

John 2: 13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near,

and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves,

and the money changers seated at their tables.

Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple,

both the sheep and the cattle.

He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

He told those who were selling the doves,

“Take these things out of here!

Stop making my Father’s house a market place!”

His disciples remembered that it was written:

‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’

The Jews then said to him, ‘What sign can you show us for doing this?’

Jesus answered them:

‘Destroy this temple,

and in three days I will raise it up.’

The Jews then said,

forty six years, and will you raise it up in three days?

But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

After 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.

Meditation

If you are of a certain age,

you know that wonderful song by the Beatles:

“All you need Love...

da, da, dada da...

“All you need is Love...

dada....

Right! A lot of us remember it!

**And I also remember that a lot of folks who were older than me
backed then thought it was naïve and unrealistic...**

ahh. Get a real! they’d say...

**they looked at The Beatles as hippies who ought to
cut their hair and get a real job..**

**After pondering and praying with the Gospel all week,
I’d like to suggest that their song: All you need is Love
is the theme song for our Gospel today!**

A lot of people like this story of Jesus getting angry in the Temple.

**I have heard folks use it as support for their own anger about different
issues and events...**

But let me share with you a little bit about the circumstances of today’s reading.

The reading starts with the fact that it was the time of Passover.

**Jews from every corner of Israel people would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem
in order to offer sacrifice at this, their most holy time of the year.**

Biblical historians will tell you that Jerusalem, at Passover, would stink!

It would have been filled with the smell of burning animal flesh.

**The Temple priests are actually better described as butchers,
because their primary job was to offer animal sacrifice.**

**The kind of sacrifice you were offering
determined the kind of animal you sacrificed.**

And it determined how it would be sacrificed, who got which part of the meat or perhaps, the whole animal would be a burnt offering to God.

Since people came from all over Israel they couldn't bring the animals with them so there were places where these animals were sold.

It is said that 90% of the economy of Jerusalem dealt with the buying and selling of animals for sacrifice

Also, according to Temple law a person could not enter the temple with any Roman coins which was the currency of the day.

The reason was that those Roman coins had the image of the Emperor stamped into them and sometimes other pagan gods, and those images were not allowed into Jewish holy space.

So people would trade in their Roman coins for Jewish currency.

**So while this market place activity wasn't illegal
Jesus knew it was now unnecessary.**

**Jesus would have remembered that almost 700 years before,
prophet Zechariah had proclaimed that at the end time
there would be no reason for any of any of this buying and selling
in the Temple because the kingdom of God had arrived.**

**Which of course, the arrival of the Kingdom of God,
was Jesus' life long message!
Why he lived and why he died.**

**So, according to John,
By claiming the Temple as his Father's house...
by driving out the animals
by overturning the tables of the money changers**

**Jesus was making a very clear and indisputable claim:
The Kingdom of God is here.
The 'quid –pro-quo' of the Temple sacrificial system was over.
Now the Love of God is the first and the last word of everything!**

**Remember last week when we talked about God putting an end to human sacrifice?
Well, today Jesus is putting an end for the need to offer any sacrifice
in order to get God to forgive or love you.**

**Today, Jesus is putting an end to the whole Temple system of Sacrifice
and in John's Gospel this event is the precipitating event
that would eventually lead to his execution.**

**Jesus spent his entire life and offered his life
in the firm committed understanding of the unconditional love of his Father,**

**No one had a to sacrifice a person,
a sheep, cattle or doves
in order to be loved and forgiven by God.**

**Once and for all...
God says: "I love you."
not will love you if...but I love you now.
as is.**

**It's hard for us humans to love like that.
Even in the best of relationships.
Sometimes relationships need to end for the good of one or both involved.
Sometimes is necessary to stop 'loving' that person for one's own safety.**

**That is true if you are talking about Love as an emotion.
But what about Love as the desire for what is the highest good for that person.
Love as the Power of creation and the power for Good.**

**Think of one person that you struggle with right now.
It could be someone you know or someone you know about.
An entertainer or a politician perhaps.
Now, we are not asked to feel warm fuzzies for that person,
but we are called to desire for them what is in their highest good.
we are challenged or invited, use whatever word you like,
to pray for their peace of heart and peace of mind.**

**The ancient peoples could not handle this message of Jesus:
it was too threatening religious and politically.
The Jews felt he was tearing up the very fabric of their religion
and the Romans felt he was threat to their political control
so they killed him.**

But their fear did not destroy his message, his life or God's love.

**Fear never can, never will destroy love.
Love is the only emotion that can hold everything together...**

**That is why Love, in all it's many ways,
is the most important way to be and the most important thing to do.
Love that is sweet and tender,
Love that is lived with intention and commitment...
Love that is lived as the way and the end goal...
Love that is known in power and in gentleness
Love that is without end.**

Ok...so now does anyone want to sing with me?

All you need is Love...dada