



## St Matthew's Holland Park Weekly Bulletin

3rd March 2024

This week's Revd. Morris' message: **Jesus ... meek and mild?**



Today's gospel concerns the Jesus' cleansing of the Temple. This incident challenges our often one dimensional view of Jesus - as a 'nice' person, gentle and mild... Sure, he personified Grace, compassion and gentleness .. but we often need to develop a more nuanced understanding of Him.

This and like passages show His legitimate and righteous anger being manifested... generally directed at religious respectable people who sought to provide *self righteousness* in pride by their own actions *for God* [ or themselves ] rather than simply doing

those things *with God as He requires* and looking to Him alone for their right standing before the Lord.

Many scholars have provided insights into the 'cleansing the Temple' incident including:

1. *There was a legitimate need for the merchants in the Temple.* Some were exchanging money [ from the common currency into the 'Temple Currency' suitable for Temple offerings ]. Others were selling suitable livestock for sacrifice that was 'without blemish'. [ E.G. How disappointing it would be to bring your own livestock the long distance to the Temple only for it to be deemed of unsuitable quality for sacrifice. It was much more convenient to purchase directly from the Temple 'pre- approved' and certified livestock.] **The Synoptic Gospels appear to indicate that these merchants were profiteering from their privileged position** and ripping off the faithful.. .hence the '*dens of thieves*' comment [ e.g. see Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48.]
2. However, John's account appears to take a different tack. John positions the cleansing as *his second sign* early in Jesus's ministry [ the first sign being turning the water into wine at Cana]. The remaining Gospels' position this event right after Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem during Holy Week thus providing the impetus for the religious elite to move decisively to rid themselves of Jesus.

John seems to have a wider message to impart ... namely to illumine who Jesus is and His role as Messiah and Saviour. John stresses Jesus' identification of himself with the Temple and foreshadows both His death and its destruction. To John, **Jesus Himself is the new Temple ...** He is the place where God meets humankind, where we can be forgiven, find mercy and Grace and become more what we are meant to be. Therefore, in the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus is **effectively announcing the imminent arrival of a superseding new covenant** that will make the Temple, animal sacrifices to cover sin and all of their supporting superstructure of Priests, Levites, taxes, festivals .. and the

merchants also ... **redundant**. Thus, as noted last week, Jesus's death upon the Cross and His resurrection usher in the new Covenant of Jesus grounded in His Love, Mercy and Grace.

This interpretation of the cleansing of the Temple, further illumines the Woman at the Well discourse later in John's Gospel [ see John 4:19-24]. Thus, Jesus's comments concerning worship in Spirit and Truth rather than in Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim take on a deeper meaning. Jesus is inviting the woman [ and us all ] to **worship Jesus Himself** - the very presence and embodiment of God and all that He has to say to us - **the Logos**.

In summary then, John's message is that **Jesus seeks to rid us all of formalistic religiosity, all that gets between us and Him and simply replace it with Himself.**



So in this Third Lenten week, I wonder **what may need to be cleansed by Jesus out of your 'temple'** [ your holy of holies - that sacred place in the centre of your being] in order to make it **a suitable dwelling place for worship in Spirit and Truth?**

**Gospel reading: John 2:13 - 22.**

**Some resources to dig deeper:** <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/third-sunday-in-lent-2/commentary-on-john-213-22-3>; <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/third-sunday-in-lent-2/commentary-on-john-213-22-2> ; <https://www.dashhouse.com/20131122the-ritual-and-reality-john-213-22/>

**Upcoming Parish Activities This Week : Mid Week Eucharist - Wednesday 6th March 10:30 a.m; Mens Breakfast 7th March 7 am @ Church Hall Lenten Study: Zoom Thursday 7th March 7:30 pm ; In- person study @ Friday 8th March 10:00 am in Church. Next Sunday's Readings:Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107: 1-3; 17-22; Ephesians 2:1- 10; John 3: 14-21**

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**Parish website :** **<https://www.stmatthewshollandpark.com/>**

**Parish Facebook site :** **<https://www.facebook.com/groups/292308270851142>**

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:**

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today. We acknowledge their continued spiritual connection to country and surrounding land, sky and water. We pay our respect to their Elders, past present and emerging and pray that we may continue to learn from and nurture one another in the spirit of Reconciliation. **STOP PRESS .. If you are looking to board in a room with ensuite bathroom in secure townhouse close to transport and shops at Coorparoo... call Jacky on 0476 205 674:)**