



January 5, 2025
Jesus at the Festivals
THE FIRST PASSOVER
John 2:13-25



1. **Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)

- a. Have you ever known someone so obsessed with a sports team that he/she bordered on being obnoxious – their team loyalty took over too many aspects of their life? How did you react to that obsession? How did it affect the person’s life?
- b. Describe a time or situation when other people around you were being so loud that you were unable to hear something, a movie, a concert, or someone talking to you. How did you feel about those making the noise? In the face of such distraction did you do or say something or did you just “grin and bear” it?
- c. Silent retreats, an experience where you refrain from verbal communication for several days, have been increasingly popular in recent years. Have you ever known someone who participated in a silent retreat? What explanation did they provide for doing so? How did they describe the benefits?

2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**

- a. Jesus Launched His Public Ministry with a Bang!
 - i. Jesus put the religious leaders on notice to launch His public ministry.
 - ii. Jesus introduced His death and resurrection at the beginning of His ministry.
 - iii. Jesus knew crowds would follow Him, but their faith would mostly be shallow.
- b. Be Consumed with Zeal for the Lord!
 - i. There's a big difference between casual belief and consuming zeal.
 - ii. Build or exercise your zeal for Jesus this new year.
- c. Drive Out Distractions that Keep You from Focusing on Jesus!
 - i. In this cleansing, Jesus was concerned for undistracted worship.
 - ii. What distractions do you need to invite Jesus to drive out of you?

3. **Study/Discussion Points:**

- a. **Sunday Afternoon** – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
 - i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
 - ii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
 - iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
 - iv. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
 - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. Monday:

- i. Read John 2:11-25 (if possible, use a Bible that does not provide section headings) making note of the many details John presents.
 1. What is the one thing that most stands out to you in this passage?
 2. If you could what would you ask John or Jesus to explain in more detail?
 3. After this first reading is there a particular application you see to your life?
- ii. John 2:11-12 precedes and sets the stage for the sermon's focal passage.
 1. Verse 11 is basically a summary of the Gospel of John. Read these verses to help identify the three keywords of verse 11: John 20:30, John 1:14, and John 20:31. In your own experience how are signs, glory, and belief connected?
 2. Many scholars like to suggest that Jesus only cleansed the Temple once, near the end of His ministry, and suggest that John is just reporting this event out of its chronological order to make a point. How does the detail John provides at the end of verse 12 and the beginning of verse 13 (remember there were no verses or paragraphs in the original) make such a position seem unlikely?

c. Tuesday:

- i. Read John 2:13-16, Exodus 12:1-30, 23:14-17, and Deuteronomy 16:16-17.
 1. Why would it have been necessary for Jesus to go to the Passover in Jerusalem?
 2. Jesus regularly got into disputes with the Jewish leaders because He did not obey their Sabbath laws. What is different about the necessity of attending Passover?
 3. How might Jesus' cleansing of the Temple at Passover be particularly significant (see Exodus 12:15)?
 4. How would you describe Jesus' actions? What do you think his attitude was as he performed them? How do you see Jesus' actions being governed by the principles articulated in Exodus 23:4-5 and Deuteronomy 22:1-4? What might we learn from this about how we should act when dealing with others who are disobeying God's law?
- ii. During Jesus' ministry the Temple (Herod's Temple) was greatly expanded from that which had been rebuilt by Zerubbabel after the return from Babylonian exile (see Ezra 6:3-12 and 3:12). It included an outer Court of the Gentiles which was open to people from all nationalities who wanted to worship God. It was in this large area (estimated to be able to hold more than 75,000 people) that Jesus taught, and the merchants had set up shop.
 1. What explanation did Jesus give for His actions in John 2:16? Compare this to the explanation given during the second cleansing reported in Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-17 and Luke 19:45-46.
 2. In this cleansing does Jesus seem to be more focused on "how" the merchants are doing business or on the "where" they are doing it?

3. How would all of the “commercial” activity Jesus was driving out have prevented the true purpose for which the Temple was built and dedicated from being accomplished (see 1 Kings 8:28-30 & 41-43 and 2 Chronicles 6:19-21 & 32-33)? What application might there be for churches today?
4. In His statement in verse 16 He calls the Temple “my Father’s house” not “our Father’s house”. What does this suggest about the status of those He was talking to?

d. Wednesday:

- i. Read John 2:13-17 and Psalm 69:1-23.
- ii. In response to Jesus’ actions the Disciples (at this point probably many more than just the 12 we normally think of) remembered a passage from Psalm 69:9. How would you paraphrase that quotation in today’s modern English?
 1. How would you define “zeal”? How is it different from “jealousy”? Similar?
 2. What does the fact that His disciples were able to recall this Psalm suggest about their background and religious education? Do you think most American Christians would be equipped to make such a connection? What enables us to do so (see John 14:26)?
 3. Read Numbers 25:6-13 (in both the ESV and NIV if they are available). What does this event teach us about how God views our “zeal” regarding His commands?
- iii. Psalm 69 is the New Testament's third most frequently quoted Psalm. Read these passages and see if you can identify the verse in Psalm 69 being quoted or alluded to: Matthew 27:34 & 48, John 2:17, 7:3-5, 15:25, Romans 15:3, and 11:9-10.

e. Thursday:

- i. Read John 2:13-22, concentrating particularly on verses 18-22.
 1. What seems strange or unexpected in the way the Jews responded to Jesus’ actions? If someone came into your place of employment and began destroying it and preventing you from making a living, how would you respond?
 2. John doesn’t talk about miracles in his Gospel, but about “signs” (see John 2:11). Although the Jews were probably not asking Jesus to perform a miracle but to explain what authority He had to cleanse the Temple, in what sense was the fact such a discussion was taking place miraculous?
 3. What about the question the Jews ask suggests that this conversation is with ordinary people (perhaps the merchants) and not the Jewish religious leaders? What would the leader's reaction have likely been?
- ii. Jesus’ answer is misunderstood, as are many spiritual truths Jesus presents in the Gospel of John (see 3:4, 4:11, and 6:52 for example). How do you think you would have understood Jesus if you had been there?
 1. Given that the Holy Spirit inspired John to provide an editorial comment in verses 21-22, how important do you think it is that we properly understand what Jesus was saying in His response?

2. What event was necessary before even His disciples could understand and believe (see verse 22)?
3. Although they did not understand what Jesus was saying they certainly heard and remembered His words. Read Matthew 26:59-61 and 27:40. What parallels could you draw to those who today continually reject Christ despite the ongoing witness of Christian friends and loved ones?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 1:20-25. How do these verses Paul wrote to the Corinthians relate to John 2:18-21?

f. **Friday:**

- i. Read John 2: 11-25 focusing on verses 23-25 and Psalm 139
- ii. The Passover Feast (Feast of Unleavened Bread) was a weeklong celebration that followed Passover and Jerusalem would have been overflowing with people who had come for the event.
 1. What do these verses tell us about Jesus' activities during the festival? What was the response?
 2. How does John 6:66 show that Jesus' decision to not entrust Himself to the people who believed in Him was the correct decision?
 3. Read Jeremiah 17:9, Ecclesiastes 9:3, Deuteronomy 31:21, 1 Kings 8:39, Isaiah 11:3-4, Matthew 13:15, Mark 7:21-22 and Romans 3:10-18. What did Jesus know was in man? How does our society feel about such beliefs?

g. **Saturday:**

- i. Read John 2: 11-25 prayerfully, meditating on what the Holy Spirit is using John to teach you and how those lessons can (should) be applied in your life.
- ii. Then meditate on Psalm 139:1-12. Given this description of God in relation to us, how is your worship of Him affected? Close by praying Psalm 139:23-24.

4. **Application:**

- a. Central to understanding Jesus' teaching in this passage is the Resurrection – it was necessary for even the Disciples' belief. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:17 that “if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins”. Praise God, He is Risen (Matthew 28:6). Despite our society's best efforts to explain away any idea of the Resurrection we must hold tight to this truth and let every Sunday (every day) be Resurrection Sunday.
- b. God is particular about how we worship Him and will not accept worship that is not focused entirely on Him. Consider what distractions prevent you from such worship – not only on Sunday in church but daily in your quiet time. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help remove such distraction and give you a heart that desires first and foremost to worship.

5. **Prayer Points:**

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications –Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19