

MARCH 7, 2021
Sunday of the 3rd Week of Lent
John 2: 13-25

“FOLLOWING GOD’S COMMANDMENTS.”

“Several years ago, a preacher from out-of-state accepted a call to a Church in Boston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived, he had occasion to ride the bus from his house to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the bus driver had mistakenly given him a quarter too much in change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, “You’d better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it.” Then he thought, “Oh, forget it, it’s only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a ‘gift from God’ and keep quiet.” When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, and then handed the quarter to the driver and said, “Here, you gave me too much change.” The driver with a smile, replied, “Aren’t you the new preacher in town?” “Yes,” he replied. “Well, I have been thinking a lot lately about going somewhere to worship. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I’ll see you at Church next Sunday.” When the preacher stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said, “Oh God I almost sold your Son for a quarter.” Our lives are the only Bible some people will ever read! As someone has said, “We need Christians to make Christians.”¹

Honesty and following what God prescribes us are essential in living out our faith. It is always now, today and we must not postpone or take a vacation to live a life of a Christians. Little things it may be, being sincere and honest will always be a good thing in the eyes of God. When we are commanded to do and follow the rules, what is our reaction? When our parents say to their child: “Do what I tell you!” their child’s reaction often is, “I will not! I will not obey or follow you.” When our youth are obliged to observe rules and regulations, they rebel and do what is the opposite. When laws are enforced in society, some people challenge

¹ www.stories4homilies.co

it. Sometimes we want to do our own thing! “The first reading from Genesis speaks of the Ten Commandments and spells out the implications of these commandments. God did not give the commandments for his benefit but for the sake of the people. When the people observed the commandments, they were the gainers, when they disobeyed, they themselves were the losers. Someone has called the Ten Commandments ten guidelines to happiness; unfortunately, some have interpreted the commandments as restrictions to man’s freedom. The first commandment forbids the worship of false gods, yet all of us at some time or another have created gods to suit us and often these false gods hold sway over our lives. Keeping the law for the sake of the law results in bondage, while observing the law out of love for God and respect for neighbour results in true freedom.”² In terms of God’s commandments, which was given for our benefit and goodness, how do we observe them, how do we follow them, or we go against them? This Season of Lent, the first reading is reminding us the importance of obedience and love for God and our brothers and sisters by observing the law of God, the law of love.

This was the desire of Jesus when he got angry when he saw the temple not a house of God but a marketplace. For Him, these people don’t recognize that the temple must be what it meant to be: built for God, to worship Him, and a place where the people and God meet. “There is a big difference between a house and a market. A house has the potential at least to be a home. A market could never really be a home; people go to markets to buy and sell. Buying and selling are not activities you associate with home. The temple was to be God’s house, God’s home, a place where all people could feel at home in God’s presence. The activities associated with the market were preventing the temple from being the home that God wanted it to be, a spiritual home for all the nations.” Jesus is referring the temple not only the building but the body of every person which for Jesus must be respected, taken care of, and maintain its purpose, that is, a sign of God to others.

² ibid

Jesus observed that “the motive for these practices should have been service of God and neighbour but instead the motive was profit. That is why when Jesus entered the temple he was upset and angry because God’s house was being desecrated. Jesus’ action was amazing and unprecedented considering that the temple had pride of place and by his action Jesus was taking on the whole religious institution and challenging their power and authority. Whereas the first part centres on the temple, the second part focuses on Jesus himself as God’s temple. He was referring to his bodily resurrection, but neither the temple authorities nor his own disciples understand the deeper implications. The last part of the gospel of today speaks of Jesus’ interaction with the people. Many of them were impressed by his challenging action in the temple. They did not understand his action, but they somehow believed that God was with Jesus, but they failed to understand that God was within Jesus, that Jesus himself was God and that true worship was worship within one’s heart. The heart of all worship would be loving obedience to God and his commandments and therefore the true temple where one worshiped God was within one’s heart.”³

So, as we continue our Lenten journey, let us ask the Lord to cleanse our spiritual temple of any sins, doubt, resentment, anger, and transform it with love, obedience, and respect to His commandments. In following the Lord through His law and precepts, we are living out the purpose of our lives: to be obedient and faithful children of God the Father.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, You are the exemplar and perfect example of obedience as You follow the will of the Father. May I observe Your law as a sign of my love to You and give me strength to follow Your commandments today and always, for my own good and benefit. Amen.”

³ ibid