

“PROFIT CARING OR PROPHET SHARING?”

John 2:13-22

Fellow Redeemed,

Fill in this blank: “**I HAVE A PASSION FOR _____!**” With a group of this size, there have to be a whole bunch of answers. People have a passion for their jobs/careers, hobbies, families, homes/cabins, travel, sports, or the gym. (I know someone who has a passion for candied raisins & DOTS). Plan a fishing trip and that's all you think about. Plan a cruise or a trip to an all-inclusive resort in Jamaica or a week in Hawaii and you can't count the days fast enough. We all have our passions and if you don't think that's true, then remember the passion that was expressed on the Monday after a team to the east lost a championship game last January 18th? Boy, was there ever passion gushing all over Wisconsin!

Jesus had a passion too. We see that in no uncertain terms in our text today. And like anyone else, his passion drove his thoughts, feelings, and emotions. What Jesus' passionate about was not what the Jews were passionate about and that difference was bound to clash.

And one day, it did – near the temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover where worship was supposed to happen. Here Jesus has a real problem with people making a choice between...

“PROFIT CARING OR PROPHET SHARING?”

One is.....1. **A problem Jesus defeats with a passion**
As opposed to.....2. **A passion Jesus desires in His people**

1

Jesus & the disciples went to Jerusalem for the Passover to celebrate that great exit out of Egypt coupled with the passing over of the angel of death because of lamb's blood smeared around the door jam. This was one of three festival all Jewish males 20/older were to attend. So every Jew needed the appropriate animal sacrifice and the temple tax. So the locals were quick to do to business with everyone coming to the temple.

Now that of and by itself wasn't sinful, (although it would've been better outside the temple courts), but the practices that developed were. The temple authorities corrupted the system by demanding inflated rates for the animals they were selling. If you didn't bring an animal deemed appropriate for sacrifice, then you had to buy one on the spot. And that turned into a scam. If you didn't have the right Jewish currency to pay the temple tax, then the moneychangers had to convert the foreign currency and that exchange rate was a raw deal too. The temple authority had turned the worship of the Lord into a money-making machine for them. They had a passion for **PROFIT CARING** only!

This took place inside the temple courts where the Gentiles gathered too. If you came to worship at the temple, what would you expect? You'd expect the sights & sounds of worship: priests chanting psalms, worshippers sounding prayers, your nose smelling incense, your eyes seeing the blood of animals sacrificed as a symbolic payment of sins.

But what do you get?...buyers bantering for a sale price with a sellers, merchants hawking their animals debating the worth of certain animals with prospective buyers. Then you have moneychangers clanging coins into the drawers arguing with tourists about the exchange rate. On top of that you choked on the stench of cattle, sheep, and doves cooped up in cages trying to be fed and watered in the steamy sun with barnyard racket that'd give you a migraine! What do have here? Nothing about worship. You've got only a passion for crooked commercialism and **profit caring**.

Jesus does not like what he sees here. Here is a side of Jesus we don't have in a picture on our walls. We think of him as the gentle Shepherd, the pleading Savior in Gethsemane, the silent Lamb before his shearers, the dying Messiah on the cross forgiving his enemies. But we never see him with a whip in one hand, turning over tables with the other and scowling at those crooked merchants who've turned his house of worship into an outlet mall!

The Lord had a huge problem with this, and He's going to **defeat it with a passion**. **He made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle, he scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!”** (*literally-a house of merchandise*) Mark's gospel refers to Jesus showing his righteous wrath (which scholars indicate may have been a 2nd temple cleaning). There in ch. 11, He said: **MY HOUSE WILL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS. BUT YOU HAVE MADE IT ‘A DEN OF ROBBERS’** {Mk 11:17}

Imagine the reactions. The merchants and moneychangers were finished. What about the disciples? Did they take a step back at Jesus' righteous wrath here? They remembered **Psalm 69:9: ZEAL {envy, jealous} FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.** Jesus is so passionate about his Gospel and the place where people worship that he was consumed in making sure that his house was used for worship – **not caring about profit!** God's house is where people could enter God's presence. They could pray, they could repent, they could look to the Messiah for forgiveness. But they had substituted the spiritual with the world. This sin just ate him up inside and that's why Jesus cleaned house with a passion.

Dear friends, does the same passion for God's house fill you? When you come here, are you filled with awe at where you are? Is there anticipation of approaching the Lord's altar with humble & repentant hearts to receive Christ's body & blood? Are we here because we want to hear God's Word and respond with prayer and praise? Do we leave with a little bounce in our step uplifted by Jesus' love showering upon us?

OR is there a different picture? Do we enter with a pre-conceived critical spirit of the songs, the sermon, the speaker, or the service? Are we more fired up for what we eat/drink at lunch or supper than what we eat/drink at the Lord's supper? Are we looking with the **"what's in it for me"** attitude draped around our souls rather than **"what's given to me"** by confessing our sins before God and hearing of the Lord's forgiveness of them? Should Jesus clean house in our hearts with a whip and overturn the tables of self-righteousness and the conceited **"what do I profit out of this"** caring in us? I know he needs to clean my heart **and defeat this problem with a passion!** There's a lot for all of us to think about.

2

Thank the Lord that his house cleaning isn't just cleaning it up, but also putting it back in order. That's what Jesus does. And that's why we're in God's house today – to see Jesus as the **PROPHET we want to share which is a PASSION JESUS DESIRES IN ALL HIS PEOPLE.**

When Jesus cleaned out the temple courts, the Jewish authorities didn't retaliate with physical force, but they demanded by what authority Jesus had to show such passion. Jesus' credentials didn't come from a badge or a government authorization. It came from who He is: the Savior who was to suffer and die. **Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days. The Jews replied, "It has taken 46 years to build this temple and you are going to raise it in 3 days? But the temple he had spoken of was his body.**

The Jews didn't have a clue what Jesus was talking about. They thought he was speaking of the temple King Herod had taken 46 years to refurbish. But Jesus wasn't talking of a physical temple, he was referring to Himself. Here is a message of grace pointing ahead to how Jesus was going to His cross to die for the sins of the world (theirs, yours, & mine) and then rise again 3 days later to guarantee eternal life. Jesus would give his body & shed His blood on the cross and then rebuild it again on Easter 3 days later at Easter!

That's when the disciples finally got it. **After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.** After Jesus' resurrection, the disciples put the pieces of salvation's puzzle together to complete the picture that Christ came to this world to save sinners. Now they would have a passion for **PROPHET SHARING** to the world.

What is the mission of the church of today? Some would say it's a place to be entertained, to be told how good you are or should feel? Some say it's the place for social change to address those old-fashioned principles that don't hold up in today's modern world. So instead of sharing **the PROPHET Jesus**, they would say the mission is to bring more world into the temple. *(a former member told us that)*

Well, there's enough world in all of us. Paul says: **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed (changed) by the renewing of your mind.** {Rom 12:2} Jesus wants His people involved in **PROPHET SHARING** because He has given His life for our sins, and given us the promise of eternal life. That's still to be the message and mission of today's church: **to reveal sin & its curse with the Law and to uplift sinners with the Gospel of Christ crucified.**

Our MV statement reads: **THE CROSS IS THE KEY TO ETERNAL LIFE. WE WORSHIP JESUS AND LIFT IT HIGH.** Let that be the reason why we want to be **PROPHET SHARING** in our St. Peter ministries and in your personal ministries. **To share Jesus the Prophet is a passion Jesus wants in His people.** So share Jesus at any/every opportunity there is. Share Jesus and His cleansing love with the GREAT NEWS of his life, death, and resurrection. **Make that** your mission. **Make that** your passion. **Make that** your life in praise, thanks, and honor for the love of our Savior, Jesus **who was pierced for our transgressions {Is 53:5} and raised again for our justification.** {Rom 4:25} He loved you to death. Now love Him with a passion for life! **AMEN**