

Scripture: John 2:13-22

Title: Do Not Make My Father's House a Market place / translated by MinJoon Huh

1. Jesus' Anger in the Temple

There are certain things that Italians are sincere about: spaghetti, pizza, and coffee. If you handle these things carelessly, they get very upset. For example, if you break spaghetti noodles in half or cut them with scissors, they get angry. Putting pineapples on pizza or sprinkling ketchup on spaghetti is another way to provoke them. They detest Americano coffee made with water. You can see how sincere Italians are about spaghetti, pizza, and coffee. Similarly, if a foreigner orders miso soup in a Korean restaurant and pours sriracha sauce all over it, you might expect a similar reaction. I've heard of a restaurant in Tokyo, Japan, that sells kimchi stew with a palm-sized chunk of camembert cheese floating in it. There may be people who consider it an insult to kimchi stew. Whenever we think of certain objects, there are basic rules or concepts that are naturally expected to be followed. When those rules are violated, we feel uncomfortable. If the subject is something we truly cherish and hold dear, when it is treated carelessly, the emotion that naturally arises in our hearts is anger.

Jesus' inability to contain his anger in the temple puzzles us. This is because Jesus was considered a person of abundant love, gentleness, and patience. It's surprising to see the perfect Jesus unable to control his anger, overturning tables, whipping, and cursing. We can imagine how deep Jesus' love for the temple must have been. How do you perceive Jesus' anger over the desecration of the temple, his Father's house? Did Jesus go too far, no matter the circumstances? Should he have been more patient or gentler?

2. The Wedding at Cana and the Subsequent Temple Cleansing Incident

The incident where Jesus drove out sheep and cattle, overturned the tables of the money changers, and scattered their coins at the temple in Jerusalem is recorded in all four Gospels. This incident, where Jesus cleansed the temple, is important in his life and ministry. However, unlike the other Gospels, the Gospel of John places this incident at the beginning of the book. Why did John place the temple cleansing incident at the beginning? In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus mainly ministers around Galilee, and it is described that he goes up to Jerusalem only once, towards the end, to be crucified. However, in the Gospel of John, unlike the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus' main ministry stage is set in Jerusalem. The perspectives of the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John are completely different. In the Gospel of John, Jesus repeatedly goes from Galilee to Jerusalem for the Passover, so people speculate that Jesus' public ministry lasted three years. Unlike the other Gospels, the Gospel of John focuses more on Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem and the temple cleansing incident. The temple cleansing

incident is juxtaposed with the wedding at Cana. Through these two incidents, John wants to show what the entirety of Jesus' ministry signifies.

What did Jesus want to reveal through the miracle of turning water into wine at Cana? What does this incident signify? It symbolizes the end of the religious system of Judaism, represented by the stone jars which were containing water. They were a religion obsessed with cleanliness and holiness. The Jews were ruining the banquet that God had invited all nations to. Jesus began a new creation by turning water into wine. It showed Jesus' determination to sacrifice himself and take over the banquet that the Jews had ruined. The temple cleansing incident is connected to the wedding at Cana. It directly shows how much the Jewish temple's religious system was corrupt. John wanted to show why their religion disrupted joy and brought about the crisis of ending the banquet.

3. Father's House Turned into a Marketplace

What was the function of the temple that the Jews had ruined? The function of the temple was to deal with sin. Sin is the culprit that destroys the relationship with God. So, by resolving the issue of sin, a new relationship with God can be restored. The Jews received forgiveness of sin through the temple, and not only did their relationship with God recover, but they also received healing and restoration from their illnesses. Jesus was extremely angry to see that this function of the temple had been paralyzed. The temple in Jerusalem was built by King Herod to boost the morale of the Jews and it took 46 years to build. It was enormous, covering an area of 400 meters by 300 meters. So, it was about the size of two soccer fields combined. The outermost part of this temple was called the Gentile court. Gentiles could enter here. And upon entering, there were the court of men, the court of women, the court of priests, and in the most inner area was the sanctuary, and within it was the Holy of Holies. The cleansing incident in the temple courtyard happened in the Gentile court. This was the largest area of the temple. This was mainly where commerce took place. What kind of commerce? Buying and selling of sacrifices took place in the Gentile court. The temple is where sacrifices are offered, right? For cleansing of the sin, animals had to be sacrificed and burned. So, animals such as cattle, sheep, and doves were sold here. People coming from places like Galilee could bring the cattle or sheep they raised themselves, but the priests did not accept such animals for sacrifice. So, people had no choice but to come to the temple to buy sacrifices. They had to buy there at prices much higher than market prices. But people coming from distant places like Rome or Greece brought coins with the image of the Roman Emperor, Denarius. To buy sacrifices, they had to exchange their money for shekels, the currency used in the temple. While outside the temple, they could exchange 1 Denarius for 10 shekels. Inside the temple, they had to exchange it for about 5 shekels, much more expensive than the market price. Money exchangers had to bribe the high priests to get a spot in the marketplace. Their tables were set up like mobile banks. The temple had turned into a marketplace, filled with people seeking

their own profit. The high priests were no longer religious figures but rather merchants and managers monopolizing salvation and sacrifices. To them, the people gathered there were just targets for making money.

Jesus carefully observed this scene. The word "observed" in verse 14 is the Greek word "eurisko," which means to observe and gaze attentively. Then Jesus took a whip and drove out the sheep and cattle from the temple courtyard. In the Synoptic Gospels, it says that he made a whip out of his belt and drove them all out. He overturned the tables and scattered the coins of the money exchangers. Jesus said, "Do not make my Father's house a house of trade." He explains why he is angry. His disciples quote Psalm 69:9, "Zeal for your house will consume me." This is a passage where we can see how much Jesus loves and cherishes the house of his Father. We must understand Jesus' passion and affection, which are incomparable to Italians' love for spaghetti and pizza.

4. Responsibility of the Only Begotten Son

The Jews were astonished. Isn't this young man from the Galilean countryside ruining the festive atmosphere right now? The police were called in, and the priests, who arrived late, asked Jesus, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" The word "sign" is in Greek, "semeion," which means to show a sign that God is with you. They are asking for credentials. They are asking if he has a mandate to do these things. Then Jesus says that if this temple is destroyed, he will raise it again in three days. From the perspective of the Jews, this is absurd. It took 46 years to build this temple, and it's absurd to think it can be torn down and be rebuilt in three days. The Gospel of John kindly explains the meaning of this statement; Jesus is referring to his death on the cross and resurrection. By saying this, Jesus expresses his determination to fulfill the function of the temple with his own body. Instead of the temple which is not able to perform its own function, Jesus will complete the temple's tasks with his body.

Jesus' zeal for the house of God began with the sense of responsibility towards his Father's house. It's the consciousness of the Only Begotten Son. When his Father's house was being desecrated, when his Father's house was being turned into a den of merchants, the Son had no choice but to intervene because he and his Father share the same destiny. There is no one else who has called God "My Father" except Jesus. There was "Our Father," but there was no "My Father." The Gospel of John says that it was because of this consciousness of the Only Begotten Son that Jesus was condemned to death (John 5:18-19). Without love for Father God, there is no anger. It's because of love, because of excessive love, that Jesus couldn't just stand by and watch his Father's house being ruined.

Such a vivid portrayal of the unique Sonship of Jesus is found in Matthew 21. It's the parable of the tenants in the vineyard. A landowner cultivates a vineyard, makes a winepress, and then goes away, leaving it to be tended by some farmers. The farmers

were expected to pay the owner a share of the produce. After some time, the owner sent his servants to collect his share, but the farmers beat and killed them. The owner then thought to send his son, assuming they would respect him. However, contrary to the owner's expectations, the tenants killed the son and took over the vineyard.

This parable is based on Isaiah 5. Isaiah identifies the vineyard as Israel and the owner as God. Israel was merely tenants leasing the vineyard for a while. The vineyard represented the promised land of Canaan, and the share they were to pay was Mishpat and Tzedakah. Mishpat and Tzedakah are translated as justice and righteousness. Mishpat refers to judicial justice, and Tzedakah refers to distributive justice, as I've mentioned before. So, God, after freeing the people of Israel from Egypt, wanted to establish the covenant community on the promised land. He hoped they would create a holy covenant community on that land. However, Israel utterly failed. Justice and righteousness disappeared, leaving only a shell. Jesus, the Son of God, couldn't just stand by and watch this reality unfold.

5. Do Not Make My Father's House a House of Trade

Jesus is defining the religion of the Pharisees and the chief priests as commerce. What is commerce? Commerce is putting value to something and making a profit from it. Investment and profit generation are important aspects of commerce. The temple religion of the chief priests was commerce. They paid tribute to Rome to obtain the right to use the temple, and they made efforts to recover their investment. They were making a profit from temple commerce by charging high fees to temple money exchangers and livestock merchants. Mishpat and Tzedakah have disappeared from their religion. Psalm 84:3 says, "Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." This describes that the even sparrows and swallows can find refuge at the Lord's altar. But in the marketplace that is unfolding in the temple courtyard, there were tears of the poor who could not buy sacrifices with money. Where everyone should be welcomed and received as equals in God's house, people were being judged and divided by money. Wouldn't Jesus be angry? Socrates said, "He who has no love for his country has no anger for his country." He was angry because of love. Jesus' anger and indignation signifies his deep love for the Father's house and his frustration with the reality that the Father's house was not fulfilling its purpose. Is the Father's house adorned with desires and competition, instead of overflowing with mercy, only in Jesus' time?

Jesus said that he would now complete the functions of the temple with his own body. He would demonstrate forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing through his own actions. Everywhere Jesus went, everyone who met him could feel the warmth and glory that they would have felt in the temple. And the Lord brought about a new creation in this

world through his death and resurrection on the cross. After Jesus rose and ascended, he sent the Holy Spirit to this earth to begin the body of the Lord's church. Now the church must act as the body of Christ and fulfill the role of the temple. The martyr Caecilius Cyprianus of Carthage referred to the church initiated by the Holy Spirit as "Mother." Let me quote his words: "From the womb of the church we are born, we are nurtured by drinking the milk of the church, we are regenerated by breathing the breath of the church... If you do not have the church as your mother, you cannot have God as your father." Through the church, we taste salvation, are born again, and grow. The statement that if you do not have the church as your mother, you cannot have God as your father is truly significant. That's how important the church is. He even said that there is no salvation outside the church. Now, forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing must be spread throughout the world through the church. Do you understand how important the church is? However, the church is being criticized in the world. People are leaving the church because there is no love and grace in it. People are leaving because the church is not different from the world but is the same. Has the church only become a marketplace in the time of Jesus? Can today's church confidently say that it is not a marketplace? The principles of capitalism operate equally within the church. Capitalism evaluates everything by converting it into numbers. It evaluates the success of ministry by how much the church has grown. When I was an education pastor, seven education pastors shared one room. There was a board on the large wall of the room that showed the attendance of each department daily in a graph. I really wanted to tear down that board. It is too sad that we are evaluating the success of ministry by numbers and encouraging competition. Once I went to a church in Pyeongchon, and there was a large display in the church lobby called the love thermometer for each small group. It displayed how many new believers each small group had evangelized using a thermometer and indicated that it was love. Can love really be represented by numbers? The marketplace is no different. Encouraging competition and valuing everything by numbers to see how profitable it is are the criteria for success in the marketplace. Can the church confidently say that it is not a marketplace?

6. We are the moving church.

Do you feel angry when you see the reality of today's church? Anger is normal. It is normal to be outraged by the reality of the Father's house being desecrated and looted. But we don't have that passion. Even though the Father's house, which should pray for all nations, is being used as a tool for the desires of a few people, we just let it happen. Some pastors think of the church as their own property and pass it on to their children. Some pastors are busy filling their stomachs with church offerings. Large church pastors are heavily burdened with large buildings and many members, as if they were their badges of honor. Of course, there are pastors and missionaries who serve with joy in the countryside and in poor environments. However, we cannot deny the reality that the church has been invaded by the logic of the world's marketplace. Why aren't we angry?

Is Christianity being criticized because the world is evil? Or is it because the church is not church-like? Even if I want to unleash my passion and whip with my belt, I am ashamed that I can only tie it up again because I am not pure enough. Sometimes I find myself more captivated by eating and living comfortably than seeking the righteousness and will of the kingdom of God. I am ashamed that I cannot unleash my passion because there is no zeal and anger toward the Father's house within me. It is so sad that we do not have the passion or anger towards the Father's house. Us not having anger towards this reality of the desecrated church, isn't this evidence that we do not have enough love and passion toward the Father?

The temple is a mediator of forgiveness. The temple is also a mediator for all nations at the ends of the earth to reconcile and commune with God. God has called us to be the church. After gathering at church every week, we disperse and sing the praise "We are the moving church of the Lord." We confess that we are the body of the Lord's church sent out into the world. God's name should be glorified where you are, healing should occur, and the joyful news of forgiveness should be spread. Dahana Church is the body of Christ established by the Lord. It is the house of God the Father. This is where we pray for all nations, and where people are reconciled and make peace with God. We must not allow our church to become a battleground of desires. We must follow the Lord more purely and seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness more earnestly. We should become a community so open that even sparrows can find rest and have a refuge like swallows. We hope that our church will establish the kingdom of God on this earth and become a loving community that pays the rent of Mishpat and Zedakah well. We invite you with holy calling and desire. Please protect your hearts, which are the temples and bodies of the church, from all desires and marketplace. I hope that during Lent, you will love Christ and the Father's church with a purer heart. In the name of the Lord, I wish you all the best.