

John 2:13-35

“What He proclaims, He does”

Lent 3

March 7, 2021

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Vicar Don Stein

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

**[What He Proclaims, He Does.]**

Brothers and sisters, in today’s Gospel reading, Jesus comes to cleanse the Temple.

And not just *cleanse* the Temple, but to proclaim its pending *judgment* down upon it!

**And what He proclaims, He does.**

This is the Jesus we Americans like to see.

The Jesus who could be in a comic book action movie.

He makes a whip out of cords, and beats the sinners out of the Temple!

And there were a lot of sinners by that time!

Jewish law had expanded from those simple Ten Commandments.

into 613 Mitzvot, mined out of the Old Testament.

That’s 613 ways to break God’s Law and be officially counted among the sinners!

(Those were just the ‘official’ ways,

not even accounting for the Original Sin which sullies each of us.)

Worse still, those who had been entrusted to help others navigate all these laws

Were abusing their station to make an extra buck off the poor and needy.

And ‘business’ was booming with injustice.

Jesus had come for the poor and the poor in spirit.

And so the moneychangers

and the doves

and the sheep

and the oxen

and the coins—it all had to go.

He drove out what did not belong in the Temple of God.

Jesus wasn’t only *cleansing* the Temple,

He was proclaiming the *judgment* that is to come down upon it—

**and what He proclaims, He does.**

But more than that,

more than only being *against* injustice,

Jesus acted *for* something else. John writes:

“His disciples remembered that it was written [in the Psalms],

‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’”

Filled with zeal *for* his Father’s house,

Jesus proclaimed *judgment* and Jesus proclaimed *cleansing*.

(Psalm 69:9, John 2:17)

The people were perplexed:

*“What sign do you show us for doing these things?”*

(John 2:18)

This is action-movie Jesus, so He responds with a defiant, powerful statement.

*“Destroy this Temple,”* He says. *“And in three days I will raise it up!”*

(John 2:19)

Jesus’ prophecy about the Temple’s destruction would come to pass.

A few decades after His crucifixion,

the Temple in Jerusalem would be utterly destroyed.

**After all: what He proclaims, He does.**

So in 70 AD, God used the Romans to destroy it, brick by brick.

### **[The Temple is Not What You Think]**

Yet Jesus didn’t only say the Temple would be *destroyed*.

This isn’t some small-budget-action-film Jesus,

this is full on massive-destruction-filled-summer-blockbuster-movie Jesus:

*“Destroy this Temple,”* Jesus said, *“and in three days I will raise it up!”*

(John 2:19)

Now this movie has jumped the shark.

Rebuild it in three days?

The Jews responded,

*“It has taken forty-six years to build this temple,  
and will you raise it up in three days?”*

(John 2:20)

If action-movie Jesus bothered to respond, John doesn’t bother to record it.

No, Jesus keeps right on rolling.

Because the Temple He would raise was not built of stone,  
but His own flesh.

*“He was speaking of the Temple of His Body,”*  
which *would* be destroyed and in three days raised up.

(John 2:21)

Truly, destroyed.

**Because what He proclaims, He does.**

He was stripped naked, forced to wear a crown of painful thorns.

The flails and cudgels used to flog him were not mere “whips of cords.”

They had chunks of “Roman iron” —steel teeth—

implanted in the leather to cause maximum injury.

Each strike wrapped around His Body, tearing into His flesh,  
separating sinew from tissue, exposing (but not breaking) His bones.

And that was just the whipping.

His already gruesome body would be kicked, jeered,

and forced to carry a rough and heavy cross

—the final instrument of His own termination—

up the hill to Golgotha, “the place of the skull.”

There, the seven-inch spikes would pierce the base of His hands, severing the median nerve, causing indescribable pain while also paralyzing those extremities.

Then His feet.

Crucifixion was a slow death— it could take days to kill a healthy man.

The position of the body prevented natural exhalation.

Lungs filled with fluid, resulting in unhurried suffocation.

Blood drained to the legs (and out open wounds).

Organs gradually failed.

And the heart, desperately trying to move what little oxygen it could, would literally burst.

Jesus would have died of a broken heart.

By the time He made it to the Cross,

Jesus was so weak that He died in just a few hours.

Not what comes to mind when one thinks of an action hero.

But he had proclaimed that the Temple, His Body, would be destroyed.

**And what He proclaims, He does.**

### **[He Makes His Temple in You]**

And He suffered all this, not because *His* Temple needed cleansing and judgement—

Indeed, His Body was perfect;

There was no sin or injustice within Him that needed ‘chasing out.’

No, He suffered all this because:

*‘Zeal **for** His Father’s house had consumed Him.’*

*Zeal **for** His Father’s house.*

(John 2:17)

Brothers and sisters,

There is another Temple.

You have heard of the one of stone, and the one of Christ’s own flesh.

But His Father’s house was established within *you* at baptism.

He was consumed with zeal **for** *you*.

*You.*

Even in your sinful, fallen state,

you mean so much to God,

that He could not permit you, His Temples of living stones,

to become a “house of trade,” a place of injustice.

No, God so loved *you*, that he gave his only begotten Son

To die in your place.

Consumed with zeal **for** *you*.

This isn’t an action movie; it’s a love story.

And it is a true story.

In receiving your judgement, He made you His Temples.

**Because what He proclaims, He does.**

## [Judgement & Cleansing]

Jesus proclaimed *judgement* and Jesus proclaimed *cleansing*;  
He received our *judgement*, and He grants us His *cleansing*.  
**Because what He proclaims, He does.**

This cleansing is not without its own sort of sufferings.  
In this life, brothers and sisters, we will suffer—  
excising sin is not painless, sanctified living is not without sacrifice!  
Jesus makes that abundantly clear later in John's Gospel:  
*"In this world, you will have trouble;"* He says,  
*"But take heart, for I have overcome the world."*

(John 16:33)

The sufferings of this life can become the death of us, if we try to face them alone—  
if we fill our Temples with moneychangers and 'things of trade.'  
But those sufferings can be opportunities for *cleansing*,  
for drawing closer to God, if we would trust in Him.

He forgives the sins of all who believe in Him.  
And He lives within them—within *you*!  
On the Last Day, He will raise up your Temples again to live with Him forever.  
**Because what He proclaims, He does.**

This was proven when He rose from the grave.  
John remembered it when he wrote his Gospel:  
*"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."*

(John 2:22)

This is what we remember this Lent, as we move to the promise of Easter:  
We also believe the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken  
**because what He proclaims, He does.**

In just a few moments, you will hear Christ's words proclaimed:  
"This is My Body... This is My Blood."  
And '**because what He proclaims, He does,**' it will be so.  
And you will receive them for the forgiveness of sins,  
**because what He proclaims, He does.**

You are forgiven **because what He proclaims, He does.**  
In Jesus' name. Amen.

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**Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous deeds among the people. Amen! (Psalm 96:3)**

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