

The Mind of Christ - Week 24
August 14, 2019

There are things that I call oddities in the life of Christ. There are many things that are odd from the standpoint of being miraculous in that way, but there are some things that are just put into the text where I think, “Where did that come from?”

We are now on the next section that is found in John 2 and it is only one verse – verse 12. Remember, the last thing we talked about was the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee.

<http://www.christians-standing-with-israel.org/israel-map-jesus-christ.html>



Cana is toward the north, and is inland between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. If you go northeast up to the top of the Sea of Galilee you will come to Capernaum. It looks to me it could be a day's journey if you walked maybe 20 miles in a day at least. So this is the scene we have to have in our mind here.

It says, "After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days."

Now, this is curious to me, because that's the only thing it says. They left Cana where the wedding feast was and they went to Capernaum for a few days. So, I have lots of questions for it.

I wrote in my notes that Jesus and his entourage head from Cana to Capernaum. The travelers included His mother, brothers, His disciples; being perhaps it's 10 or 11 people. We don't know exactly how many, but we know the brothers who have been named, His mother, and the 4 disciples that he had at that point. (All the disciples had not been called yet.) So there were probably about 10-11 people in this entourage going from Cana to Capernaum.

His brothers were not believers in Him although it *seems* to indicate that they were with Him at the Wedding feast since they went from there to Capernaum with Him. So what would they be thinking about Jesus, the elder half-brother? What did they think of Jesus having disciples because now, is their brother a Rabbi in their mind? Having disciples would probably make Jesus a Rabbi. What did they think about the "wine" incident? Did they realize that He had turned the water into wine? I speculated that it may not have been evident to everyone in that scene what He had actually done. And, I am guessing that the journey took no more than a day by foot not being sure of the how the terrain would be. Capernaum is north of Galilee, not right **on** the Sea, and it's a fishing town.

Sometimes our true understanding of Jesus' mind comes from seeing these more mundane decisions. When we see Jesus' decision that He made to go from Cana to Capernaum with His family and His disciples with him, this seems mundane, but what can we imagine about Jesus' mind by these little decisions? For example:

Why did He choose to go to Capernaum?

Why did His mother and brothers go with Him? (His brothers didn't yet believed in Him)

Nazareth was only a couple of miles south of Cana so they could have easily gone back to Nazareth which was His home. So instead of going back home, why did they take a day's journey north?

Why did His new disciples go there with Him?

It says that they stayed a few days. What did they do there?

Did they visit friends, extended family, did He teach or do any miracles while they were there?

Where did they stay?

There are so many questions.

Why was this ever included in the record? Why is this important to put in there anyway since we have no context or understanding of what they did?

The text says that He went *down* to Capernaum when geographically he went **up** to Capernaum.

Brian: *It was downhill* to get to Capernaum.

Rod: That's right. It was downhill. They were going down, basically, down to sea level.

We see the same thing in John 2:13 when it says, "He went up to Jerusalem" although Jerusalem is South of Galilee. *He went up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem is on a hill.* The "up" is elevation, not direction. The next verse says "[The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.](#)"

So he went **down** to Capernaum because he was going down-hill. I just find these little things interesting regarding the accuracy of the text. It shows that whoever wrote this knew what he was talking about even if it may not immediately *seem* right to us.

So at this early stage of His ministry, we see a transition from family to disciples. There are a couple of others, but this is one of the **few** places where we see family and disciples together. And where He spends the majority of His time is now changing. He would not be at home very often any more. He would not be spending most of His time with His family, so the 12+ some women would become his traveling companion and the home of Lazarus in Bethany would be His retreat. He would spend time there.

Perhaps this short trip to Capernaum was a time of transition for Jesus. Perhaps He tried to explain to His family that things were changing and that His focus and mission was shifting. Leaving father and mother, seeking a wife (the church) and clinging to her was his new focus.

Maybe, and this is just in my mind ... I don't know any more about it than you do ... but putting all this together, it seems logical to me that Jesus knew that things were going to change. This might have been a last little trip He was going to take with His family.

Brian: When Mary said they had run out of wine, Jesus said 'my time hasn't come yet', but what we don't know is if Jesus had some communication with God. It seems that something has happened that He now has permission to "start his ministry". I think that when He performed His **first** miracle, that began His ministry.

Rod: Yes. And you'll find Him later on, returning to Capernaum and Bethsaida which becomes a kind of "home base" for Him later on in His ministry. We will see Him go back to Jerusalem in the next story. But maybe He's scoping that out as "where will we set up base here for my Northern office as opposed to the Southern office down in Jerusalem".

Let's go to the next story. The next story picks up in John 2:13. This is the story of the first Passover and the cleansing of the Temple. I really, really like this section because it really shows us a lot about the mind of Christ.

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went **up** to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵ And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; ¹⁶ and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house [f] a house of merchandise." ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume me." ¹⁸ The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us [g] as your authority for doing these things?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this [h] temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this [i] temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But He was speaking of the [j] temple of His body. ²² So when, therefore, He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Let's jump into this. This is filled with so much. Again, this is the first Passover in the ministry of Jesus and the cleansing of the Temple. This one is heavy, and it is filled with great insight into the "mind of Christ". The occasion is the Passover. It is the first of three ... possibly four ... Passovers in the ministry of Jesus during his earthly ministry. It is like bookends marking His time from Passover to Passover. Remember He was killed right after the Passover, so the Passover becomes a way to mark the time of His ministry. He is beginning His ministry about the time of one Passover and will end His ministry at another Passover.

There are at least three Passovers – maybe four, and then the Lamb of God is sacrificed. This is the "Pasca" (πάσχα) according to Judaism. "Pasca" refers to the meal, the day, the festival or the sacrifice.) It means to skip over, to hop or hobble or limp: even to dance. Maybe you hop around to dance – I don't know. The word is also used in 1 Kings 18:26.

²⁵ So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it." ²⁶ Then they took the ox which [k] was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, "O Baal, answer us." But there was no voice and no one answered. **And they [l] leaped about the altar** which [m] they made. ²⁷ It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened." ²⁸ So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. ²⁹

It described the prophets of Baal dancing on the altar trying to get Baal to respond on Mount Carmel when they had the contest with Elijah.

The Passover was when the blood of the lamb without defect was smeared on the doorframes and the doorposts of the Israelite's houses in Egypt causing the angel of death to pass over and not kill their firstborn. The lamb substituted for the first born.

I learned something recently that isn't in my notes. I didn't know it then. I learned recently about some of the idolatrous practices of people back there in that time. And one of the common idolatrous practices was to offer your firstborn in sacrifice to the gods.

When God took out all the firstborn ones in this plague, He removed their ability to sacrifice them to their gods. It was another way of saying to them, "Look. You are depending on **your** gods. You go *so far* as to even *offer your firstborn sons to the gods!* I'll take away your sacrifices, and *then* how are you going to placate your gods?" I had never made that connection before, and, again, I cannot attest to it 100% but it is interesting that offering children as sacrifices was common.

So the lamb was substituted for the firstborn. Jesus, being the firstborn, now was to be the Lamb slain and His blood smeared on the door. Surely, this feast was highly personal to Jesus since after 1,500 years of watching the Jews celebrate in all kinds of ways, and with all kinds of attitudes, from flippant to reverent, He was going to perfectly fulfill its meaning. Sometimes I think we miss the idea that these things that pre-figured the sacrifice of Jesus ... the Passover ... the Day of Atonement, that Jesus from heaven has been watching these things every year enacted on earth and played out on earth knowing that this was a foreshadowing of what He was going to go through one day. And to see the various ways that people did it, I mean the individuals who participated in that. Surely some of them did it whether as a ritual without meaning while some may have taken it to heart and it meant a lot to them. But Jesus observed all of that. And now, Jesus is getting very close. He is now on earth participating in these Passovers Himself.

However, this does not seem to be His focus this day. In other words, right now His focus is not on the Passover, per se, but on the lack of respect shown to His Father and His Father's house. I want to look at how Jesus viewed all of this stuff that was going on in the temple – the selling of the animals, the exchanging of money and all of that.

The word "Temple" is the word "hieron" (ἱερόν). It's a sacred place. It is the entire precinct as opposed to just the actual building "naos" or (ναός). There are two words for Temple. One is the whole Temple complex, while the other is the actual Temple building with the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The word "naos" means "to dwell".

So, Jesus on earth knew Herod's Temple, described by Josephus. There were three parts to this Temple. There was the Temple proper (the naos – the actual building) where only the priests could go. Jesus never entered that part of the temple while He was on earth. There were two circular courts around that Temple; the one closest to the Temple was for the men, and the other one, further away, was for the women.

Outside of **that** parameter was where the Gentiles could go. And remember that they accused Paul one time of taking Titus into the Temple, but he actually didn't because Titus was a Gentile. So Paul could not take him into that place where the **Jewish** men could go.

It was probably the outer court, not the inner court of the men or the outer court of the women, or even outside that parameter that they were setting all the booths up for selling all these things. I'm not sure why oxen and doves were being sold because this was the Passover, and there was only one sacrifice for the Passover— the lamb. Neither oxen or doves were used in the Passover.

The Money exchangers exchanged Roman money for Temple money. There were two different currencies; the Roman money and the Temple money. Most people just used the Roman money like Jesus did when he gave the coin with Caesar's inscription on it in **Luke 20:22-25** "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" ²³ But He detected their trickery and said to them, ²⁴ "Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." ²⁵ And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Roman money was not allowed to be spent on Jewish sacrifices, so they would exchange it for Jewish money that had been coined by the Jewish leadership so that they could buy the sacrificial animals. There was a great opportunity here for fraud, for graft and this must have been a very, very chaotic scene.

Perhaps there were four Passovers during Jesus' ministry.

There was this one in John 2:13. "The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

There was one mentioned in John 5:1 though the feast is not identified. It isn't "said" to be a Passover **feast**, they don't identify it, but that *could* be a second Passover.

John 6:4 says, "Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵ Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"

And then there is the Passover near His death in Matthew 26:17-21

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸ And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'" ¹⁹ The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. ²⁰ Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. ²¹ As they were eating, He said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me.

So there were possibly 4 Passovers from the beginning of Jesus' ministry up to His death at the end of His ministry. That would make His ministry about a three year period.

Josephus estimates that there were over a quarter of a million sacrifices made during this week. Can you imagine 250,000 sacrifices being made during this week? It is likely that the oxen and the doves were for different types of offerings because they were in Jerusalem and they didn't just celebrate the Passover. They also had Thank offerings, Guilt offerings, and other offerings that they could make any time during the year. Certainly some people made these other offerings and that is why they sold the oxen and doves. There was also the dedication of the Firstborn. This was a very busy time in Jerusalem like Jesus went through when He was a baby.

Imagine the amount of blood flowing around the Temple. Imagine the smell and the flies. I mention this because I grew up in a family that had a meat-packing company. My granddad and his brothers, and later, one of the brothers and one of his sons had the meat-packing business. I used to hang out as a little boy at the Appitorium. The appitorium was where they slaughtered the animals and packaged the meat, so I got to see the whole process of cows and pigs being slaughtered, and I guarantee that they don't do it that way anymore. I **do** remember that the carcasses and the stuff that they couldn't use in the process would end up in the back of the appitorium. They would sit there in the hot sun for a little while before they could be carried off by rail and sold to a rendering plant where they would cook it down and make dog food. I can still close my eyes and smell that smell of being in that place, and know the amount of blood that flowed down through the drains underneath to be sold for the dog food as well. But I cannot imagine 250,000 animals being slaughtered.

The Temple taxes and other exchanges regarding the money had to be made in Temple coinage, not Roman coins. There were people who sold and exchanged the coins during this religious and sacred time, blatantly profaning God's Holy feast and worship. There is a major principle of Holiness here. And this is one of the major lessons and response that Jesus had to these events that were going on and are definitely an insight into the mind of Christ.

We must devote ourselves specifically on occasions, privately and publically, to activities that allow us to focus on God, His Son and the Spirit. Now, I **do** believe that we can worship God 24/7; and that anywhere we are, and anything we do is worship to God. But there are times when there are **special times** of being in the presence of God. I think the Lord's Supper is one of those times. I think that when we enter into prayer it is a special time of devotion to God. I think in our day and age when we have made 'everything the same', that we have taught our children not to be reverent at certain times. We haven't taught them to honor certain things that God has told us to do. People have a hard time today, getting serious – even in very sacred moments.

I think *this* story helps us to understand Jesus' mindset of saying that there are just *some* things that you **do not** do, they are an *affront* to God, and it is certainly going to come out in this story. We need to be able to learn how to focus on God, His Son and His Spirit. There are special times that distractions are to be avoided. There are times that we just don't **need** distractions. The discipline of focus is to be guarded. These times are set apart for consecrated devotion. They are essential to our well-being as God's children. There are times that we just need to get quiet and be with the Lord.

The chaos of this scene must have greatly irritated Jesus. Where was God in all of this? This was not about putting God in the center; it was about **profit!** It was about **financial gain!** **It was about keeping up appearances, and about routine, ritual and form. But - where was the heart?** The intent of the Passover was lost in all this confusion. Jesus' spirit must have been **greatly** aggravated. He was stirred up. He was bothered. His ability to focus on the meaning of the event was **disturbed**. *He wanted to defend the honor of His Father*. Now, when you see Jesus get **this** angry over something, and there are certain times in the life of Jesus where it says He was indignant, He was angry. This is one of them! And He does this twice. He does this at the beginning of His ministry AND at the end of his ministry. Those are the two Passovers He observed in Jerusalem.

When others complied with the status quo or the cultural norm, Jesus saw this as a shifting cultural norm of the Temple, just like I believe we're seeing today a shift in the cultural norms of how people do church, how they do their relationship with God, and we are NOT becoming, in my opinion, *more* devoted to God, *more* sacred, or *more* Holy. We are breaking down the distinctions between the Holy and the profane. Those things are broken down today.

This event, I believe, shows us Christ's mind. *Jesus fought back*. He fought back against what He saw. He was *counter-cultural*. He was *cross-cultural* (to use the term I used on Sunday). He was a rebel ... with a very distinct cause. He **knew** what was proper, what was **right**, and this was **not**! He took action. He responded. He didn't sit on the sidelines. He stood up causing more chaos in the short term, to remove the chaos.

Sometimes you have to cause a little more chaos in order to remove the chaos. That's what is happening in Philadelphia right now. "**Suspect surrenders after 6 officers are wounded in Philadelphia standoff**" <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/police-fired-upon-philadelphia-they-respond-shooting-incident-n1042436> - 8/14/19. I guarantee those police are creating a lot of chaos in order to relieve the chaos and it will be over when the last shot is fired. This is what we have to do. Sometimes the surgeon has to create chaos in order to heal the body. And that is what Jesus is doing.

Jesus made a scourge. It's the same word used that is about the scourge that was used on Him. This is interesting to me. It's a scourge of cords, also called a flagellum, a whip or a lash. He probably did **not** put the bone in it as He made it very quickly. But Romans used this in public punishment. So this describes the same instrument that was used on Jesus at His crucifixion.

How was the scourge in the hands of Jesus different than being in the hands of the Roman soldiers?

First, there is no evidence that Jesus beat anyone with it. There is no evidence of anybody being hurt. He swung it at them ... we know that. But there is no evidence that Jesus beat them with it. Rather, He used it to drive them out of the Temple, including the animals.

Secondly, they deserved this treatment and He did **not** deserve it. Jesus was upholding the honor of God by sacrificing Himself, not only without blemish, but with dignity and holiness and reverence. And there was nothing dignified, holy or reverent in the scene at the Temple. So it was a mockery.

Thirdly, Jesus' anger was righteous. In His anger, He did not sin or cause permanent harm to anyone. His was a controlled anger. It was directed by the Holy Spirit. The anger of the Jews towards Him bore **none** of these characteristics.

What was Jesus thinking? The coins were poured out. The tables were overturned. The people were scattered. The dove handlers were commanded to turn the doves loose. (I wonder if they did). How must Jesus have looked to these people?

Carole – The Jews were not allowed to lend money to their fellow Jews in return for interest. And here, they are not even providing a service, they're just switching coins and over charging. And I'll never forget when you were teaching us about being in contempt of court, and that would put you in jail. They were in contempt of His Father.

Rod: Absolutely. And Jesus is the judge on this occasion, the gavel is coming down and He is holding them accountable for what they are doing.

So, I wonder how he looked to them. I think He looked like a mad-man. I think He was wild. I think there was fire in His eyes. I think Jesus was *determined*. For someone who just came from Cana, (where His time had not yet come) and He had told everyone to keep what he did 'quiet', *He's not keeping it quiet now!* This was not done in a corridor. He wasn't going around whispering in everyone's ear, "Please leave. This is my Father's house."

If He did not want to call attention to Himself, then *why is he doing this?* And why is He doing it in the Temple of all places? He could **not** have done it in a more public place in Israel!

And, again, the contrast is amazing to me because a few days before He's whispering, "*Don't tell anyone about this. Keep it quiet.*" But now ... Surely, He knew this would get Him immediate, focused attention! Everybody was going to be looking at Him. This makes little sense to me. I am not following His thought process well. Except, in reflection about this, I don't think at that moment He cared a bit about it. I think His total focus was on defending His Father.

Brian: There was something of great power in this. If I got up there, even if I had a bullwhip, two people would grab me from behind and that would be it. And yet, Jesus had so much power that no one touched Him. They realized that there was something in the authority of the way he did it. In Mark 11:28, they asked Him "By what authority do you do these things?" There was something of authority in the way He did things.

Rod: Oh, absolutely. My son, Timothy posted the other day that he was going to start going to the gym. He used to have a very active job as Assistant Manager at Lowes where he ran around all day. But since that, he has a desk job and he's put on some pounds. All these new clothes that he's bought are kind of bulging a little bit, so he's determined to go to the gym. This is really hard because he gets up early in the morning. He had been in the Marines for a little while, but they booted him out for medical issues. So I posted on his page that I could get up and go over there and pretend that I'm a Drill Sargent, scream, holler and spit in his face a lot. But he answered, "With all due respect, dad, I don't think you have the intimidation factor to be a Drill Sargent! I don't think anybody is going to buy it." And he's probably right. I would not be a good Drill Instructor.

Anyway, with emotions this nature flowing, producing the chemicals in His brain, when I think about the Mind of Christ, His brain ... His mind, the thinking part, was filled with adrenalin. I guarantee He is soaking up the chemicals in His brain. And the chemicals within His brain that came from such emotion – what possible effect was it having on Him?

I know what effect adrenalin is on us. It hypes us up. It's the fight or flight kind of thing that we go through. Sometimes people can get hyper-focused when they have that adrenalin. They may have more strength when they have the adrenalin in their system.

So, how did Jesus calm down after this? I used to have to go in and de-brief the firefighters when they had all these chemicals running through their bodies. I would help to calm them down. I wonder if Jesus needed a de-briefing after this.

Jean: We do not have a building like the Temple that we have to defend anymore but are there **not** things that we should maybe act as Jesus did being very concerned and angry about? There might be many things today that I think I should have those feelings toward.

Rod: I agree. Sometimes there is a profound sense of injustice that we feel with a need to right a wrong. I would assume that when Jesus left the Temple, it returned pretty much to the way it was. I don't think when He drove them out their hearts changed much.

Jesus referred to the Temple as "the house of My Father". Back in Luke 2:49 Jesus made a similar reference to being in His Father's house (or about his Father's business) when he was 12-years old. His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house,"

How easily man forgets whose house he lives in. This is God's world. This is the Father's Church. This is God's Nation. These are God's children. We somehow believe that **some** of this is **ours**. These men had started to stake out their claims on ground that did not belong to them and ground that had been dedicated to God.

When Solomon dedicated this temple 1,000 years earlier, he prayed to God and this is what he said, "That their eyes might be opened toward this house night and day, toward the place of which you said, "My name shall be there to listen to the prayers which thy servant shall pray toward this place." 1 Kings 8:29

Solomon envisioned that not only the Jews but all peoples of the earth would come to the Temple. He said in 2 Chronicles 6:32-3 "Also concerning the foreigner who is not from Your people Israel, when he comes from a far country for Your great name's sake and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray toward this house, ³³ then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, and fear You as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that **this house which I have built is called by Your name.**"

Solomon dedicated this house with 22,000 oxen, 120,000 sheep, yet those on **that** day had no regard for all of this. Look at how far they had come from the day that Solomon had dedicated the "original" temple to where they were **NOW**. In Jesus day, it was Herod's temple. But look how far they had fallen. There was no respect for the Father. They had no idea that this was the place from which **God** would hear the prayers of the nations.

Jesus said they had made it a house of merchandise. The Greek word that is used for merchandise is the word “εμπορεύματα” from which we get the word Emporium. This word is used by Paul in 2 Peter 2:3 about **making merchandise of (exploiting) them**. He said, “**and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.**” Men will make merchandise of you.

Some people will make merchandise of others. We call it “trafficking”... trafficking. And we use that “not in a good way” these days. It was not just that they were **there** in the Temple courts. That wasn’t the issue. But **they were taking advantage** of people.

Jesus’ sense of justice kicked in. He was there to protect the weak and the vulnerable. It wasn’t **just** that this was God’s house that they were doing it in. But they were abusing **people** – taking advantage of **people**. He knew that these people were not just providing a benevolent service so that they could by their sacrifices with Temple money. They were in cahoots with the Jewish rulers to make a profit off of those who came to worship. This got Jesus “mad”. He is opposed to His house, for the message being co-opted for dishonest gain. They were taking advantage of **people** in God’s house of prayer; not an emporium. Jesus cleansed the house.

Politicians often do this. They make our country a house of merchandise.

It is also interesting that Jesus disciples associate Psalm 69:9 “**For zeal for Your house has consumed me**” with this event. This is an imprecatory psalm. It’s the kind of Psalm where David or those who wrote the psalm would call down fire from their enemies; that invoked judgment, calamity, or curses, upon one's enemies ... to take them out. And this psalm is being remembered by the Apostles in John 2:17, **His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house will consume me.”** This is an appeal to God to deal severely with our enemies.

In the Psalm, and when you see a part of a psalm, Scripture or quote, you have to read the whole context of it. They are not just ripping prooftexts out of the psalm or Scripture. They are bringing something out of it but the entire psalm is probably important to the context.

In the Psalm, David is expressing his mistreatment and how it is because of his great **zeal** for God and His house. In other words, David is being mistreated because he has **zeal** for God’s house. The rest of the verse says, “And the reproaches of those who reproach you, (or thee) have fallen on me.” That is significant because David is saying, “when I have zeal for your house, and people reproach me, they reproach You, God; but now those reproaches have fallen on me.”

The word “reproach” means disgrace, shame, scorn or taunting”. Those who directed taunts at God the Father, through their action by not showing respect for Him, had now to deal with the Father’s Son.

Here is the picture that I get from the cleansing of the Temple. Jesus stepped between those who taunted His Father, and His Father, to defend His Father’s honor and His Father’s house.

Jesus is the One who says, “You are disgracing, and you are mocking My Father, and I am going to step between you and Him, and I will defend My Father. And when we get *that* kind of picture in our heads; **that** leads to your question about “what kinds of things do we do? Certainly, when the Lord’s name is taken in vain, what do we do? Do we step between God and the taunter to defend the honor of our Father? What do we do?”

The word used in this text to describe Jesus’ response is the word “zeal”. Zelos (ζηλος) means heat. Zeal in a favorable sense means ardor, jealousy or fervent mind. It is indignation. The context determines whether something is good or it is bad. You can be a zealot for bad things as well as good things.

So, what stirred Jesus? What was it that stirred up His Spirit? What inflamed Jesus? What was His passion? This strikes at the heart of His thinking? The Mind of Christ is one of zealousness for anything that glorifies or upholds the honor, dignity, integrity or holiness of God. Jesus’ mind is so laser-focused on this **one** thing – honoring His Father, and anything that comes or comes into His life that is dishonoring to His Father, Jesus is upset about it.

True character is to feel strongly and act boldly regarding **things that matter**. We spend too much time on petty things. That is one of the reasons why I am so absolutely fed-up sick with politics in our country... because so much of what is said is petty. I wish we could get back to some serious stuff. Oh, it may have some serious bone in it somewhere, but all the stuff that is being said around it is petty. That’s my opinion.

Jesus sense of purpose, justice, vision, and direction propelled His life. His sacrifice of time and energy, and even His life was for things that **matter**. To see something that is just **wrong**, and devoting yourself to doing something **about** it, is Christlike.

But the passion is ultimately for **God’s** honor, not mine. Is God honored? And what dishonors God dishonors me. You know, we’re offended by a lot of things. People get offended by a lot of things. If the **only** thing we were offended by is what offends God, we’d probably be okay. But we get offended by a lot of things that have nothing to do with God. Zeal is about feeling...

Jean: You know, here it says that zeal is the fervor of love. But please explain a little more about what “offends” God. What does “offend” mean? What is offensive to God?

Rod: What is offensive to God ... what is abhorrent to God? What is it that causes God to be disgusted?

1. The evil in **Noah’s day** – the thoughts of men’s mind were evil continuously and He grieved that He even made man.
2. It was offensive to God **to have other gods before Him**. To put something between us and God that we made more important than Him – that’s offensive to God. That gets Him going.
3. **The Tower of Babel**. God drew a line.
4. **Sodom and Gomorrah**
5. **Abortion** is in that category. That is offensive to the God who is life.
6. **Homosexuality** is an abomination to God.

But again, contextually here, we have to see what Jesus **did** with the very people he is driving out of the temple. What did He **do** for them? He gave His **life** for them! He **died** for them!

A lot of times we can feel strongly about the things that offend God, but how do we respond to it? If we respond to it simply by making a whip, and there are times when we need to have some verbal whips to say, “This is wrong”, but we have to follow that up with what Jesus did ultimately, and that is that Jesus **died** for that sin because He loved the sinner so much – these people who are doing these horrible things.

There has to be this whole picture because what has happened so many times is that people have had a good zealous thought about God or something, and they went about it in a way like shooting abortion doctors. You could say, “Well, that guy is a zealot”. He is zealous for God’s honor. But that isn’t how He told us to go about changing the sin of the world. We don’t go around shooting sinners. We have to take the entire package, the whole thing.

But the assault on values calls for zeal. I believe we should get zealous when values are assaulted. The lostness of mankind should bring out the zeal of God’s people. It should absolutely stir us up to know that people are dying and going to Hell.

It needs to get down into the depths of our being. It needs to **consume** us to where we see all of these things that need to be **addressed**. But again, having the wisdom to know how to address it is another part of this.

But the second major phase of this is in 2:17 – They were consumed. “[His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house will consume me.”](#) Zeal for God’s house consumes. King James says it will eat me up – literally. Zeal for God’s house will eat up or devour me. It’s like the birds who ate up the seeds that fell on the pathway soil.

Revelation 11:5 says from the mouths of two witnesses, “[If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die.](#)”

Luke 15:30 says, “[But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.](#)” The older son accuses the younger son of devouring His father’s wealth with harlots. But instead of starving him, the father fed him the best fatted calf.

Or Matthew 24:24, “[For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.](#)”

Or Mark 12:40, Beware of “[Those who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation.](#)” Jesus is being consumed by his zeal for God’s house while the Jewish leaders are consuming widow’s houses. One writer suggests that the Pharisees charged widows for their long prayers and thereby impoverishing them. I heard of a practice over in Kenya where some preachers charged for healing people. We will pray for you, but you must pay us. They asked me what I thought about that, and I told them exactly what I thought about that. It’s much like modern T. V. evangelists who take widow’s Social Security checks to make their own lives better.

There is so much more about this scene helps us to understand the Mind of Christ. One of the things that you have to conclude about Christ, from here and many other scenes was that Jesus was laser-focused on accomplishing the will of the Father. There was no dead time. There was no time in His life where He was off-task ... where He did not think about what the will of the Father is and how to accomplish that will.

And if we're going to have the Mind of Christ, we have to think like Him, we're going to have to be focused on the things that He's focused on. And I know I get tired like everybody else, but it juices me up when I get all these reports from around the world about people who are coming to Christ. We see people who are working night and day to lead people to Christ. That's good stuff.

Jean: If we can't take a whip to these people, can we at least speak to them?

Rod: Absolutely

Jean: In this society I don't think we have the courage to speak against that stuff because you'll be persecuted for saying it against evil.

Rod: Right.

Sandra: I was talking to somebody once about the sins of the world and I asked them, "what would you do if you had a homosexual child", and that person answered saying "I'd love them". You can hate the sin and love the sinner.

Rod: Oh, absolutely.

Jean: And you can pray for them. But still, something should be done. At least say something, if nothing else, about the wrong.

Rod: But again, there are things that can be done in a loving way to make sure that people know that you don't endorse the sin. But I agree. We're not threading the needle very well. I think we tend to go from one extreme to the other. We're either out here just condemning people and losing any possibility of winning them to Christ, or we're going over here and sweeping it under the rug or simply condoning it. We don't see that distinction anymore.

Jean: I'm reading a book about hospitality, a woman who invites the, homosexuals and other sinners in for a meal. She said she doesn't condone what they're doing, but I'm inviting them in.

Rod: But somewhere in the conversation, I think people have to know where you stand.

Brian: The Prophets spoke about mercy and justice, but I think we sometimes pick on certain sins that we *don't* have trouble with ... the ones that 'we don't do'. We'll pick on the sexual sins, but not on the greedy. But I think we need to on take all the sins. When we don't take on the needs of the poor and the alien, people see us as hypocrites. We have even endorsed people who are cruel. It is very complex in today's world and we have to be very careful how we treat others or we lose our witness. Jesus didn't take on particular issues but he changed people's hearts.

Rod: We need to take on Jesus. He's all we need. The rest is greed and/or idolatry.