



Heaven on Earth (Part 8) – The Temple, Spiritual Consumerism, and Jesus

JT English – October 7, 2018

It is so good to be with you today. My name is JT English. I'm one of the pastors here on staff at The Village. I oversee The Village Church Institute. It's my joy to preach as we continue our sermon series in the gospel of John. If you have a Bible, go ahead and grab it and flip to John, chapter 2. If you don't have one, there should be a Bible in the seat in front of you. I'd invite you to grab it and flip to John 2.

Last week, we looked at Jesus' ministry as he made water into wine. Now we're looking at Jesus as he enters the temple and cleanses the temple. John, chapter 2, verses 13-22. John writes these words by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'

So the Jews said to him, 'What sign do you show us for doing these things?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking about the temple of his body. 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."

I don't know if you saw, there was an incredible story that broke in London this past week. I'm not a very artistic, creative person. For those of you who know me, the most creative thing I've ever done

is put in slide transitions in PowerPoint. I'm like, "Slide to the left by dissolve," and I feel like I've really created something creative and accomplished something. I don't consider myself an artist or creative. I'm grateful for men and women who have those gifts and skill sets, but that's not me.

In the world of art, there was incredible news that broke out of London this week. Anybody heard of an anonymous painter and artist named Banksy? A few of you have heard of Banksy before. If I'm honest with you, I had not heard of this until this story broke this past week. He is apparently a well-known but anonymous artist. Very, very few people actually know who this person is, but his personality and his work and his art has become so well known. It's almost like you know who he is because you know what he does.

This past weekend, there was an art auction that was happening in London, and one of his paintings (it's called *Girl With Red Balloon*) was going for sale. It's this incredible picture with this great frame of a little girl who's holding a balloon and kind of letting it go. It really is a stunning picture when you look at it. It was going up for sale. It was going up for auction. If you were asking me how much I've spent to put art on my wall, I'd say, "Almost nothing." If I'm going to create art, I'm going to go to Hobby Lobby and get watercolors and do it myself.

I had no idea paintings went for this much. This is incredible. It starts at 10,000, then 20,000, then 100,000, then 200,000, then 500,000, then \$1 million, and eventually this painting sells for \$1.4 million. Here's what's incredible. That's not even the stunning part of this story. Here is the stunning part of this story. All of these people are gathered around this painting, and the painting sells, and the auctioneer says, "Sold, \$1.4 million!"

Immediately, the frame basically opens up automatically, and the piece of art drops through into a paper shredder placed into the frame. It was a secret thing, and it starts going through the paper shredder. The reaction you're having right now is the reaction (you can actually watch a video of this online) everybody in the audience had. They were all gasping. Imagine the person who bought it. They're like, "What?!"

What's crazy now is they're saying it's actually worth *more* money now because of what happened, which is just incredible to me how economy works like that. It's this incredible story of a group of people valuing this art and valuing it so much they're going to spend \$1.4 million, and there was a secret paper shredder hidden in a frame that destroys the piece of art. The thing I'm actually fascinated by is not so much the art, though that *is* fascinating. I'm fascinated by the person.

Isn't the allure here Banksy? That an artist would have the foresight to, years in advance, put a paper shredder in a frame and then figure out how to automatically make it shred the moment it's sold for \$1.4 million. That's an incredibly talented, insightful, but also evasive person. People still don't know who he is. Moments of chaos, laughter, concern. Who did this? Why would they do it?

I just think this is incredible, because you actually learn a lot about Banksy by what he does. Though he's anonymous, you feel like you kind of know him, and you kind of love him. You're like, "I could hang out with that guy for a little bit, maybe. Just once." Although we don't know the artist, we learn a lot about who he is based upon what he does. That's a key point for us today.

What John is trying to do in this gospel account is he's not so interested in you just knowing what Jesus *does*; he's far more interested in you knowing who Jesus *is*. It's not enough for us to know what Jesus *does* if we aren't intimately familiar with who Jesus *is*. So here's the main point for today. In this text, we're going to see that Jesus is *a prophet who challenges the spiritual consumer*, he is *a priest who cleanses us from sin*, and he is *a king who builds a temple for God's presence*.

1. *Jesus is a prophet who challenges the religious status quo, the spiritual consumerism of his day.*

Verses 13-17 paint this incredible picture. It paints this picture that Passover is being celebrated. You remember what Passover is. Passover is this celebration of the Jews coming together every year to celebrate what God had done for them as he brought them out of slavery, out of bondage, out of the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt. We studied that when we went through the book of Exodus last year.

Every single year, because of what God had done on their behalf, the Jewish people were gathering together to celebrate what God had accomplished, including Jesus. Jesus has come to Passover to celebrate with his fellow brothers and sisters what God has done in the exodus. He shows up at the temple, and he sees something that's absolutely shocking to him. He sees people selling animals. He sees people exchanging money, and he engages in this intense conflict.

The conflict in this passage is between spiritual consumerism and true worship, between corrupt religiosity and true discipleship. You see, here's what's happening. Let me see if I can paint this picture for you. These men and women are traveling 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, sometimes 100 or 200 miles to come to Jerusalem to offer their spiritual sacrifice of worship. Do you know what's really hard to carry for 200 miles? A goat. Have you ever tried to get a goat to go, like, five feet? It's really hard.

So the temple priests and the economists of the day have basically set up a business system that allows you to, for convenience, buy your gift right at the temple. Not outside the temple, not in Jerusalem, but just right here in the temple. So Jesus comes in, and he's actually not frustrated that there's some kind of economy and commerce happening. What is he frustrated with? *Where* it's happening.

He's not frustrated at all that they're offering a sacrifice; it's that they're doing it in the temple. He's not challenging the commerce of the day. He's not challenging them buying and making sacrifices. He's challenging the fact that the commerce is happening in the temple. In verse 15, he makes a whip of cords. He drives them out of the temple with sheep and oxen, pours out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturns their tables.

What is he doing? As a prophet, Jesus is challenging the religious status quo, which was marked by spiritual consumerism and convenience. It's important for you to see that he's not condemning sacrifice, he's not condemning the market; he's condemning a consumerism that had begun to mark their spirituality. What do I mean by "spiritual consumerism" and "spiritual convenience"? I want to see if I can set this conversation up by saying I think there are two things we'll all recognize that could be part of their spiritual consumerism, but ours as well.

First, *spiritual consumers put themselves at the center of worship, not God*. It's often not done intentionally. It's often unintentional. You see these men and women traveling hundreds of miles to offer their sacrifice to the God who saved them from Egypt. As they're coming a long distance, what are they looking for? Convenience, ease. "Make my relationship with God and my worship with God as easy as possible. What's the path of least resistance? What is going to cost me the least?"

Eventually (and here's what you have to catch), slowly, our felt needs begin to take precedence over the worship of God. Our felt needs, whether we realize it or not, begin to shape and form the actual worship of God we're participating in ourselves. The temple begins to represent a marketplace rather than a place of worship. The temple begins to represent a bank rather than a place of worship, because worship and commerce begin happening side by side. Their felt needs are changing the very fundamental act of worship they're participating in.

I know it would be easy for us to say that was simply happening in Jesus' day, but this happens in evangelicalism in the contemporary church too. Our felt needs begin to take precedence over the

actual worship of God. David Wells is a scholar and theologian, and he wrote a book on evangelicalism, making these comments as it relates to this, specifically. He says, for church, "This market today is competitive." Isn't that an interesting word to talk about ministry, that churches have to compete with each other to meet the felt needs of the people in the area?

"And increasingly what [churches] are up against are churchgoers' *preferences*. This is a buyer's market and what the buyer wants has become as large a consideration as what the church wants to give. And what churches have discovered is that these preferences are significantly affected by deep therapeutic longings [of these people], by fallacious assumptions about human potential, by a sense of entitlement to wholeness, by an almost sacrosanct assumption..." Another key word here. "...about consumer sovereignty..."

Do you realize we act like we're sovereign in the worship gathering, but only Jesus is sovereign? The consumer is not sovereign in the worship service; Jesus is sovereign in the worship service, but we don't act like that sometimes. "[We're shaped] by the entertainment industry, and perhaps even by a desire to be cocooned from society as much as possible." So, what is Wells trying to say? What is Jesus trying to say here? That it's so easy for our spiritual lives to not be marked by the sovereignty of God but by our preferences and consumer sovereignty.

Churches and ministries have to begin shaping their ministries around therapy and entertainment and self-actualization, and when we do that, what is worship no longer shaped by? God. Unintentionally, very quietly and very subtly, we put our felt needs above the worship of God. So temple worship is no longer about who God is but what they want. The consumer is in view, not God. Their experience of worship has become more important than the worship of God himself.

We have a tendency to think that if we are worshiping Jesus, if we have the right object of worship, then it doesn't matter *how* we are worshiping, that the manner of our worship does not matter to God, but Jesus says that's not true. They were worshiping Yahweh. They had come to sacrifice to the God who saved them out of Egypt. It wasn't that they were worshiping an idol; it's that they were worshiping the true God falsely.

Often, we're only worried about worshiping false gods. Jesus says it's possible to worship the true God falsely, and it happens here in John, chapter 2. Jesus says you have to be very careful to not put your felt needs, your desires, your preferences, your consumeristic assumptions above the worship of God himself. That's the first point related to spiritual consumerism.

Secondly, *we can unintentionally have an incomplete view of God*. What does Jesus say? The first thing he says in this passage is, "Take these things away; my Father's house is not a house of trade." Jesus is saying if you want to have a right view of worship, of your spiritual sacrifice of worship, it must be fueled and governed by your view of God. He says, "This is my Father's house; this is not a house of trade."

What we see in this text is an emphasis of the love of God to the neglect of the holiness of God. You see, these people had assumed that God is all-loving, all-patient, all-merciful. Will he really care how we worship? Jesus says, "Absolutely." Is God all-loving? The answer is "Yes." Is God all-merciful? Absolutely. Is God patient with us? Absolutely. But God is also holy, set apart, distinct, full of wrath and judgment.

Spiritual consumerism is marked by worship that doesn't take into account the nature and character of God. These men and women who were selling oxen, sheep, and pigeons were assuming that as long as they were worshiping God they would honor God. While this is true, Jesus reminds us that he's also full of justice and holiness. Spiritual consumerism, my spiritual consumerism and yours, has a tendency to emphasize the love of God to the neglect of the holiness of God.

We sacrifice the holiness of God on the altar of our own spiritual convenience. Jesus' view of worship is dictated not by who *we* are but by who *God* is. Consumers view worship being dictated by who *we* are. Disciples view worship being dictated by who *God* is. Jesus is saying there are proper ways to worship and improper ways to worship. If God is love and he is also holy, that should shape the way we approach him and the way we worship him.

If we only emphasize the love of God as inviting and yearning and sinner-seeking and lovesick passion for us to the exclusion of his justice, his glory, his holiness, his transcendence, the cost is massive, and it ceases to be Christianity. If you only have a god of love, a god of mercy, a god of patience, you have a god; it's just not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is full of love, mercy, justice, and patience *and* holiness, set-apartness, wrath, and judgment toward sinners.

If you take away the holiness of God, you take away the cross of Christ. We sacrifice the holiness of God for the sake of our own spiritual experience. The love of God without the holiness of God ceases to be Christianity. Frederick Bruner says it this way: "When a church exists for comfort to the

exclusion of challenge, for grace and not ever for judgment, she becomes a hideout for thieves rather than a house of God."

Here's what I want you to hear this morning: there are a lot of our brothers and sisters who live in this world who are enduring physical danger and imminent threats to their lives because of their faith in a way that I can't imagine and, frankly, have never experienced before, and in all likelihood, unless God does something radical and sends me overseas, I probably *won't* experience in my life. That's probably true for most of us in here.

That doesn't mean you don't have great dangers facing your faith every single day. The greatest danger to your faith in our culture and in our world is that you would allow your spiritual consumerism and spiritual convenience to distort your view of Jesus. The greatest challenge to your faith, day in and day out, is that you would allow spiritual consumerism and your spiritual convenience to distort your view and vision of the glory of Jesus Christ.

Consumer Christianity will give you just enough Jesus to inoculate you *to* Jesus. Coming to a church service week by week by week and just getting a little bit of Jesus, like a shot of Jesus, will inoculate you to Jesus but will eventually actually kill you because you won't actually *have* Jesus. Consumer Christianity will tell you Jesus is merciful, but it won't tell you he's holy. Consumer Christianity makes Jesus to be the mascot of our own spiritual lives, but Jesus will have none of it.

Do you know what the scary part of this text is, for me at least? They had no idea they were participating in spiritual consumerism. They were just worshipping. That's scary to me. They were doing what they thought God had asked them to do, and Jesus comes in, flipping over tables, making a whip of cords, and saying, "I will have none of this. You have destroyed the worship of our Father."

Spiritual consumerism places the self above God, and it excludes the holiness of God to the exclusion of the love of God. How do we know if we're participating in spiritual consumerism? Spiritual consumerism, like it was in the text and like it is today, is often masked with religious platitudes. Spiritual people know how to be spiritual.

It says things like, "You know what? I'm just not fed here anymore," as if that was the only goal. It says things like, "That preacher isn't funny enough," as if he was supposed to be. "That music is too

fast. That music is too loud. That music is too slow. That music is too quiet," all at the same time. "I just don't feel connected there anymore."

Spiritual consumerism masks itself in religious platitudes, but consumeristic Christianity is an oxymoron, because there's nothing consumeristic about biblical Christianity. There's a way of approaching life with God that tragically does not rely on God's presence, and I am afraid that that's true of so many of us. Rather than relying on the presence of God, we build our spiritual lives on preference, not presence.

Too many of us are interested in a preferential Christianity and not the presence of God, but here is the great news: Jesus loves you too much to serve as your mascot for your life. Jesus is too lovely and beautiful and majestic and holy to be your mascot. He is your Lord. Jesus is a prophet who is going to challenge the spiritual consumerism not just of *his* day but of ours. As prophet, he comes to us and wakes us up from our spiritual sleep, our slumber, and says, "I refuse to be your spiritual mascot, because I am your Lord." But Jesus isn't just prophet...

2. *Jesus is a priest who cleanses us from sin.* Look at verse 15. It says he makes a whip of cords and drives them all out of the temple. Jesus is a prophet who confronts us in our sin, but as a priest, he also cleanses us from our sin. One of the primary responsibilities in the Old Testament was to cleanse the temple, to make sure the temple was prepared for worship, was prepared for sacrifice, but the temple priests here in John, chapter 2, had failed to do their job. Why? Because the temple is now a bank. It's a place for commerce and economy.

Jesus, the true Priest, comes in and scourges the temple. He cleanses it. He purges it from filthiness and ungodliness. Often this passage is used to comment on how Jesus had a righteous anger and we should too. I'll never forget. Right after I became a Christian... If you have an anger problem, you love this passage. Right? I was at a football tailgate (I can't believe I'm saying this), and my team lost. The ref made a bad call, and I was like, "Aah!" and I threw the table over. My wife was like, "What is going on?" I'm like, "Jesus did it." Anybody been there before?

I understand that that passage does remind us that Jesus isn't just soft and tender. He also is firm and has anger and righteous indignation against sin, but I want to show you something here that I think we often overlook in this text. The text says he drove them out. That is not judgment; that's mercy. It would be judgment if the text said, "He left them there in their sin." Mercy is that he drives sin out; judgment is that he leaves us in our sin.

Jesus wants to wake us up and cleanse us from our sins that we don't even know we're committing. It is the mercy of God to confront us in our sin but not leave us there, to also cleanse us from our sin. How horrible would the good news be if Jesus just confronted us in our sin and didn't cleanse us from our sin? The good news is that when Jesus confronts you in your sin, what is he going to do next? He's going to cleanse you from your sin.

That's exactly what we see here. He confronts them in their sin, but then he cleanses them from their sin. What's funny about this passage is he often cleanses areas that religious people don't think need to be cleansed. All of us have those peripheral sins that we'll talk about publicly that are culturally acceptable sins, like, "Golly, I really struggled with greed today. I had two bags of Cheetos instead of one. I should have just had the one." It's a culturally acceptable sin. Right?

What Jesus is doing here is something so offensive, so invasive that these people don't even realize they are committing that sin. He confronts them and challenges them and ultimately cleanses them. About a year ago, I had a situation in my life where I was sinning against somebody grievously without even knowing it. Have you ever been there before? Where you are sinning against somebody, and it's a sin of omission, not a sin of commission.

I wasn't intending, at least in my mind and my heart, to sin against this person, but I was hurting someone deeply. I was just going on about my day and going about my life, and in the middle of my sin, Jesus was kind and merciful to confront me in my sin through that person. They said, "Do you see what you're doing? Do you see how you're hurting me? Do you see what this is doing to our relationship?"

I was absolutely devastated. I just broke into tears. I wept. I felt shame. I felt like God couldn't love me if I was the kind of person who could do something like this to somebody. I felt guilt. I felt dirty. I felt unlovable. I just felt embarrassed that I would do something like this. I felt frustrated, because golly, I felt like I had grown past sinning like that. I felt like I had moved on to more sophisticated ways of sinning. Have you ever felt that?

God, through this person, just confronted me in my sin, and it felt probably much like *this* did. It was shocking. It was so painful, but do you know what else it was? It was cleansing, because that person said, "I know you've sinned against me, but I love you and God loves you and Jesus has cleansed you from your sin." What does that do to me? It's like this text makes me want to get up and leave my

spiritual consumerism behind, leave my sin behind, because Jesus isn't kind and merciful just to confront; he's also kind and merciful to cleanse.

That's exactly what he does in this passage. If Jesus is disciplining you, you can be sure that Jesus loves you. If God is leaving you in your sin, that's when you should be worried. If God is confronting you and cleansing you from your sin, that's when you know you're loved. Jesus cleanses us from our sin. It's painful as we have the idols of our heart and life chased out with a whip of cords by Jesus, as he throws the tables of our lives over, but just like Jesus drives out the moneychangers, he drives the sin out of us.

The incredible thing about Jesus is that these people who are participating in spiritual consumerism, looking for convenience and consumption... It's people like that who he's graciously transforming in this text, saying, "Get up and leave, and don't participate in this kind of spirituality anymore." So, Jesus is a prophet who challenges, he is a priest who cleanses, and...

3. Jesus is a king who builds a temple for God's presence. Look at verse 18 with me. **"So the Jews said to him, 'What sign do you show us for doing these things?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking about the temple of his body."**

The first part of this text shows that the Jews are really offended. Why are they offended? Because Jesus is assuming the authority they thought *they* had. "On what authority are you coming into our religious gathering and telling people that they're sinning by flipping over tables and bringing out a whip of cords? On what authority are you doing these things? Give us a sign that you have the authority that *we* are meant to have. Give us a sign that you're on the same religious platform that *we* are."

But does Jesus give them a sign? No, he doesn't give them a sign. Here's why. I've always wondered why Jesus didn't give them a sign. Do you ever just wonder, "Why didn't Jesus just do it? Wouldn't that make it easier for everybody if he just gave them a sign right here?" I think he doesn't give them a sign because he knows if he gives a sign to a spiritual consumer it will only further domesticate their view of God. I don't want you to miss that. If you give a sign to a spiritual consumer, it only further proves to domesticate their already domesticated view of God.

D.A. Carson says it this way: "A sign that would satisfy them, presumably some sort of miraculous display performed on demand, would have signaled the domestication of God. That sort of 'God' does powerful stunts to maintain allegiance..." Does Jesus need to do a powerful stunt to maintain allegiance? No. That's why he doesn't do a sign. "...and that kind of allegiance is not worth having." A god who performs signs on demand is no god at all; that's called a *pet*.

I have an awesome dog, and his name is Bartlet. I'm not joking you. I named him from the show *The West Wing*. Anybody seen *The West Wing* before? It's my favorite show of all time. He's named after a character in *The West Wing*. He is a fluffy-as-can-be Goldendoodle. He's just an awesome dog. He's smart. He's intelligent. He's just awesome. I've taught him how to do everything except not bark at you when you come to my house. I'm like, "Why can I not teach you to not bark at people when they come to the house?"

I can teach him to high five. I can teach him to do a double high five. He gives me hugs, even, when I want him to. He'll roll over. He'll jump. He'll sit. He'll stand. He'll wait. He'll do all kinds of awesome things. Do you realize sometimes we expect the same thing of God? "Give me a sign...*now*." When we treat God like that, we have a domesticated view of God, not a sovereign Lord. Jesus says, "I refuse to give you a sign, because that will further domesticate your view of God."

When asked the question, "Why doesn't Jesus give a sign?" Calvin said, basically, Jesus believes that his resurrection alone is sufficient to shut the mouths of spiritual consumers. Jesus' person, Jesus' work is sign alone to shut the mouth of spiritual consumers. Spiritual consumers want a sign from Jesus; disciples want Jesus. They demand an immediate sign, but he delays until the resurrection, because God does not operate on our timetable, because he is not pet. *He* doesn't need training; *we* do. We want him to act immediately, but he often says, "Wait. I'm going to give you something so much better."

I'm in a season of life right now, as many of you know, where my wife and I have been walking through a challenging health situation. In May we thought she was diagnosed with cancer. It's called sarcoma. It turns out it's not that. It's something far more complex. Not life-threatening but still really challenging, where she still has a tumor in her leg. She was diagnosed on Memorial Day weekend, and we've been in basically six months or so of pretty intense pain, of pain therapies and medicine and prayer.

This community, like I'll say every single time I talk about this, has been God's presence to us. God has drawn near to us through you. I always, as many times as I can, just want to say thank you for being our family and for being our community. It has been by far the hardest five months of our lives, with no comparison. We thought we had suffered before this through death in the family. Nothing like what we've experienced these last few months.

Macy has her six-month scan this Thursday, and you know what's welling up in my heart? "God, give me a sign. My timetable. Here's what I want coming out of that meeting, God. I want a clear plan of action. I want it to be gone." Is that the way God works? No. Pets work like that. Dogs work like that. God does not work on our timetable, because discipleship is slow, it's painful, but it's transformative.

Spiritual consumers demand all kinds of signs, but there is no better sign to shut the mouths of spiritual consumerism than an empty grave. The best sign is that Jesus defeats Satan, sin, and death and raises to walk, and he invites us into this newness of life. That's better than any kind of sign, because those of us who get Jesus don't only get Jesus; we get the greatest sign of all, which is resurrection from the dead.

Then he says, "Destroy this temple, and I'll raise it up." The only person in the Bible who's fit to build a temple is the king, but Jesus is talking about an entirely different temple. He's talking about his body. That's what the text says. He's not talking about this temple that was the centerpiece of all Jewish life, this thing that all Jewish life centered around, this worship of God and commerce and coming to the temple to offer worship. He says, "Destroy *that* temple. That temple that you think is indispensable is very dispensable."

We see at the cross the body of Christ is where the love of God and the holiness of God collide, where God's love for you is met with God's wrath for you and Jesus becomes God's shield for you so that the wrath of God against you would be exhausted for all time. He proves himself to be so powerful that your sin doesn't keep him dead, but it says he raises himself from the dead. Do you realize that Paul says if Jesus is not raised from the dead, you're still in your sins?

If Jesus just dies at the cross for your sin, you are still in your sin, and you of all people, Paul says, should be pitied. The cross of Christ is not enough to buy you forgiveness if Jesus is not raised from the dead, Paul says. It says in Acts that if Jesus did not raise from the dead, we of all people should

be pitied, and we should eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow we're dead. But the gospel gives us such a better word.

Jesus overcomes Satan, sin, and death through a resurrection of the dead. "I won't stay dead, but the wrath of God toward sinners will be exhausted, and I will resurrect and be King forever. This body that is raised from the dead overcomes this previous temple system that was full of spiritual consumerism and corruption." Jesus says, "My body will be the fulfillment of all that the temple meant. It's the center of true worship. In this new temple, my body, the ultimate sacrifice for sin will take place. Within three days of death, I will rise from the dead, and I will be the true temple of God's presence to all people."

The body of Jesus is the place where heaven and earth collide. Here's what's incredible about this story. It's not just his physical body that becomes the temple, but what else becomes the temple? You and me and God's church. After Jesus was ascended and resurrected, he then dispenses the Spirit in Acts, chapter 2, and Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:16, **"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"**

Because Jesus resurrected from the grave, you have access to the presence of God, not just because you come to some temple but because you know Jesus. In other words, he didn't just raise Jesus' body from the dead; he raised *you* up with him. How exciting is this? This is something worth celebrating. Why is The Village Church a church that's passionate about church planting and the Great Commission and going to the unreached and planting a church wherever we can? Because Jesus is not done building his temple yet.

Jesus is extending his glory to all of creation, and he won't stop until it's done, and neither will we. How exciting is this this morning? Mosaic Church in Richardson and Eastside Community Church in Eastside, Dallas were planted this morning by The Village Church as their first services. That's worth celebrating.

There are people who are not in this room, and I know the campuses are with us too, who are not at Dallas, not at Plano, not at Fort Worth, and not at Southlake anymore, because we believe this mission is true: King Jesus has overcome Satan, sin, and the grave, and he is sending his temple to all neighborhoods and all nations as he establishes his presence among all of us.

Here's what's incredible. How much better is that mission than good ol' spiritual consumerism? Why participate in spiritual consumerism when you can have *this*? A prophet, a priest, and a king. That is so much better than North American cultural Christianity spiritual consumerism. The mission of the King beats spiritual consumerism every day of the week.

So, the conflict in this passage is between spiritual consumerism and true worship, and the only answer to spiritual consumerism is a better view of Jesus. This morning, I want to invite you to have a better view of Christ. This text teaches us a few things, like we've said. He is your prophet. How is Jesus your prophet? Well, maybe this morning the Spirit of Christ is showing you and revealing something to you about your nature.

Maybe it's a sin you were totally unaware of walking in here. Maybe it's a sin you're all too familiar with, and you're being confronted with your unrighteousness, confronted with your unholiness, and you're realizing the separation between God and man is far further than you ever could have imagined. The depth of your depravity is far more than you ever would want anyone else in this room to know, and Jesus, in his kindness, in his mercy, is confronting you in your sin.

The good news is that Jesus isn't just a prophet; Jesus is also priest, and as priest, he makes sacrifice for sinners and cleanses sinners from all unrighteousness and all wickedness. We don't have to meet with God in the temple anymore, because Christ has made us clean, and through the cross he offers cleansing to us from our sin.

Maybe today Jesus wants to offer you cleansing from your sin, maybe for the first time. Maybe you've never placed your faith in Jesus. Maybe you've never trusted in the cross of Christ, but you're more aware now than you ever have been of your wickedness and unrighteousness and his beauty, glory, mercy, and forgiveness extended to you through Christ.

Maybe you know Jesus, but you're just becoming acutely aware in this moment, like I was last year of a grievous sin I needed to be cleansed of. I want to remind you this morning that Jesus is your priest, and it is merciful for him to purge that sin from your midst. Finally, he is King. He's the one who builds the temple, gives us the Spirit, and will do so until the day he comes, and this mission is better than any form of spiritual consumerism.

The last thing I want to say is this: spiritual consumerism is marked by an interest in what Jesus does, not who Jesus is. This morning, I want you to be intensely interested not just in what Jesus

does for you but in who Jesus is for you. The worshipers in Jerusalem were coming just to commemorate previous acts of God, and they were missing the presence of God in their midst. In other words, they wanted to worship God for what he does, not experience who he is.

John's purpose in writing this for me, for you, and for our community, I believe, is so that you might simply see and savor Christ today, that you would just love who he is. If you continue participating in spiritual consumerism, which we're so prone to in our culture, the wind is going to change, and you'll need something else next week, next month, next year...maybe a different church, maybe a different preacher, maybe a different podcast, maybe a different discipleship program, and your felt need is going to change.

Spiritual consumerism changes week to week, but eventually it vanishes and dies, and you'll be left with nothing. Christ never changes. So this morning I want to invite you to see and savor him. Spiritual consumerism doesn't last; Jesus does. Let's pray.

To you, Father, and to the Son and to the Spirit, we offer honor and glory and praise. You, Father, have lavished your love out upon us in Christ. We who were wicked and ungodly and unrighteous, you have made a way for us in Christ. That through his death, burial, and resurrection we get to participate in life with you is gift upon gift, something we could have never earned, something we could have never done, something we never could have bought for ourselves, but you have seen fit in Christ to buy reconciliation for us on our behalf as a free gift of mercy.

Where there might be forms of spiritual consumerism in our lives, whether we know it or not, would you just be faithful today to cleanse us of that? There's no song, there's no prayer, there's no sermon that can be efficacious and can work to do that. Only your Spirit can. Where we see the visible, you know the invisible. Would you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, simply work among us, purge sin from our lives, from our minds, and from our hearts, and help us to see Jesus as beautiful and worthy and glorious. It's in his name we pray, amen.