

## Pure, Uncluttered Worship

**Introduction:** What comes to your mind when you think of the word, "clutter"? Your closet? The garage? Your desk drawer? That space under the bed? Most of us have those places where clutter accumulates. Unfortunately, we also tend to have spiritual clutter in our lives at times that hinders us from experiencing God in full measure. Jesus came to earth that we might experience a pure, uncluttered relationship with God. He is zealous for this. We see it at the cross, but we see it as well in his earthly life and ministry. Our study today takes us to an encounter where Jesus' passion for uncluttered worship is made explicitly clear.

**Opening Discussion:** What most distracted you from worshipping God this past week?

### Read John 2:13-22

1. What religious observance was at hand when Jesus went to Jerusalem?
2. What does Jesus find in the temple and what is the problem with it?
3. What does Jesus do?
4. What does this incident tell us about Jesus?
5. To whom does Jesus' act of cleansing the temple express love?
6. Is there anything about this incident that challenges your views about Jesus?

Steve said:

**What does this incident tell us about Jesus?** After all, the Bible is about God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures reveal the identity and mission of the triune God. This incident tells us that **Jesus is zealous for pure, uncluttered worship of God.** Cleansing the temple demonstrated how zealous Jesus was for pure temple worship in first century. Going to the cross demonstrated how zealous Jesus is for pure, uncluttered worship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I think we can all agree that you have to be pretty zealous to die for something. Jesus died on the cross and was raised on the third day in order to secure free, uncluttered access to God.

7. What do you think it means to truly live out "pure, uncluttered worship of God" in your life?

Steve said:

My simple encouragement to you is simply to notice how Jesus is pursuing you. Notice His relentless tenderness in your life. Notice how zealous He is for you to experience God in a comprehensive way.

- Some of you have **anxieties** about the future (job, marriage, money, etc.). It may be that God won't give you relief until you learn how to trust Him ("w/o faith it's impossible to please God"), until you learn to "cast all your anxieties upon Him, for He cares for you."
- Some of you are **weary**. You're just tired from the wear-and-tear of life. Jesus is saying to you, "Come to Me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." You won't have true rest/shalom/wholeness until you find your rest in Him. The rest Jesus gives comes through discipleship.
- Some of you face **dangers** – spiritual, physical, and emotional dangers. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. He won't run away like a hired hand. He will fight for you. And He is more fierce than any of your enemies.
- Some of you are **heart-broken** over things that have been done to you and over things that you have done to others. Jesus died and rose again to "bind up the broken-hearted."

8. Did you related to any of the areas that Steve mentioned?

9. Are there other areas of distraction and clutter in your life that is hindering your relationship with God? If so, what are they?

Steve said:

Whatever your circumstances, know that Jesus is "for you" – He is zealously "for you." And He will do whatever it takes to clear away the clamor and the clutter so that you might experience God in all His fullness. Jesus is so zealous for your well-being that He is willing to inflict pain if that's what it takes. It's like my friend Father Adam at Conception Abbey says, "If you follow Jesus, He will ruin your life, and He will ruin your life in beautiful ways." Jesus died and rose again so that we might have pure, uncluttered worship of God.

10. How do you sense Jesus pursuing you in these areas? What do you sense he is doing that you might experience God in all His fullness?