

Mark 11: 15-19

15 Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves; ¹⁶and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. ¹⁷He was teaching and saying, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations"?' But you have made it a den of robbers.'

¹⁸And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. ¹⁹And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

Meditation: The passage about the fig tree (yesterday) is an analogy of what is going on in this passage. Jesus performs a symbolic act in the outer court of the temple where buying and selling for the purpose of fulfilling sacrificial offerings in the temple is taking place. There is considerable debate among scholars as to what exactly Jesus was accomplishing in his mind through this act. Was his disruption of this activity of buying and selling a sign of the imminent destruction of the temple which Jesus' believed would be an act of God's judgement? Was it a demonstration pointing to the view that Israel worships God in form and ritual, but fails to be faithful at the level of the spirit? Whatever is the case, this action clearly fueled the intention of the religious leadership to engineer Jesus' death.

We live in a time when the language of judgement is frowned upon and disdained. So is any concept of guilt or 'the prick of conscience.' It somehow undermines self-esteem and freedom to be. And yet, any healthy development of self requires a healthy sense of responsibility and accountability, which also requires an appreciation for the language of judgement, the psychology of guilt and the spirituality of conscience. In this time of Covid-19, how are we confronted by our responsibility and accountability for one another, but also, for our planet? Living unto ourselves and our own individual freedom can no longer be sustained if it means neglecting our neighbour who is now that much more intertwined with our own personal well-being, be they human or non-human creational life. We are now ever more folded into one another, accountable and responsible for one another.

Prayer: Thank you, O God. Whether we feel isolated and alone or not, the truth is: our lives are ever more intertwined with the lives of others near and far. This may cause us stress and fear because we have less control. And yet, O God, it may also be an invitation to engage our neighbour with greater intention, attention and compassionate care. May you rouse up in us greater trust and greater love, O God, and may we see the beauty of being accountable and responsible for the life around us beyond our own; Amen.