

Sunday, March 3, 2024 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Bible Study
Third Sunday in Lent
“I Will Raise Up”
John 2:13-22

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants discuss these questions: “How do you respond when you are angry? Do you shout? Curse? Throw things? Stew in silence? Calmly express your feelings?”

John 2:13-22 Context. In this week’s reading, John describes Jesus “cleansing the Temple” of the sellers and money-changers (local currencies had to be exchanged for proper “Temple” currency) who were making a profit on the sacrifices that everyone was required to make. John uses the term “the Jews” to describe Jesus’ opponents and enemies, as though all Jews hated Jesus. Jesus’ opponents were clearly the religious leaders, but not all Jews hated Jesus. After all, Jesus himself was a Jew, as were all of his earliest followers. Jesus also speaks of the destruction of the Temple, which angered the religious leaders who lived off the profits generated by Temple business, and who equated criticizing the Temple with speaking against God.

Read John 2:13-22

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the text?

Read John 2:13-22 again -

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the “synoptic” gospels because they are similar in the way they present Jesus’ life and ministry. John is different. The writer of John seems more concerned with theology than chronology. John places the narrative of Jesus going to the temple in Jerusalem and “clearing the temple” early in Jesus’ ministry; whereas, the synoptic gospels place the passage during the last week of Jesus’ earthly life. Why do you suppose the writer of John’s Gospel chose to do this? (The Preaching notes suggest that John’s agenda begins with worship – and having a “right spirit” for worship.)
- Where and when do you normally worship? What helps you feel like you are in a “right spirit” for worship?

- In John 2:16, the New Revised Standard Version quotes Jesus as saying “Stop making my Father’s House a marketplace. The Common English Bible uses the phrase “a place of business.” Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase says, “a shopping mall”.
 - Why do you suppose Jesus was so angry?
 - Would Jesus turn over the tables of a Christmas mission market in your church? How about the youth group selling tickets to a spaghetti dinner to raise money for their mission trip? What if the youth were selling tickets to a fundraiser for a ski trip?
 - What constitutes using the church as a marketplace or a shopping mall?
- In John 2:18, after Jesus drives out the people selling animals for sacrifice and turns over the tables of the money changers, some of the Jewish temple authorities challenge Jesus about showing a “sign” (his prophetic credentials).
 - What is Jesus’ response in John 2:19-22?
 - How did the temple authorities misunderstand Jesus’ words?
 - Do readers of the gospels sometimes misunderstand (or misuse) Jesus’ words today?
 - What can help us make decisions about how to read and understand Jesus’ words today?
- In Christian tradition, every Sunday is a celebration of Jesus’ resurrection. How can our worship help raise us from the things in the world that threaten to tear us down? How might we invite others to worship with us and experience the joy of Resurrection?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

Gracious God, we are thankful for the blessing of being able to worship freely. Help us to turn from those things that distract or demean us and enter worship with a right spirit so that we may be strengthened to serve you. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.