

Theme: **Thy Will be Done**

Text: John 2: 13 – 25

Date: March 4, 2018

Season: 3rd Sunday in Lent

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and peace to you as you let God's Will be done in your life, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Zeal - a strong feeling of interest, conviction, passion, enthusiasm and a desire that makes someone very eager or determined to do something. What do you have a zeal for in your life? Sometimes, what appears to be rude and totally inappropriate behavior is simply an outburst of a strong conviction, that's zeal. Someone sees the complete miscarriage of justice or something wrong goes on that just has to be made right and that person who was once quiet, polite and gentle becomes enthusiastic, passionate and dramatically overwhelming, that's zeal. Zeal in a person can accomplish a lot, if it is directed in the right way. Today in our scripture reading we have three examples of Zeal.

In our Old Testament reading, we hear about the zeal of the Lord for the people of Israel to learn how to be His people, so from the top of the mount Sinai He speaks the Ten commandment to the people gathered at the base of the mountain so that they will know how to be His people. God's zeal for the people of Israel to be His special people was so overwhelming that the people got scared and asked Moses to ask God to speak through him instead of directly to them for they thought they would die.

In our Epistle reading for today we hear about the zeal of God to give each of us a new life that is beyond the things of this world. The Apostle Paul tells us, **'God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,**²⁹ **so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.**³⁰ **And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,**³¹ **so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."** (1 Cor. 1:28 – 31)

In our Gospel reading for today we have another example of God zeal for us through His will being done in the life of Jesus Christ. The Apostle John tells us. **'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.” (Jn. 2:13- 17)

The Passover is by far the most important celebration for the Jewish people for three reasons. The first is because God commanded them to celebrate this festival every year as a remembrance of how God brought His people out from being slaves in Egypt to make them His special people. The second is because the blood of the Lamb painted on the door-post of their houses saved them from the Angel of Death and so they are to remember that it will be the blood of the lamb of God that will save them from eternal death that they deserve because of their slavery to sin. The thirdly is that by this festival they are reminded that God will send His Son to be their savior, who will shed His blood for their sins so that death will pass over them and they can go the Promised Land prepared for them by God.

So why did Jesus cleanse the temple with a whip and an overwhelming zeal? Because Jesus came into this world to get us ready for the kingdom of God and the sinfulness of this world had change this celebration, from what it was supposed to do, that is build up His people and prepare them for His coming, to something that had become a money-making marketing time. Jesus seeing the complete miscarriage of the Passover celebration and had to do something about it and when about cleaning up the miss-use so that the temple could be used for what God had intended it to be.

Jesus had just started His ministry and this was the first Passover that He had the opportunity to share with His Disciples and the temple needed to be cleaned up and made into a place of prayer and the strengthening of the promises of God, where God is the centered and not our selfish sin. This perversion of the truth is what the devil wants to do with all of the celebrations that God has given to us to celebrate. Think about it: Christmas is supposed to be the celebration of the greatest gift ever given to mankind by God, the birth of Jesus Christ into this world. But the sinfulness of the world and the deceit of the devil have turned this celebration of God's gift to us into the biggest money-making marketing time of the year. All Saint day, was given to us as a day of

remembrance of all the Saint of God in the past, who have been involved in our lives to bring us to God's Word, to help us in our faith and to encourage us in our life as a follower of Christ. But the sinfulness of the world has made this celebration almost none existing and instead the second most money-making marketing time of the year. Where Satan is celebrated on the eve before All Saints Day, we call it Halloween or it use to be called All Hollowed Eves. Oh, let's not forget the most important holiday of the year for all Christians, which the sinfulness of the world would like to forget completely, Easter. The deceitfulness of Satan and the sin filled world has tried to make this celebration into another money-making marketing time, but no matter what they do it still proclaims the work that Jesus did for us all by His life, death and resurrection.

Jesus was faced with this same dilemma that we are when we come face to face with a perversion of the true celebration given to us by God. In these situations, we have three choices. We can ignore the perversion and do nothing about it; or we can grow accustomed to the perversion but still do nothing about it; or we can take action and do something about preserving the truth of the celebration given to us by God. Jesus chose the latter method and with zeal He made His whip and drove out all those who were not using the temple grounds for pray and the strengthening of their faith in the promises of God.

The Apostle John tells us, **'So the Jews said to Him, "What sign do You show us for doing these things?"**¹⁹ **Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."**²⁰ **The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"**²¹ **But He was speaking about the temple of His body.**²² **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.'** (Jn. 2:18 – 22)

The Temple in Jerusalem during Old Testament time was the place where the Lord God came to give His people mercy. When Jesus came into this world He came as the lamb of God that takes away all the sins of the world, God's mercy. By Jesus' life, death and resurrection He secured for us God's mercy, that's Grace, God's Riches At Christ's Expense. It is now through Jesus Christ that we come into the presence of God, for His mercy and grace, His Temple and we are strengthen in our faith. So we come today to

this Sanctuary to receive God's gift to us through the forgiveness of sins give to us as we confess our sins and receive the absolution pronounce to us by God's Word, that all our sins are forgiven in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Holy Baptism. It was in our Baptism that we were given the Holy Spirit to work in our lives to bring us to faith and to keep us in that faith. We come to this Sanctuary to receive God's gift of His Word, read and proclaimed to us so that we can grow in our faith as it nurtures us with God's living water. Through God's Word, the Holy Spirit goes to work in our lives to sanctify us as His children; the heirs of the Kingdom of God purchased and won for us by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We come to this Sanctuary to receive the body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, where we receive the assurance that all our sins have been paid for and we are given the bodily nourishment that will strengthen our lives so that we will be ready to face the trials of this world with the armor of God.

Yes, this sanctuary is a holy place not because of what we do here but because of what God has given to us through His Word and Sacraments. Do you have a zeal for the Lord God almighty? God has a zeal for you and is working in your life through His Word and Sacraments, by the Holy Spirit, to bring that zeal, His love for you, into your life and out into this world so that others may hear His Word and come to faith in Him. The Apostle John tells us, **"Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs that He was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus on His part did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for He Himself knew what was in man."** (Jn.2: 23-25)

God knows us better than we know ourselves, because He is our Creator. We bear witness to Him by sharing His Word and love to others because of our zeal for the gifts of God given to us. Yes, Jesus has become the Passover feast that we need to celebrate each day of our lives so that death will pass over us and we will be with Him in the perfect Promised Land prepared for us by the Lamb of God who took away all the sins of the world. Amen.