

DEVOTIONS FOR LUKE 22 - JOHN 2

SPRING CLEANING

Friday, April 7

Reading: John 2

John 2:14 *In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."*

I can relate to comedian Phyllis Diller who said, "Housework can't kill you, but why take a chance?"¹ It is that time of year when hearts turn toward spring cleaning. One website has some interesting suggestions concerning spring cleaning. For instance, "Start small, like, say, taking down the Christmas tree, or throwing away the newspapers from even-numbered years... You can pretty much just hose everything down, except for your hose. Buy a second hose... Get a Roomba. Get a cat. Record a video of your cat being scared by the Roomba. Post it on YouTube, make a million dollars and move to a cleaner house."²

In John 2, we see Jesus involved in some important spring cleaning. Passover occurred in April and Jesus finds the Jerusalem temple court filled with merchants, animals, and moneychangers. There was nothing wrong with having markets like this. They were necessities especially during Passover. Thousands of Jews would come from all over the Empire to celebrate in Jerusalem. They would need to buy animals for sacrifices and the Passover meal. They would also need to exchange their foreign coins for Jewish coins acceptable for temple use. What upset Jesus was not the "why" this was happening, but the "how" and "where"!

History records that these religious merchants were fleecing the people with expensive prices for the animals and charging exorbitant exchange rates. The cost of buying a sacrifice in the temple was much higher than anywhere else. And if someone brought their own animal the priests would deem it "blemished" and not suitable for sacrifice thus forcing people to buy a "temple-approved" sheep or dove. It was quite a racket!

Jesus also objected to the fact that this market was set up in the Court of the Gentiles, the only place a non-Jewish person could come to worship God. The temple authorities were effectively eliminating the chance for Gentiles to discover and worship the true God at the temple - the very purpose for which the temple had been ordained by God! So here at the beginning of His earthly ministry, Jesus cleaned them out. He would do it again at the end of His ministry (see Mark 11:15-19).

Do you get upset when you see things being done in God's name that abuse other people and drive them away from Christ? Is there anything in your words, actions, or attitudes that might need "cleaned out" so Christ can shine through your life?

¹ <https://www.bustle.com/articles/151599-14-spring-cleaning-quotes-that-say-what-were-all-thinking>

² <http://www.funnyordie.com/articles/1c7d032c73/tips-and-tricks-for-spring-cleaning>