Jesus would not entrust himself to them. The word “entrust” is the same word as “believe” in Greek. What this text is saying is... **“Jesus did not believe their believing.”** Our text gives the reason Jesus did not believing their believing...**It says** He knew all men.... man’s testimony... that is man’s words are not critically important... Jesus knows the heart. These people who believed in Jesus did not truly surrender to Jesus and Jesus knew of their surface faith. We see this lesson throughout scripture. *Matthew 7:21 states*

**"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a great author of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Colleges have classes on just Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor in Germany during WWII. He was one of the

few minister of any church to speak out against Hitler. Hitler hated him. As a matter of fact in the early 1940's Hitler ordered Bonhoeffer to be arrested and he spent much of the war in prison.... writing books. It is said that as the Allied armies were entering Berlin one of the last orders Hitler issued was the order to execute Bonhoeffer. He was executed on VE day in 1944.

The classic book Bonhoeffer wrote is entitled The Cost of Discipleship. In this book he contrasts what he calls “cheap grace” versus true grace. Allow me to share some quotes....

**Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of the Church. We are fighting today for costly grace.... Cheap grace means forgiveness of sins proclaimed as a general truth, the love of God taught as the Christian “conception” of God. And intellectual assent to that idea is held to be of itself sufficient to secure remission of sins.....**

**Cheap grace means justification of sin without justification of the sinner.....**

**Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.**

**Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price...**

**Such grace is costly because it call us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it cost man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all it is costly because it cost God the life of his son. Above all it is grace because God did not reckon his son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered his up for us. Costly grace is the incarnation of God.**

I believe we live in a day and age of cheap grace. Very often cheap grace has taken over the Church. Cheap grace does not honor God. Cheap grace does not bring the fruits of the

Spirit. Jesus does not believe the belief of those who adopt cheap grace.

We are now going to turn to the story of Jesus clearing the temple. I want to look at the anger of Jesus and make 3 points about anger.

**Point # 1** The anger of Jesus was infrequent and selfless. In all the gospels we have Jesus demonstrating 3 or 4 times and every time it is selfless anger.

If I were in the shoes of Jesus I would be angry almost all the time. He was attacked constantly by the Pharisees. They lied about him and twisted his words. That would make me angry.

The disciples were, in many ways, idiots. They constantly bickered. They constantly wanted the ear and time of Jesus. They were vying for power and influence. They would constantly make me mad.

Jesus would teach the crowd for hour after hour and then at the end of the time they would ask a question that clearly demonstrated that they did not have clue what Jesus had been teaching. That would make me mad.

His family did not understand him. They tried to use guilt with him.. They tried to change the direction of this life. That would make me angry... isn't it easy to be angry in our families. It is so easy to angry at our children... so easy to be angry at our spouses.... so easy to be angry at our parents.

Jesus was never angry at the every day affairs of life. The anger of Jesus was always selfless. That is not true with us. James describes sinful anger in *James 4: 1-4*

**1What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.**

This describes my anger. It is selfish. I do not get what I want or I have wrong motives and I get angry. This anger never pleases God.

**Point # 2** Notice Jesus' anger was always controlled. Jesus never lost his temper. In our text Jesus walked into the Temple, saw the situation.... sat down and braided a whip. This took time. His anger was planned... his anger was controlled.

This is a great lesson for us today. The old adage of "count to 10 before you act." is very

scriptural. This is a step that I have had to learn.... especially with my children when they were growing up. Again and again I had to stop and breath before I said anything or before I acted.

Sometimes a achieved this... often I did not.

Jesus never desires us to lose our temper. It never brings glory to him. This week, during VBS the children were studying the fruits of the Spirit. *Galatians 5* states....

**22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**

One day the children were learning about kindness. One of the children said..."boy... it's hard to be kind all the time." I think every one of us could echo that comment. But I want to point out the key to this command... it's verse 24 and verse 25. If you try to be more kind... or more in self-control... or more patient... or any of the fruits... we fail every time. Not the key is to be "crucified with Christ." The key is to be more and more surrendered to Jesus Christ. Do you have a problem being patient with a child? Make a point of this.... get the habit of every time you feel you anger rising..... pray to Jesus. This does a number of things.... it give you your

counting time... and it makes you aware that Jesus is with you.... and finally... it taps you into the power of the Holy Spirit. We live by the Spirit and stay in step with the Spirit. Don't try to be good. Don't try to master your anger... surrender to Jesus Christ every day and every minute of your life.... that is true belief.

**Finally Point # 3** Notice that the anger of Jesus was righteous anger. My first 2 points were on when not to get angry.. This point is when we should be angry.

Notice what Jesus saw as He entered the Temple. The Temple was huge... over 30 acres were covered by the temple. He was in the outer courtyard... The Court of Gentiles. Every year every Jew within 20 mile circle around Jerusalem was required to go to the temple and give a sacrificial offering. This was to point to their love of God and need for forgiveness. What happened was this... the Levitical Priesthood found a way to make money off the requirement. They set up booths in the courtyard. They sold animals that were acceptable to be offered and they exchanged the common Roman Money for Temple Money at a 14% exchange rate. They declared that only Temple money was acceptable to God. Also, they declared that only

“unblemished” animals were acceptable and they were the ones who had the unblemished” animals. It was a racket. A very profitable racket for the priest and their families

Into this scene Jesus walked. In the name of religion... people were being ripped off. His reaction was anger. Great anger. He drove the merchants and the money changers out of the temple. He is saying.... false religion is evil. Stealing from people in the name of religion is evil..

And evil causes anger.

I do believe we too need to be angry at evil that surrounds us.

- I look at the world at war... and I get angry
- I look at the continued segregation between races and I get angry
- I see the disregard for life... the elderly... the unborn.. The poor and I get angry
- I see one child purposely hurt another child and I get angry
- I see parents have no control over their children and parents who do not care.. I get angry
- I see husbands and wives who can not overcome their own selfishness and make life hell for themselves and their children and I get angry
- I turn on the t.v. and see pornography and occultism and I get angry.

We as Christians need to be angry at a sinful world. Yes, we are to love the sinner...but

the sin almost overwhelms us. The solution is Jesus. Not judgement. Not violence. Not

temper... Jesus. The world must know Jesus.... and we start with the world around us. Jesus

must be lifted up and shared with all. Righteous anger is the call of God.

AMEN