

CLEANING HOUSE

(John 2: 13-22)

Intro: It was the first day of Passover 1993.

-It was also the beginning of Spring Break.

#My sons would have a whole week off from school.

-We decided to take a week of vacation.

#To fly out to Washington, D.C.

*To visit my brother.

+Who lives in Rockville, Maryland.

*To see some of the historic sites.

-We rented a car.

#To travel down into Virginia.

*Bull Run.

+Where the first major battle of the Civil War was fought.

=After Fort Sumter, of course.

*Appomattox Court House.

+Where the Civil War ended.

=At least that is where Robert E. surrendered:

-Army of Northern Virginia.

=Although there were a few skirmishes after that.

*Monticello.

+Home of Thomas Jefferson.

*Richmond.

*Williamsburg.

*Jamestown.

*Yorktown.

+All the historic sites.

=Associated with those places.

But first there was the matter of Passover.

-We were to spend the first night with my brother.

#But my brother's house was all torn up with remodeling projects.

#So he arranged for us to stay at the home.

*Of a woman he was dating.

-Laurie was Jewish.

#It was the custom of her family.

*To celebrate Passover.

+By eating the Passover meal.

=Seder.

+By recalling the Passover story.

=Haggadah.

#We were invited:

*To share in the meal.

+Parsley.

+Unleavened bread.

+Bitter herbs.

+Egg.

+Lamb.

+Wine.

=I had to watch my boys with the wine.

*To share in the story.

+To ask.

+To answer.

=Question.

-“Why is this night different from all other nights?”

#For several hours we shared.

*In the meal.

*In the story.

+In English.

+In Hebrew.

=Laurie’s daughters were attending Hebrew School.

-So they knew the language.

#Perhaps the way Jesus shared the Passover meal.

*With his disciples.

+It was a memorable night.

The next morning was memorable as well.

-Before we set off on our site seeing trip.

#There was the matter of breakfast.

*But there was:

+No cereal in the house.

+No bread for toast.

+No donuts.

=Or sweet rolls.

-Like the good Orthodox Jew that she was.

#Laurie had removed everything from her house.

*That contained.

+Yeast.

+Leaven.

#She had cleaned house for Passover.

I. In Our Gospel Lesson For Today The Passover Of The Jews Was Near.

A. Jesus Went Up To Jerusalem To Clean House.

1. His Father's house.
 - a. Temple.
2. Temple was full of animals.
 - a. Cattle.
 - b. Sheep.
 - c. Doves.

-Probably not in the Temple proper.

#Although there was perhaps a risk.

*Animals could get loose.

*Animals could get into the Temple.

-But in the surrounding area.

#Known as the Court of the Gentiles.

-Our church building.

#Different.

#Not to scale.

*But if:

+Our chancel represents the Holy Place.

=Including the Holy of Holies.

-Reserved for the High Priest.

#Once a year.

#On the Day of Atonement.

=There was a roof over that part of the complex.

+Where you're sitting represents the Court of the Israelites.

=Where the sacrifices were performed.

-Men and boys who were of age.

#Could enter this part of the Temple.

=There was no roof.

+Narthex represents the Court of the Women.

=Not allowed in the Court of the Israelites.

+Outside represents the Court of the Gentiles.

=Where the animals would have been.

*All of this area.

+Now part of what is known as the Temple Mount.

=In Jerusalem.

-How else were the religious pilgrims to acquire the animals?

#For the Passover sacrifice.

*It would have been difficult for most of them.

+To bring the animals all the way from home.

*They bought them in Jerusalem.

3. Temple was full of money changers.
 - a. How else were the pilgrims to get the coins for the Temple tax?
 - b. Coins in their pockets.
 - Roman coins.
 - Coins of the realm.
 - Coins with graven images.
 - #Violation of one of the sacred commandments.
 - c. Those coins had to be traded for Jewish shekels.
 - Coins without the graven images.

B. Jesus Cleaned House.

1. He made a whip.
 - a. Perhaps from the rope.
 - Used to tether some of the animals.
 - b. Driving the animals.
 - Cattle.
 - Sheep.
 - #Out of the Temple.
 - c. We don't need to assume he used the whip on the merchants.
2. He overturned the tables of the money changers.
 - a. Pouring out the coins of the money changers onto the ground.
 - “Pouring out.”
 - #Can also mean:
 - *Pouring out of a liquid.
 - *Shedding of blood.
 - b. Overturning their tables.
3. Perhaps because they provided the sacrifices for the poor.
 - a. Sellers of the doves received slightly gentler treatment.
 - b. Jesus simply told them:
 - Pack up.
 - Get out.

C. Why Did Jesus Clean House?

1. Didn't the merchants serve the religious needs of the pilgrims?
 - a. Sure they did.
2. Did the merchants overcharge?
 - a. For their:
 - Goods.
 - Services.
 - b. Possibly.
3. Had the merchants allowed their businesses to encroach?
 - a. Upon the Temple grounds.
 - b. No doubt about it.

4. But Jesus is doing more than scolding these merchants.
 - a. For operating their businesses on sacred grounds.
 - b. For exploiting the religious pilgrims for personal gain.
5. Jesus is cleaning house.
 - a. To put himself in the place of the Temple.
 - In our Daytime 5x5 group.
 - #We are studying the Gospel of John.
 - Last Wednesday we looked at:
 - #Replacement Theme in John.
 - *How Jesus replaces:
 - +Old religious practices.
 - +With something new.
 - =Something new is Jesus himself.
 - Only in John's Gospel.
 - #Jesus is the Lamb of God.
 - *Who takes away the sin of the world.
 - +John 1:29.
 - #Jesus is crucified.
 - *At the very hour the Passover lambs would have been killed.
 - +John 19:14-22.
 - #Jesus declares:
 - *He will destroy this Temple.
 - *Rebuild it in three days.
 - b. Those who heard Jesus' declaration.
 - Thought he was talking about the building.
 - #Temple of Herod.
 - *Had been 46 years in the building.
 - *Would take another 35 years to complete.
 - #Place where sacrifices were offered.
 - #Place that represented the inaccessible presence of God.
 - But he was really talking about himself.
 - c. Jesus came to clean house.
 - To become the very presence of God.
 - #To every person.
 - #In every place.
 - To become the ultimate and final sacrifice.
 - #For all the sins.
 - #Of all people.
 - #Of all time.
 - *No more lambs need to be killed.
 - *No more animal sacrifices need to be made.

- To become in his own body the Temple of God.
- #Destroyed on the cross.
- #Raised up on the third day.
 - *Herod's Temple was destroyed.
 - +By the Romans.
 - +In A.D. 70.
 - =By the time John's Gospel is written.
 - There is no more Temple.
 - There are no more sacrifices.
 - *But the resurrected Temple in the person of Jesus.
 - +Lasts forever.
 - =In the vision of St. John the Divine.
 - Revelation 21:22.
 - =Of the New Jerusalem.
 - There is no Temple.
 - #Lord God Almighty.
 - #Lamb.
 - *Are its Temple.
- +Temple.
 - =Razed on Good Friday.
 - =Raised on Easter morning.

II. As My Brother's Friend Laurie Cleaned House For Passover, By Removing All Of The Leavened Food, How Shall We Clean House For Lent And For Easter?

A. As Jesus Comes Into Our Homes And Into Our Hearts, Where Shall The Cleaning Begin?

1. Maybe we begin with the 10 Commandments.
 - a. As I tried to describe at our Wednesday evening soup supper.
 - We don't necessarily have to see the commandments as demands.
 - #Although they can be demanding.
 - We can see them as gifts.
 - #Prescribing what righteous relationships ought to look like.
 - *Righteous relationship with God.
 - *Righteous relationship with other people.
 - #Here's the 10 Commandments "Hillbilly Style."
 - * (1) Just one God.
 - (2) Put nothin' before God.
 - (3) Watch yer mouth.
 - (4) Git yourself to Sunday meetin'.
 - (5) Honor yer Ma & Pa.
 - (6) No killin'.
 - (7) No foolin' around with another fellow's gal.

- (8) Don't take what ain't yers.
- (9) No tellin' tales or gossipin'.
- (10) Don't be hankerin' for yer buddy's stuff.
- b. Are there things that are getting in the way?
 - Of our relationship with God.
 - Of our relationship with other people.
 - #What needs to get cleaned out of our hearts?
- 2. Maybe we begin by focusing anew on mission ministry.
 - a. Last fall Bishop Floyd convened:
 - Pastors.
 - Congregational leadership.
 - #Of the seven ELCA congregations in the Tulsa area.
 - *To foster:
 - +Communication.
 - +Cooperation.
 - =Between our congregations.
 - b. One outcome of those conversations.
 - Webinar scheduled for Tuesday evening.
 - #Infomercial from "A Renewable Enterprise."
 - Possible resource.
 - #For Ascension.
 - #For the other ELCA congregations.
 - *To help us look anew at:
 - +Our mission and ministry.
 - +Our gifts and resources.
 - *Maybe to help us ask:
 - +Are there?
 - =Attitudes.
 - =Practices.
 - In our congregations.
 - That are getting in the way of our:
 - #Mission.
 - #Ministry.
 - =Ways that we as congregations.
 - Need to clean house.
 - You are invited.
 - #To register.
 - #To log on.
 - #To give input.
 - *To me.
 - *To the Church Council.
 - +No cost.
 - +No obligation.
 - =For participating in the webinar.

- c. Another outgrowth of the Bishop's Consultation.
 - Invitation to conversations with St. Andrew Lutheran Church.
 - #Sand Springs.
 - First conversation is scheduled for next Sunday.
 - #Pastors.
 - #Representatives of the councils.
 - *Of our two congregations.
 - Could our Lord be calling us to something new?
 - #Stay tuned.

B. Jesus Comes To Clean House.

- 1. To push out those things.
 - a. Aren't needed.
 - b. Have gotten in the way.
 - c. Pushed him out.
- 2. To push his way into:
 - a. Our hearts.
 - b. Our homes.
 - c. Our congregations.
- 3. To push in:
 - a. With the meal:
 - His own.
 - #Body.
 - #Blood.
 - *In the form of:
 - +Unleavened bread.
 - +Cup of wine.
 - b. With the story.
 - His own story.
 - #Haggadah.
 - Story of:
 - #Passover.
 - #Deliverance.
 - #Salvation.
 - c. Christ pushes in.

Concl: It's Lent.

- Time of Passover is near.
- Easter is coming.
 - #It's time to clean house.

