

“Jesus, Rock & Redeemer”

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; **John 2:13-22 (Sermon)**

Our scripture readings this morning opened in the familiar.

Exodus 20: 1-17 is after all one of the most familiar passages in the scripture.

Even if we do not know what is known as the “Decalogue” or the Biblical laws relating to ethics and worship by heart, we know that there are 10 commandments.

We know that they are not suggestions from God, but indeed commands from Him, and that they have a foundational role in both Judaism and Christianity.

In them we find the command to worship God only.

And we have commandments that cover idolatry, keeping the Sabbath holy, blaspheming, murder, adultery, theft, lying and dishonesty, and coveting.

It is an incredibly broad list that is excellent instruction for holy living and for striving toward God and for living in community together.

But they are not all easy commands to keep.

And they are read more like a top 10 of what God expected His people to do.

If they were easy for people to do, Jesus wouldn't have needed to become so upset when he found the money changers in the temple in John 2:13-22.

John tells us that the money changers had turned God's house into a marketplace. They had cheapened it and sullied it.

Remember, the temple was the place God had prescribed for the God of Israel and His people to meet. It was a place where sacrifices and prayer were offered during religious festivals and special times in people's lives.

It was a place for thanksgiving, prayer, and worship.

It was a place of pouring out hearts to the Living God, the one whom the Psalmist had declared even “The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork” (Psalm 19)

The temple was a holy place because it was where humanity and divinity met.

This was not just any place and we do not treat God and His sanctuary lightly. The people are humbled because God has asked us to come in and humbly and reverently we enter in.

In joy we meet God and one another.

In this moment Jesus says to those money changers, by defiling the temple you have essentially broken the spirit of the first commandment, to “come to God right”.

Jesus addresses the money changers in such anger because they had a superficial religiosity masquerading as the real thing.

Jesus says to the assembled worshippers as Jeremiah, Isaiah, Micah, and John the Baptist before. They had all spoken words of warning to the people that they were just going through the motions of worship without their lives exhibiting the deep commitment and love God desired of them.

John says something startling to us about this moment.

That the disciples remembered that it was written “Zeal for your house will consume me.” John 2 20 (NRSV).

This is not just Jesus getting angry. This is Jesus upending a system that essentially looked like a cubic zirconia masquerading as a diamond.

The God who laid out instructions for Holy living in the commandments of Exodus.

Corporate worship should be about us all coming together for everyone’s good so that all might be able to touch the heart of God.

Jesus proclaims that there is something that no death, nor corruption, nor man’s inability to grasp the importance of what God offers in the unity of worship.

Jesus says essentially that my Father gave you this temple to commune together with Him and it was not properly cared for.

Now I will give you a temple that you may think you’ve destroyed but in three days I will raise it up.

Jesus says He is offering the temple of His very own body. He will offer what we cannot corrupt.

Humans in John were in the place where humanity and divinity were supposed to meet - the temple. Instead, humanity’s sins were on such display in this moment.

Jesus looks at the brokenness in the temple and essentially declares you need me!

The God who the psalmist declares “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple”

There is a universal problem between us and God. God wants us near and we have difficulty following his basic rules. The problem wasn’t the law. The problem wasn’t God. The problem was us.

And Jesus offers Himself up as a sacrifice for us. To make the bridge between sinful humanity and Our Holy God.

That’s the message of the cross. That’s the message that is at the center of the cross of Easter.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 tells us that “the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Why does the world create a big 6 foot rabbit that brings candy at Easter time? Because the cross is foolishness to the world.

Every time we celebrate Holy Communion, the words of Jesus are repeated:

“This cup is the New Covenant sealed with my blood.” Luke 22:20.

And ***“This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”*** Luke 22:19

Jesus’ body and His blood redeemed sinful humanity. “Redemption”. That’s a powerful noun in the English language. It means “the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment, or clearing a debt.”

Jesus paid the price to purchase a place for us in heaven.

He redeemed and made right the relationship between us and God.

He becomes the chief cornerstone or “rock” of the new temple.

The words of the psalmist “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer” should become a prayer that we should pray.

Lord, let my walk with you be so close with you that others can see You are My Rock and My Redeemer.

Let my walk with You be so wonderful and pure that my words and my heart are acceptable to you.

In a few minutes we will celebrate the Lord’s Supper, or Communion.

The questions before every human being are:

- How can I have a seat at the table of Jesus Christ?
- How can I ensure that Jesus is indeed my redeemer?
- When I have hit the ‘rock bottom’ of any given situation, how can I stand upon The Rock that is Jesus?

And the answer is Jesus offers all of the incredible benefits of new life in Him.

He offers to redeem us from the wages of sin, to literally ensure us a place in His Kingdom.

He offers this to us not because we deserve it, but because He looks beyond our faults and sees our needs.

He offers to anyone who asks the chance to become their Savior and their Lord.

Have you accepted Jesus this morning? Are you walking with Him as one who has been redeemed?

If not, I beg you to ask Jesus to save you from the penalty of your sins.

You need to do it today, because none of us is assured of tomorrow.

See me after the benediction and tell me you want Jesus to be your savior. Don't put off the most important decision you will ever make.

And for those of us who are saved. Perhaps you made the decision to accept Christ into your heart long ago.

Scripture says that we are only saved once, but each time we take communion we are renewing and remembering our covenant, redeeming relationship with Jesus.

Every time we take communion we proclaim that Jesus is our Savior and the Lord of our life.

Each time we take communion we take a moment to reclaim the benefits Jesus offered when He stretched out His arms upon the cross and offered Himself for us.

Every time we partake in the communion meal at the table of Jesus Christ we renew our commitment to Jesus and remind ourselves that Jesus is our Rock of Ages and we are His faithful disciples.

Every time you share in the Cup and Bread of Christ you declare to Jesus and yourself that you indeed want "Just a Closer Walk" with Him!

AMEN