

Loving the Church: *Because Jesus is Zealous for Worship*

John 2:13-22

Introduction: Today, we begin a three week series on the church, specifically, loving the local church. Why is this important? Because if we don't love the church our hearts won't be engaged in what God is doing among us and we won't give or receive everything God has for us in this church. As Steve mentioned, loving Faith doesn't mean that we will agree with everything that happens here; that we will like everyone who worships here; or, that we ignore deficiencies and immaturities that we see. But if we love this church, we will want her best and will demonstrate it by being patient and kind. We won't be arrogant toward others here and we won't seek our own. We won't be forever agitated by everyone and everything; we won't hold grudges; and, we will believe the best. If you love this church you will pay the price and expend the energy to treat others this way. Loving the church is important. It is part of how we worship God.

Opening Discussion: Does it seem strange to you to think in terms of loving the local church? Why or why not?

Read John 2:13-22

1. What does Jesus find in the temple and why is this troubling to him?
2. In what way was worship being hindered in the temple?
3. What does this episode in the temple reveal about Jesus?

Steve said:

What does this incident suggest about Jesus' intentions toward us? It suggests that Jesus will do whatever is necessary for us to experience a pure, uncluttered worship of God. I'm thinking here of an entire lifestyle of worship – where all of life is an expression of our devotion to Jesus. Jesus can be just as fierce today as He was the day He cleansed the temple. Jesus is doing the equivalent of driving out the merchants and livestock and moneychangers from the temple; He is driving out the things that hinder us and clutter up our lives and our relationship with God.

4. What things in your life tend to hinder and clutter up your worship of God?

Steve said:

Whatever your circumstances, know that Jesus is “for you” – He is zealously “for you.” He didn’t die and rise again so that we can be luke-warm and complacent. He died and rose again so that we might be completely God’s. Consequently, 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 to bring you to the place where you worship Him with everything you have.

5. Have you ever considered that Jesus might allow pain in your life to help you "experience God in all His fullness" and to bring you to a place of worshipping him "with everything you have"?
6. How in the past or even now have you sensed God working through pain to refine a greater heart of worship in your life?

Steve said:

Jesus is so zealous for the worship of the nations that He calls churches into existence who will represent Him all around the world. We’ll talk about this the next couple of weeks, but Scripture makes clear that communities of believers – not merely individual Christians – represent Jesus as the body of Christ. Churches are uniquely suited to lead people to Christ and to see them grow into maturity. This is why Faith E Free exists: because Jesus is zealous for worshipers. We exist to help people come to faith in Christ and then experience God in all of life. In other words, we exist so that people far from God might become worshipers.

7. Why do you think the local church is "uniquely suited to lead people to Christ and to see them grow into maturity"?
8. If this is why the local church exists, what implications does it have for you as part of this community of faith?