

A LION CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE
Next Steps Devotional Guide
February 2, 2025
Sermon Series > The Gospel of John

1. Read Revelation 6:16 in your sermon outline. When we think of a lamb, we typically do not think of a lamb having wrath. We think lambs are easy prey, timid, meek and powerless. How is it possible for a lamb to have wrath?
2. Read John 2:12 in your Bible. Jesus travels from Cana, where He turned water into wine, to Capernaum — a city on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. It is about 18-20 miles walk. Capernaum became Jesus home base of operation for His ministry. In this trip Jesus called Andrew and Peter to follow Him a second time. This time they commit and stay with Jesus until His crucifixion. During the next three years, Jesus will do six more signs to prove His divinity to them. Why do you think this was not enough in the end?
3. Read John 2:13 in your sermon outline. Jesus decides to go the the Passover in Jerusalem and so He and his disciples and family make this 85 mile trip. It would take 3-4 days by foot to get there. Now this was not a random thought. Read Luke 2:41 in your sermon outline or Bible. This was an annual tradition by Jesus' family. He has been making this trip every year of His life. It is obvious this is something He looked forward to doing every year. What are some Christian traditions you and your family do each year that you look forward to doing? How do they impact your walk with Christ?
4. Passover was a huge festival and celebration for Israel. In the first century, Jerusalem had a population of around 60-70,000 people. During Passover, first century Jewish historian Josephus says around 3 million pilgrims came to it. That is almost unimaginable. For example, during our own Azalea Festival, around 300,000 people come to it. Wilmington is packed and congested. All these people came in obedience to God's law in the Old Testament. They came worship and celebrate God. What has been one of the most meaningful worship times you and/or your family has had? What happened and why did you single this one out?
5. Take your Bible and read John 2:14-17. After Jesus arrived, He saw what He had always seen on these annual trips to Jerusalem for Passover. The Lamb of God became the Lion of Judah. The Lamb morphed into a lion. Jesus did not lose His temper. Jesus did not lose control. He was angry and rightfully so.
 - a. Take your Bible and read Matthew 11:28-30. When Jesus got to the Temple, He saw a circus, not worship going on there. Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, is a concept that has been so overworked that many today preach and follow a Christ who has no resemblance to the Christ of the New Testament. That Jesus is an idol, drained of His deity—a weak, good-natured deity whose great aim is to let us off the hook. Do not get me wrong. Jesus is meek and mild. What impression do you think this gives of Jesus? A lamb or a lion? Why?
 - b. Take your Bible and read Matthew 16:23, Matthew 23:27, 33 and Mark 3:5. What impression do you think these verses give of Jesus? A lamb or a lion? Why?
 - c. Why do you think many people prefer Jesus as a lamb and not as a lion? Which do you prefer and why?
6. We looked at several reasons Jesus went from being a lamb to a lion after arriving at the Temple of Passover:
 - a. The first had to do with the currency the religious leaders would only accept in order to pay the Temple tax. You could only use Galilean or Temple shekels. No Roman currency was allowed because it contained the image of the Roman Emperor, who Romans considered to be a god. To Jews, this money was uncleaned and violate the 2nd Commandment of the Ten Commandments the forbid idolatry by making an image of a supposed god. We can admire them for their good intentions, but as the old adage says, *"The road to hell is paved with good intentions."* Thus, this gave way for the need of money changers — those who would exchange Roman currency for Jewish currency for most of these 3 million pilgrims. If you have ever traveled overseas, you have to convert your American currency into the currency of that country. Do you think this was a good idea or should the religious leaders have accepted Roman currency also? Why or why not?
 - b. As a result of the exchange of Roman currency into Jewish currency. The fee to do this was 1 day's wage. Then each Jewish adult male had to pay the Temple Tax, which was 2 day's wages. So, already, each Jewish male pilgrim is up to 3 day's wages. This was just the beginning. Then you had to sacrifice an animal for Passover. If you brought your own animal, it had to be inspected and yes, there was an inspection fee, which was 1/4 day's wage. First century Jewish historian Josephus writes that the religious leaders always rejected your animal for its failure to be "unblemished." This meant you had to buy one of their animals and the going rate was around 3 weeks wages. So, now you are up to 3.25 week's wages just to worship God for Passover. The religious leaders had taken a festival given by God to celebrate in worship Him freeing them from Egypt and turned it into a money making ordeal. In what ways do you see this happening today in the name of God?
 - c. Jesus got mad over the bare-faced extortion at the expense of the poor and humble pilgrim and that it was being done in the name of God. This sort of reminds me of Jim & Tammy Faye Baker and PTL. What may have started out with good intentions turned into greedy extortion. What safeguards would you recommend any ministry to have to prevent this from happening?
 - d. Jews in Jesus' day did not call Passover, Passover; instead they called it Annas' Bazaar. Annas has been a former high priest and he was a member of the religious order called the Sadducees. Sadducees were part of the rich aristocracy of Jewish religious leaders.
 - i. Sadducees only accepted the first 5 books as Scripture — the Mosaic Law. They rejected everything from Joshua through Malachi. They accepted both Greek and Roman culture and they often aligned themselves with Rome. They held the majority of seats in the Sanhedrin. They did not believe in angels,

demons nor in life after death nor the resurrection of the dead. So this is why I think the Sadducees were “sad-u-cee.” They were more of a political party than a religious one. With no eternal accountability or judgment in the beliefs of the Sadducees, no wonder they were corrupt. In their mind, their motto was: “Get all you can. Can all the rest. Sit on the can.” Had they accepted Joshua through Malachi was Scripture, how might this have impacted their actions?

- ii. Three years later when Jesus is arrested for cleansing the Temple a second time, He is first taken to Annas, not Caiaphas the high priest. Read John 18:12-13 in your sermon outline. Why? First century Jewish historian Josephus tells us in his writings that Annas was a sort of what we might call today a Jewish Mafia godfather. His family controlled the Temple and Passover and they were getting filthy rich off of it.
 - iii. New Testament scholar Dr. Kent Hughes writes that a few years before this story, Rome raided the Temple treasure and took what would be the equivalent today of \$20 million and did not even scratch the surface. Annas and his family had their own 1st century equivalent of PTL — not praise the Lord, but pass the loot.
 - iv. What John does here is remind us again of Jesus’ divinity in the cleansing of the Temple. It was Jesus as God who gave the command about Passover, the Old Testament Law and gave the commands to Solomon about building the Temple. Passover was to be a worshipful experience to focus on God, not on extortion, money, wealth, power and control. Do you ever see people today in the church that are like Annas and his family? If so, what should you do about it?
7. In this story, John teaches us some truths about righteous anger. First, there are times it’s right to angry and right to confront the wrong. That is how MADD and SADD got started. That is how Show Hope, Compassion International and Send Relief got started. When you see an injustice, do you get angry, so angry like Jesus, you choose to do something about it? Why or why not?
 8. The second lesson John teaches us here about anger is that just because something is accepted by our culture does not mean it is accepted by Christ. Sometimes what is needed is not helpful diplomacy, but an honest dispute. In what areas today do you think the church gives to cultural acceptance and why?
 9. The third lesson John teaches us here about anger is it is more important to be spiritually and biblically correct than politically correct. That means at times speaking the truth in love and tactfully even if it offends. Which acceptance does your life show you prefer: our culture or Christ’s? Why?
 10. One of the purposes of John’s Gospel is to prove Jesus’ divinity. Jesus was not just a prophet, or a great teacher, but God in human flesh. Jesus’ divinity proved His authority over organized religious headquarters. Read John 2:16 in your Bible. Annas and his family thought the Temple was their personal property. Sometimes we see this in the church as well. How does this attitude prohibit worship?
 11. Jesus’ divinity showed that organized religion is more about what people can give rather than helping them to grow. Our mission as a church is to make and mature disciples. Everything we do is about that. How can you help new people who attend Southside internalize this as their mission as well?
 12. Jesus’ divinity showed that organized religion is more about what the spreadsheet says than its spiritual mission, message and purpose is. Our goal is not to make money, but to make disciples. Church is an item on their “To Do list.” We can make worship more about what we do, than who we focus on in worship. What is the difference in growing up in the church verses growing up in Christ?
 13. Jesus’ divinity showed that organized religion is more about creating a hindrance to worship than a path for worship. Read John 2:17 in your Bible. How could you personally help created a path for worship for others? Worship is preoccupation with God. Worship is not about place, style of music, externals, time we meet or circumstances. Worship is an attitude of the heart.
 - a. Read John 2:18-22 in your Bible. The religious leaders asked Jesus for a sign that proved He had the authority to do what He did in cleansing the Temple. What “signs” do you think people ask Jesus to die to prove He has authority over their lives?
 - b. This is why Jesus Christ didn’t come to planet earth to revitalize religion, but to re-invent it. Worship wouldn’t be a place - it would be a Person! And His way would not offer people a complicated system, He would offer them a crucified Savior.
 - c. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 in your sermon outline. How is your body a Temple and what does Jesus Christ need to cleanse from it?
 14. Application Question #1: When it comes to your Temple, He is being patient with you. But do not mistake His patience with His acceptance. Why? Read John 2:16 in your Bible. Where do you this is principle in your life from Christ?
 15. Application Question #2: When the Lord confronts you, do you get defensive, challenging His authority? Read John 2:18 in your Bible. When you hear God’s speak to you through His Word, do you get resistant or you do get repentant? Explain.
 16. Application Question #3: When it comes to your relationship to Christ, does your heart have a zeal for what is important to God or are you just apathetic? Read John 2:17 in your Bible.
 17. Application Question #4: Are you more about control as Annas and his Jewish mafia family were or are you more about consecration as Jesus was?
 18. Application Question #5: When you come here on Sundays, do you focus to worship God or are you just going through a ritual or check-list? Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb of God, but He is also the savage Lion of Judah. How?