**“This Temple”**

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Exodus 20:1-17

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

John 2:13-22

 Lent 3

“’Destroy this temple’, Jesus said, ‘and in three days I will raise it up,’ The Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking about the **temple of His body**. When therefore 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.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

Seldom are there things **more destructive than natural disasters**. Tornadoes and hurricanes level the ground of buildings and vegetation alike. But **human disasters**, say of war, can be **much the worse**. What two world wars did to Europe, highly concentrated atomic bomb did to cities in Japan … and both must be learned from.

Solomon’s Temple was opulent and pristine, built of the finest qualities in materials from every corner of the known world. Ships from everywhere sailed, then transported things to Jerusalem. No expense was (in this) spared and no other place on the planet was comparable.

By that time, it had already been leveled once. Babylonians saw everything of value in it, so returned eventually to leave no stone unturned. What was once beauty beyond others was made gravel. After captivity, God’s people again constructed as best they could, and that was of an opulence all its own. And Jesus came many times over to do all that was commanded to be done at that place … and then teach on its steps and courtyards repeatedly, with **zeal always for HJis father’s house obvious in Him** It was there (at that place) where His only show of appropriate anger was displayed, as market forces dominated where **only God should have**.

I’d hate to say that **the same problem exists today**, but I’ll say it: **“the same problem exists today”**. I know people who will not even enter a church building if the wrong style of music is played. I know people who will stay clear of a church if the pastor preaches too harshly or talks too long, or doesn’t use the right inflection in his voice, or is too physically old to be at all interesting to look at while he talks. I know people at churches for the business or social aspects of them. People may tolerate an hour, but after that, the Sunday school program better be super-dynamic and the youth group with lots of kids, and the age of those we call brothers and sisters not be 60, cause that’s too old.

I know people who consider themselves part of Christianity yet are ambivalent and sometimes even opposed to anything remotely similar to temple-like in shape or design, and often not that thrilled with paying attention much to the Christ or the divine Godhead in the word and expectations of men, women, and children that He’s got pretty-clearly laid out for us (like “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (not stained or ignored). I know sinners settled for considering themselves “good-enough” rather than **confessing within the church among people** that Christ is Lord. The temple (or even its concept in the minds of people who should know better) is mostly **diminished to an advertised marketplace option**. And **what** **people do is (way more often than not) consume of the temple worship that they choose to “homage”**.

**Text**

“The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and **Jesus went up to Jerusalem**.” **Jesus** was always in synagogues and was in the Temple of Jerusalem more than minimum required times. I suppose if one wanted to **do what “Jesus did”**, here’s a good place to **start your considerations**. Godly expectations were **particular**, and synagogue and temple events and liturgies were religious, dictated of old, documented and enacted as dictated, uniting professors of the faith over fifteen accounted centuries and ratified by Jesus Himself. On the night He was betrayed, He was fulfilling Passover house duties extended from the Temple ones, He enacted then explained the dimension of bloody doorposts and the eating of the meat of the sacrifice and drinking of the cup of life and peace.

So “Jesus went up to Jerusalem, the Passover of the Jews at hand”, and “in the Temple He found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there, so making a whip of chords, He drove them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and oxen. And He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And told those who sold the pigeons, ‘**Take these things away**; **do not make My Father’s house a house of trade**.’”

But even that dwarfed the **bigger issue:**

**THE FATHER’S HOUSE WORTHY OF ZEAL WAS, ULTIMATELY, HIS OWN BODY GIVEN AND SHED FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF ALL SINS**.

“’Destroy **THIS TEMPLE**’, Jesus said, ‘and in three days I will raise **IT** up.’ The Jews then said (and here’s where “the cross is always folly to those without Godly-conceived and submitted-to wisdom and discernment” which is where all of Jesus’ “c**onsuming zeal for His Father’s house” extends us**) ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking about **THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY**. When therefore 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.**”

**Application**

“We preach (and teach) Christ crucified” … and, of course, “risen”. There’s a reason why we guide ourselves with crosses before our eyes, especially visible here. There’s a reason why not only do we have the empty big cross proclaiming the resurrection of Christ Jesus and His life given to us by it, but we remember the price for that in “Christ and Him crucified” (the “**crucifix**” next to the pulpit, such that, if you’re looking to the Word proclaimed, it’s **aligned, always and forever beneath and because of**, **the bloodshed and death of God’s Son to pay the sufficient price for our eternal life**).

As your pastor and priest within this “Temple” (continuing stable and faithful as it is only “templing” God’s Temple in Christ’s body and blood and Word), I’m careful not to “monkey around with” that reality. I try (very hard) not to be “faddish” or “novel” or “showy” or “much noticeable at all as myself”, but transparent so God can deliver, in Word and Meal (and that’s with lots of His Word and safe proclamation of poured-over liturgies and hymnody. We pay homage to God in Christ here as centuries have done so … and propose to stay that way, **committed, anyway**, to worship God with “angels and archangels and with all the company of Heaven, lauding and magnifying **His name and not our own**, evermore praising with our voices **God** and saying” all that we say with consistency. ….

I’ve come to visualize everything in Scripture through the lens of Christ incarnate and crucified. Who God the Father is “pleased” to see is His perfect Son, so we who He sees “in pleasure” is only us as we’re hidden behind Jesus. I happen to think that it’s always been that way (and always will be) that God’s Temple is indeed Jesus embodied in flesh for the perfect sacrifice then raised.

I think the Father looks at His Son’s Church that way as well … the Temple of His flesh where He says His flesh would be, Promised upon altars to be served to baptized believers around a Communion Rail, Word spoken literally all throughout the dedicated assembly. It’s why we built this temple shaped like a cross as seen from above. I want it clear from every aspect of what we know ourselves and express ourselves that we are under Christ sacrificed to save here. We benefit … we exist and live … within, behind, and under God’s Son and His saving work and now Lordship, the “right hand” of Heaven’s throne **substantially on earth still**, to then be **borne in receivers who walk wherever we do carrying that consumed Meal and heard spoken Word of the divine, yet perfectly human, Him**. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.