



BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

March 7, 2021

Third Sunday of Lent Year B

Lectionary: 29

Gospel Jn 2:13-25

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, *Zeal for your house will consume me*. At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken. While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

Spiritual Reflection: From around the world, first-century Jews came to the temple at Passover to sacrifice to the Lord (Ex. 12:1–28; Lev. 23:4–8). It was impractical to bring sacrificial animals long distances; so, they were available in Jerusalem — for a price. Most Jews also paid the temple tax at Passover, and moneychangers were there to convert Roman coinage into appropriate currency: pagan mottoes on Roman money made it unacceptable for Yahweh's house. Though not inherently evil, these practices became occasions for sin. Pilgrims paid exorbitant rates to change money, and sellers exploited those in poverty, overcharging for the poor man's offering of pigeons and doves (Lev. 5:7). To make things worse, these merchants set up shop in the Court of the Gentiles, making it useless as a place of prayer due to the hustle and bustle the buying and selling created.

Spiritual Questions

1. What are some ways in which we prevent people from worshiping God?
2. What are some ways that we take advantage of those who are less fortunate? Maybe in the way we offer our friendship?
3. What areas of separation do you have in your own life?
4. What can you do to make people feel more welcome at Church?
5. How can you become more of a friend to strangers?