

That We Might Know the Lamb and the Lion
John 2:13-22

Introduction:

My natural inclination is to want to create my own security, so this text makes me incredibly uncomfortable.

Marva Dawn once said that in order to worship God rightly, his Word must **first kill us – shake us up – put to death our self-centeredness**. This morning, I invite you to join me in the blender, where I've taken up residence the past week.

Voyage of the Dawn Treader

There is a memorable passage in C.S. Lewis' *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* that touches on John 2:12-22. In the passage, young Edmund and Lucy stumble upon a white and pure lamb in the middle of a green expanse and the lamb is cooking a fish breakfast.

The lamb gives Lucy and Edmund the most delicious breakfast they have ever had, followed by a conversation about how to get to the land of Aslan – heaven.

As the lamb begins to explain the way, a marvelous thing happens. Writes Lewis: **“His snowy white flushed into tawny gold and his size changed and he was Aslan himself, towering above them and scattering light from his mane.”**

Need:

What a picture! Lewis is illustrating a great truth of our faith – a truth that needs to be recaptured and remembered, particularly as you work your way through John's Gospel. **The Lamb is the Lion!**

Jesus is the **gentle and meek Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world.

Yet, He is **equally the Lion of the Tribe of Judah** – majestic and fierce.

Text: John 2:13-22

Context: Our passage begins in the wake of the wedding miracle in Cana of Galilee. Jesus changed water into wine at the wedding of a young couple (possibly one of Jesus' cousins who was being married). The wine ran out and Jesus turned ritual water into the finest of wines. Now we find Jesus and his new disciples (and in all likelihood his family) en route to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. **READ TEXT! (Truth's about Lion/Lamb?)**

Sermon Body:

- We do not serve a **safe God** (vs. 13-17).

Explanation:

[13] **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."

- If we consider Jesus' ministry to date, as described in John's gospel, I don't know that we have any indication that the disciples were prepared for what was about to take place at the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Based upon **John 1:35 – 51**, we know that **James, John, Peter, Andrew, Philip**, and **Nathanael** were present at this cleansing.

- Remember, Matthew, Mark, and Luke report a cleansing of the temple in the week of Jesus' crucifixion. Two years later than this cleansing.
- I am not certain that those 6 guys were prepared for what was about to happen as they entered Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover with Jesus.
 - They had just witnessed Jesus' loving act of grace at the wedding in Cana. A great time was had by all! A celebration marked by the overflowing joy of Christ!
 - Jesus and his party left Cana for Capernaum, a short trip of about 20 miles. A beautiful walk as the Palestinian spring season was underway.
 - From Capernaum, we read that our Lord moved south to Jerusalem.
- [13] The **Passover of the Jews was at hand**, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
 - With the Passover, A SPIRIT of EXPECTANCY covered the land. Probably very much like we experience during the Christmas season!
- As our Lord and his followers drew close to Jerusalem, the signs of the season were evident. The roads grew all the more congested.
 - As many as 2 ¼ million people would have crowded into Jerusalem to take part in the celebration.
 - Sellers of trinkets and souvenirs were on all sides, some of which likely bothered our Lord but not as much as what He saw when He entered the temple . . .

[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.

What he saw enraged Jesus! **He finds not a house of prayer** but a RELIGIOUS CIRCUS!

- **Extortion and exploitation** ran wild – all being driven by Annas the high priest.
 - Sarcastic commentators of the day dubbed the temple – the “**Bazaars of Annas.**”
 - They knew the high priests actually sold franchises for money-changing booths/animal sales.
- The commotion that must have been within the temple is almost beyond our imagination.
- And it was all being carried out in the **Court of Gentiles** – the place where the Jews should have been meeting the Gentiles and telling them about the one true God.
 - Any Gentile searching for truth would never find it in this circus!
- Our Lord suddenly appears in the temple – and his followers quickly realize – **Jesus is a good God, but he isn't safe! He cleans house!**

- Jesus reaches down, gathers some cords, and quickly knotted them together into a whip.
 - And the house cleaning was underway!
- One commentator notes: *“Jesus must have appeared 7’ tall as his whip began to fly.”*
 - Tables crashed
 - Money jangled across the floor
 - The money changers, the sellers, the inspectors all driven out by our Lord.
- Indignant and angry, we see him yelling: **“Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.” [16] – How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!**
 - All of this taking place in clear view of the priests who ran this religious circus and who would eventually send our Lord to the Cross! Actions and words that eventually got Jesus (Matt. 26:61; Mark 14:58) and Stephen (Acts 6:14) killed.
 - **The Lamb was also a Lion! - Good? Yes! Safe? No!**

Argumentation:

- No, we don’t serve a safe God, yet my heart is given to my own self-devised safety.
 - We live in a culture craves safety:
 - Headlines:
 - *Is your 401K safe?*
 - *Are you children safe at school? Safe at home? Safe in the car?*
 - *Is it is safe to fly?*
 - *Are toys made in China safe for your children?*
 - *Is your home safe while you’re away?*
 - We live in a post-911 world, and are bombarded with safety issues 24/7.
- Yet, time and time again in the Scriptures, we see men and women taking risks for God’s Kingdom.
- I am regularly tempted to create safety in my own life, man-made and artificial safety in the face of his call to **abide** and **trust** in Him. It is a life-giving trust, but **with the probability of inconvenience and discomfort** – even suffering.
 - The Jesus who says: *“Come to me if you are tired and weary and I will give you rest.”* (Matt. 11:28).
 - Is the same Jesus who says: *“Do not be surprised if the world hates you. Remember that it hated me first.”* (Jn. 15:18)
- I’m quick to say **“Yes”** to His invitation to rest, but I’m not so sure about the invitation to be hated or shunned at the office or in my home for His sake.
- I am quick to accept God invitation to **green pastures** and **still waters**. Let’s just make sure the road to those green pastures and still waters doesn’t lead through dark valley (Ps. 23). **“Just don’t ask me to sacrifice, God!”**
 - Yet, is it not in those valleys and **during their times of trial** that we are reminded just how sweet and good our Lord is?

Illustration:

- Following Jesus is a very satisfying journey, but at the same time it can be **wild, unpredictable** – even **dangerous**.
 - The disciples quickly found that out and so will anyone who else who picks up a cross and follows Him.
- The call of Christ is a call away from man-made security – it is not a self-help program.
- What can one expect? **Hardships, risks, fears, dislikes, and dangers**.

Hebrews 10:31 tells us *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* He is dangerous, not safe at all. Yet, there is something far more fearful and dangerous than to fall into His hands: **to not fall into His hands**.

- For the same hands that **whirled the whip**, are the same hands that **bore the nails**.
 - The hands that **poured out the coins** and **flipped the tables** of the money-changers are the same hands that **hold our lives** and **bear our names according to Isaiah**
 - One day, these hands will **wipe away every tear** from every eye of those that love Him.
- In the end, if you don’t fall into His hands you never discover **real life, real joy, real freedom** – one never discovers just how **good** and **satisfying** and **glorious** Jesus really is.

Application/Illustration:

What then is God doing when he takes us to those uncomfortable places – physically, socially, relationally? Why the hardships? The risks? **Does he just want me to know that He’s not safe?**

No – He takes us to the unconformable and dangerous place to give us the greatest gift that he can bestow – the **heart of Jesus himself**.

2 Cor. 3:18 – Paul tells us that God is **transforming his children** into the image of His Son *from one degree of glory to another*.

It is God’s desire to form us into Jesus People. Is there a greater gift than to be like Jesus?

- Christ felt no guilt – God wants to banish yours.
- Jesus had no bad habits – God wants to remove yours.
- Jesus had compassion for the broken and hurting – God wants you to have the same.
- Jesus had courage for the challenges – God wants you to be courageous.
- Jesus had no fear of death – God wants you to be fearless.

Our Father wants you and me to be just like Jesus . . .

Question: What are you trusting in this morning? Where are you seeking refuge/security? Life Satisfaction?

A title? A position? A bank account? Maybe a pastor? Your own abilities or business savvy? All momentary and will eventually disappoint. Fleeting and temporal.

“7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit” (**Jeremiah 17:7-8**).

- We come to God on His terms –through the Lamb and the Lion (vs. 18-21).

[18] 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.

Explanation:

The temple cleansing takes place on the heels of the Wedding at Cana and Jesus' first miracle of changing purification water in wine.

Both the wedding miracle and the temple cleansing stand at the outset of Jesus' ministry.

The water into wine miracle is done somewhat in secret, while the temple cleansing is done in public.

Both the wedding miracle and the temple cleansing point to a greater reality.

- They are actions that DECLARE who JESUS IS and WHAT he has come to do – namely replacing and fulfilling old covenant rites and rituals.

The purification water and the continual sacrifices of lambs (first in the tabernacle and now in the temple) all pointed to the LAMB OF GOD (John 1:29) who takes away the sins of the world – Jesus.

Water could clean hands and feet but it couldn't cover the sins of the heart. Only the blood of the Lamb of God could do that!

By turning the house of Jesus' Father into a "*house of trade*," the priest and traders were actually obscuring the temple's witness to Jesus himself!

We see Jesus in John 2, 3, and 4 transforming worship in and through Himself!

[19] "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.

Jesus saw himself to be the one who had authority to declare the destruction of the old temple and the building of a new one, of which he was the founder.

As the long awaited Messiah, he replaced the **deficient worship** of the Samaritans (John 4) and the **correct, but temporary**, worship of the Jews.

It is true worship that now happens through Jesus because he himself is God –

He **forgave sins** – only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:5-11).

He **accepted worship** from his disciples – only God is to be worshiped (Matt. 14:33; 28:9)

He **claimed eternal preexistence** with God – John 8:58

He said he was **one with the Father** – John 10:30

- All of the Old Testament sacrificial system – the tabernacle, temple and its rites and rituals – all pointed to Jesus, the sacrificial LAMB and the temple of his body that would be broken and his blood that would be poured out "**for the forgiveness of sins.**" (Matt. 26:28).

Illustration: [Unrelenting Lion/Lamb that washes & Fly-fishing \("catch and release"\)](#)

From John 1 – John 21, we see time and time again that men and women come to God on his terms – through the Lamb and the Lion – We see the **unrelenting Lion that pursues broken and dying people** and the **Lamb whose blood washes away their sins, freeing them to live lives of real purpose and joy and freedom.**

- I love fly-fishing. Church planting has stunted somewhat my ability to get away into the mountains of Western North Carolina, but when I do, God uses it to restore my soul.

- There's a certain angling etiquette in fly-fishing that's known as "catch and release."
- The fisherman catches the various species of fish, and then releases them uneaten and unharmed.
- Fly-fisherman revere the catch and enjoy the release, because when it comes to fly-fishing, it's not primarily about the "eats" but the art.
- Fly-fisherman learn and employ all kinds of skills in the art of getting a trout to take their fly. But the real joy is experienced when the Rainbow or Brown or Brook Trout is **briefly held, delighted in, and rejoiced over** before being released for the **enjoyment of others**.

Jesus is the **consummate fly-fisherman** practicing "**catch and release.**" And he is fishing the nations of the world, building His new temple of which He is the founder and the foundation.

- God gave us His Word to **disrupt, shape, and fuel us for the fight** (vs. 22).

[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.

Explanation:

- Why did God give us his word?
- Did he give it to us for literary purposes?
- Were the Scriptures given that we might have a textbook on God?
 - In order that we might be puffed up with biblical facts and data?
- Did he give it to us that we might toy with it? – Twist it and squeeze it into our needs and wishes?

NO!!!!

God gave it to us to **DISRUPT our LIVES, SHAPE our LIVES, and FUEL US FOR** life's battles!

During and immediately after Christ's crucifixion, where were the disciples? Cowering away behind closed doors – afraid that they were next on Caesar's "To-Do List."

One can't help but wonder if Peter was thinking of restarting his fishing business – we see him headed in that direction. What Matthew checking to see if H & R Block was hiring? And Thomas, he ran so fast from the scene of the crime everyone was left in the wake of his flight.

What changed it all? The **RESURRECTION**. They saw him and they **REMEMBERED**:

The **words of Christ and the Scriptures** – and **that changed the destiny of each life**.

God's word **disrupted their man-made plans**, while shaping and fueling them for the mission and its - challenges – ahead.

God's word **REORIENTED them to the reality of who they were and whose they were**, while fueling them to **LIVE THE RESURRECTION**.

Illustration: - **Hughes Oliphant Old** (*Remembering = the essence of worship*)

Remembering is of the **ESSENCE of worship** . . . As we **remember**, we are **reoriented**.

Remembering is to be reminded of our identity as God's people and the reminder is grounded in the Word of God!

Luke 24 – Two accounts

- **Resurrection** –

A group of women go to Jesus' tomb with burial spices, intending to go to work on Jesus' body. But of course, there is no body. Confused, "What's going on here anyway?" Two men appear – angels – and say:

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? **6** He is not here, but has risen. **Remember** how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, **7** that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." **8** And **they remembered his words**, **9** and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

- **Road to Emmaus –**

Later in the day we read of two individuals, one named Cleopas, walking away from Jerusalem to a town called Emmaus. They are joined by none other than Jesus himself. They don't recognize him at first.

25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

- First Christian worship service!

28 So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, **29** but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. **30** When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. **31** And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

- Second Christian worship service!

Gathering, preaching, and Lord's Supper all there!

Lord's Supper – gave us the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, instructing us to partake of it in "REMEMBRANCE" of Him (Matthew 26; Luke 22)

Application:

Revelation 10:9 – The angel tells John to "take and eat" the scroll upon which was written the words of God. He tells John, "It will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

Take and eat it. Let this word get down **into your guts**, where it will **give you a stomach ache**.
Let it

disrupt you, shock you, offend you,
confuse you, teach you, nourish you, and comfort you.

Taste its sweetness. Let it train and shape and fuel you for the fight ahead.

Conclusion:

Our God is not safe, but he is good!

Is Jesus the gentle and meek Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? Absolutely!

Is He also the Lion of the Tribe of Judah – majestic and fierce? You better believe it!

All authority in heaven and on earth is at his finger tips (Matt. 28).

[17] His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for [his Father's house would consume Him]."

Jesus statements about the temple would be misrepresented at his trial (Matt.26) and would lead to his crucifixion. His zeal for his Father's house thus consumed him.

Yet, there is a deeper meaning in this statement.

The zeal that ultimately consumed him was a passion for the redeemed people of God – the body of Christ, the family of God, the temple of God:

Paul – "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you . . . God's temple is holy, and you are that temple!" (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

It was **his passion for broken/fallen people** like you and me and seeing them **reconciled to Himself** that ultimately consumed him.

1 Cor. 3/2 Cor. 6: Paul tells us that we (the people of God) are the temple of the living God.

God has made his dwelling among us at a great cost to himself.

Today, has something/someone/some attitude or habit obstructing communion between you and the One whose ZEAL/PASSION for you consumed Him? **Question: Are you as passionate about Him is he is about?**