

Grace mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. I want you to picture Jesus in your mind's eye. Go ahead, close your eyes and picture Jesus. What do you see? Maybe you see Jesus praying at the garden of Gethsemane? Or maybe you see Jesus the gentle and mild shepherd leading the flock beside quiet waters to fertile green pastures? You can open your eyes again. When we think of Jesus, we think of a calm, quiet, and peaceful man. Or if he is showing emotion, perhaps you see Jesus crying near Lazarus' grave as he beholds men mourning the death of a friend? Or maybe, Jesus laughing with children? We have these sort of pleasant pictures of Jesus. We like these portraits of our God, as dispassionate, serene, or contemplative.

We are unsettled by a picture of an angry Jesus. Our gospel reading shows a picture of Jesus being downright furious. What makes God angry? Sin. God hates sin.

Jesus is God. We tend to forget that fact. We think of Jesus so much as a friend or a teacher, that we forget that he is the great "I AM." Wake UP! He is God! Jesus is the great I am. He is the one, as is written in Job, "who laid the earth's foundation and marked off its dimensions, who stretched a measuring line across it and set it on its footings and laid its cornerstone, while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy. Who shut up the sea behind doors, when it burst forth from the womb, as he made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, and fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, and said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'. He gives orders to the morning, and shown the dawn its place, he has journeyed to the springs of the sea and walked in the recesses of the deep. He has seen the gates of death and the gates of the shadow of death. He is the great and

powerful one who rained fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. He is the one who turned the Nile and the waters of Egypt to blood, and sent the frogs and flies, and plagues against the Egyptians. He is the one who sent poisonous vipers amongst Israelites as they sinned in the wilderness. He is the one who shook the mountain as the Israelites waited for Moses to return. He is the one who raised armies against his own people for their countless sins. Yes Jesus is the one. Jesus is God. Let us not forget that.

God hates sin. And God loves us and he wants us to visit him. He loves us so much he made a place where his children could go to visit him. He had the temple made so that his children would know for certain that they could go there and encounter him. But sin is the problem and God took care of sin. He established sacrifices for his children so that they would know for certain their sins were taken care of. He, God himself, ordered sacrifices so that his children had no doubts at all about their sinfulness and its payment.

What had happened at the temple? Why was Jesus so angry? The temple was a place for prayer for all nations. Sacrifices were made here for men. What was the matter? The business of the temple overtook what was really important. Worship. Worship was and is the point of God's house. This is God's house. Here, in this place, right now, we know with 100% certainty God is here. And he gives us the church so we have this certainty, and may not doubt at all.

Sacrifices were necessary in the temple. It would be difficult if not impossible for pilgrims to make the long journey on foot and bring livestock along for these sacrifices. And the money that was demanded in the law to pay the temple tax was really only used in the temple. It was useless anywhere else. So these men at the temple

were providing a needed service. But sin corrupts everything. The people were permissive. They said, “Ah, so what? It’s not a big deal. So what if our business elbows out those gentiles from God’s house. They don’t mean much anyway to God.” The vendors were doing business in the temple, and their business interrupted worship. Imagine the noises from all of these people, and don’t forget the animals and the noises they make, and their smells. There would be more commotion and noise and smell and mess than any fair or market. And don’t forget, the businesses were shady. They charged outrageous prices to these pilgrims for most likely very imperfect specimens. And the moneychangers charged outrageous fees to convert roman currency for temple money. The business of the temple was a racket. And God was getting pushed out. God was angry. Jesus was angry.

What does Jesus do? Something most unexpected and very unsettling. He makes a whip, and drives everyone out of the temple. He is filled with a righteous fury and cleans house. We see an angry God, and it scares us. You can imagine what the disciples must of thought later that day after seeing their Lord angry and shouting. Jesus is angry at sin. God is angry at sin. He hates the fact that the perfect world he had created was made imperfect with sin.

God hates sin so much that he doesn’t even spare his own son. He hates sin enough to send Jesus to die upon the Cross. God is zealous enough for his children, for his children in all nations, that he would not withhold his own son. God permits these sinful evil men who confront Jesus, to kill him. To nail him to a fool’s cross. And after he is dead, Jesus is raised on the 3rd day. Wicked men destroy God’s temple, but God rebuilds the new temple, the body of Christ. God forgives us by the death of his son.

Every sin is poured onto Jesus. All sins of all time, from every nation are visited upon the Cross: The sins of the Jews in the wilderness; the sins of the Jews in their idolatry; the sins of the men who nailed Jesus to the Cross; your sins; my sins. All sins are delivered onto Jesus. We are made anew, pleasing to God.

And someday, we will rise. As St. Paul writes, “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.” Jesus says in our reading that he will rise. We will too rise. Jesus will return someday, and he will raise all of the dead, and we will go with them to everlasting life.

The gift of eternal life is for all nations. That is for us and all in Round Lake. Many homes in Round Lake do not have a church home. God has made us into his disciples, to make other disciples. If you have not already done so, I urge you and remind to sign up for our church retreat, where we will on Saturday be empowered and strengthened to be God’s witnesses. We can be blessed to be a blessing. In the name of Jesus. Amen.