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| **The Focal Point of God’s Presence**  *Promise: our Lord promises to give Himself to us in His Word* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 2:13-22 (Third Sunday in Lent), 3/3/24)  *So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”*– John 2:18-19  **Lead In –** I challenge you this morning to modify the image you bear in your minds of the Lord Jesus. Does your image match well with the actions described in our Gospel Lesson? Does it include a *disturber of the peace* who drives out with a whip money changers and animals from the temple? Does it include one who went about overturning tables? Does it include the one who said in Matthew 10, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” (v. 34)? Or who said in Luke 12, “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!” (v. 49)? So, what’s going on in our Gospel Lesson this morning.…   1. **It Is No Tame and “Safe” God Who Claims Us**    1. CS Lewis’ choice of a lion to represent Jesus…    2. Jesus’ zeal for God’s House of Prayer… 2. **Significance of the Temple and What It Represents**    1. Indeed, God is everywhere present…    2. God determines where and how He is accessible…    3. The trajectory of God’s accessibility… 3. **Jesus, the Incarnate One, Is the Focal Point**    1. Cryptically, Jesus’s speaks of His upcoming death…    2. God dwells and is made manifest in Jesus…    3. And Jesus has promised His presence in Word and…   **Final Word –** Friends in Christ, Hebrews 13 describes acceptable worship as being with reverence and awe, as we are reminded that God is a consuming fire. When we conceive of worship as our effort to render service to God rather than His coming to us and serving us, we are operating with a man-made religion. Christianity taught by the Bible speaks of God coming to us and drawing us to Himself. In worship God serves us, chiefly by forgiving and cleansing us from sin. When we are drawn into His presence in the Divine Service, the untamable God, the Holy One, will drive out that which is evil, even to the point of overturning tables in our lives. And He does so that nothing impedes His restoring us so that we might have communion with Him. Indeed, He is zealous that the Father’s house be a place for communion with God.  **Christ Figure:** “Aslan is a lion – the Lion, the great lion.” “Ooh” said Susan. “I’d thought he was a man. Is he – quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.” … “Safe?” said Mr. Beaver … “Who said anything about safe? Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King I tell you.” – The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe  **Ps 69:9** For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.  **Je 23:23-24** “Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord. | **John 2:13-22 ESV**  *Jesus Cleanses the Temple*  13The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.” 17His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”  18So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” 19Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” 20The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” 21But he was speaking about the temple of his body. 22When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.  **Ex 19:20** The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.  **Jn 2:19** Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”  **Jn 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.  **Jn 15:1, 3, 7** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. … 3Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. … 7If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.  **He 13:28-29** Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. |