

The Third Sunday in Lent
3/4/2018; Year B
John 2:13-22
“Jesus cleans up the Temple!”

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 marketplace!" 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, "This temple has been under construction for 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.

The first time I was at the temple mount, you could not see this street. The second time you could see where the street was in Jesus' day. The third time you could walk down it and go into the ruins of the marketplace and really see in your mind what was happening in the episode of Jesus' life as John describes it. It became more real to me than ever before.

John has a real advantage over the remaining Gospel writers in that he lived a long and full life after the others had died. He had a longer period of time to see it all in the context of time and history – enough time to see how it fits into Jesus' overall impact on the world.

John had come to know Jesus in all his aspects – teacher, rabbi, leader, former stonemason, healer, miracle worker, messiah, son of God, savior of the world, lover of children, as one who is kind to the outcast, hater of injustice, and one who relieves suffering.

But he also knew Jesus in that one aspect that he presents this morning in the Gospel which he wrote as “bull in a china shop” so to speak. He knew Jesus as one who despised unrighteousness, a man capable of and full of rage -- the one who is capable of running out a

cadre of people (not one money lender, but all of them; not one seller of goods, but all of them; not one tax collector but all of them).

Now that is a lot of rage.

And this is the man whom John introduces in his Goodnews – a raging bull of a man.

There aren't any hymns of which I am familiar that celebrate this image of the Christ.

There are not any pageants which re-enact this happening in Jerusalem even though other Gospels record this too. They place it closer to the crucifixion week – John places it early in his gospel so you come to see quickly that if you come to know this Jesus, you must know a full man and complex man.

I have many times in the church and in the world over the last 40 or so years heard the statement, "I want to see Jesus, or I wish to see Jesus." Some of you have even said or thought such.

I would ask: "EVEN THIS JESUS THIS MORNING?"

No, I think not for this Jesus is at least frightening if not outright one from whom we would run away.

In answer to that often-asked question "if you could invite anyone in history to have dinner with you who would it be?" Many include Jesus in their answer.

I would ask: "EVEN THIS JESUS THIS MORNING?"

No, I think not for this Jesus is not really a dinner guest.

This Jesus does not abide a blind eye to shown to injustice as monstrous evils thrive right under our noses while we are complacent to every cry for decency and justice.

This Jesus does not abide lukewarm-ness toward his Father, toward the poor, toward the downtrodden, toward those in need of care and protection, toward those in need in any way what-so-ever.

All which occur as we become complacent in our own lives and take for granted that it will not or does not occur in neighborhood.

This Jesus' anger is not the opposite of his love of which we all are so fond – it is his loves clearest expression. [based upon "Love and Anger" by J.W. Hamilton in Ride the Wild Horses 1951]

This Lenten morning as we traverse a walk toward our remembrance of Jesus time in Jerusalem, remember the Jesus we love so much is the Jesus who loves us, but is a fully complex man capable of more than just kindness and comfort – but one capable of reacting with rage and anger for the needs of others – especially when those needs are neglected.

Perhaps we would do well to check our own vision of the world around, to check our own vision and to make sure we are not being hindered in our view of the community and the people of the world.

Randy Dunnavant