

Kingdom Come

Week 4 The heart of our Leader.

John 2:13-17

Introduction:

We are entering a time in the Christian Year called Epiphany, the celebration of the Magi and the first manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles. What does this mean? Jesus came for the whole world. Right now, we join with billions of other Christians around the world as we pause to reflect on and call each other to continue the mission of Jesus Christ.

Quick Recap:

The last two weeks we talked about the legs of the gospel.

What was it that brought billions of people to the feet of Jesus?

1. Live charitable love.
2. Proclaim the name of that love, share the story of Jesus.

Opening Illustration:

What do you need? Let me rephrase that. What do I need?

Let me take you on a journey. My journey. Your journey may be different, but we are searching for the same end treasure.

A few years ago, I looked at a picture of myself and realized I needed to lose some weight. Honestly, I felt bad about myself. I needed to look better than I did in that picture. That led me in some good ways and in some bad ways. I ate healthy but the reason I ate healthy God still was doing surgery on.

From there God made me aware that I was seeking the approval of others. That led me in some good ways and in some bad ways. I worked harder and won more people over but why I did these things God was still dismantling.

From there God helped me become aware that I have tied my worth into being admired for my accomplishments.

From there God let me become aware that my identity is in things that aren't very reliable, my ability to achieve and people's approval.

As I could see the problem in this I honestly felt, and still do at times, desperate. This world literally can't satisfy what is in me.

My first reaction was to just ratchet up everything. To do what I know to do, but harder. Diet harder, work out harder, study more, impress, impress and impress. Every step of success left me realizing I can't make a fountain big enough to satisfy my heart. Moreover, the more I try to I don't only wear out myself, I wear out others. So instead of doing more I started fasting.

Setting aside the created things so I can see the Creator more clearly. Instead of eating perfectly, I fast from food. Instead of blogging more, I fast from my need to be heard. Down the line I started setting my man-made fountains aside. Then while fasting, it was literally just one

meal to pray and think, it hit me... I need the Creator to be bigger than His creation in my heart. I am hungry for God.

Oh, I am still like a child working through this. Immature and sloppy.

With this in mind let's go to the text.

John 2:13-17

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

John 2:13-17

13 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15 And making a whip of cords, 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. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

- Is Jesus ok with violence? What is going on here? To understand this we must understand the historical context. There is a lot here. I want to look at just two things.
 - The temple was the place where people could meet with God. Not only Jews but Gentiles.
 - The religious leaders had manipulated the purpose of the temple in a few ways:
 - They were using people's hunger for God and the exchange of Roman currency as an opportunity to make money. They literally had monetized the Gospel.
 - They had brought the business into the temple area that would have been reserved for the Gentiles, functionally saying there is no room for you.
 - See the relentless love of God. This recorded place of physical intervention by Christ was a profound statement. Don't separate people from God.
 - I want to pause here and talk about tithing in church.
 - *We are commanded to support those who preach the gospel (Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:6-14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). And while we should enjoy the good things God gives us, we are also called to be generous to those in need (1 Tim. 6:17-19; 2 Cor. 8-9). Wealth can so easily become an idol, leading us to abandon the Lord. -Dr. Harrison, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.*
 - You don't live generously because God needs it. He builds a system where you get to participate because your heart needs to mature in generosity and charitable love.

- Notice how the author of John says it was out of Christ's "zeal" for God's house. If you read further you will see the Pharisees basically say, "What right do you have to mess up our system?" Let that sink in. In the house of God, they can't see the heart of God, reconciliation. The glorious news all people needed in that day is the same message we need today. God wants you, for your own sake.
- Then comes Jesus. He drives out all the noise and proclaims He is the temple (vs. 19-22), the place where people can meet God.

Final Thoughts:

Back to my story. I thought to be whole I needed better work, a better body, more knowledge, more fans of Mike, more money, and bigger things accomplished in my life. What I actually needed was all the noise driven out so I could stand before Christ and finally see Him clearer. Little did I know it wasn't more but less that would help me see satisfaction better. I don't think what most of you need today is more information about God but the powerful presence of Him in your life.

Have you ever heard the parable of the river?

There is an old parable told of a river that was powerful and strong. It could cut through rock, reshape the land, and both plant and animal would bow before it to survive. Eventually the river came to a desert. As it dried to a halt the river called out to the maker, "Why won't you let me pass?!" The maker replied with, "The only way to conquer this land is to let go." The river tried and tried for years to pierce the desert. Always failing. Finally out of desperation the river gave in and submitted itself to the maker. In slow evaporation it was pulled into the sky, giving itself over to the breath of the maker. As the river was changed into a cloud it was carried over the desert and finally at the edge of the sea it was turned back into water. As rain the river finally fell in peaceful grace.

Your striving can't conquer the hunger of your heart. Only giving yourself over to God can.

Next Steps Cards:

- If you need the power of God in your life come forward. We want to pray over you.
- Also fill out the prayer cards.
- The powerful presence of God is also our prayers over the lives of those we are praying for. Pray over the candles.

Resources:

- The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Jn 2:13-17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- Dr. Harrison, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/7-reasons-christians-not-required-to-tithe/>

- Soanes, C., & Stevenson, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Concise Oxford English dictionary* (11th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 2014). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 24:36–43). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.