

Who Does He Think He Is?

Intro. The Lord went to the temple at one of the biggest holy days of the year and came face to face with a religious farmers' market. He disrupted a system that to the leaders seemed to be working quite well.

I. People came to the temple to give thanks to God or ask for help. An offering was made and some of the food went to feed the poor. People needed to buy an offering and somebody *had to sell it*. The Roman money *had to be changed* to the Jewish shekels used at the temple. Nothing wrong in theory; this was established in the Old Testament. But it had become *less about worship* of God and *more about business* for the sellers and the Pharisees who profited together. This made the temple area a difficult place to pray. The Lord's reaction was anger because of

the lack of reverence for his Father and his house.

This was not good news for the local economy of the temple. The religious leaders asked the Lord, "Who do you think you are?" and "Show us your authority for doing this." In other words they wanted to see some ID. The answer he gave was a riddle about his death and rising three days later. With the Lord's coming, the worship system was changed. No more buying or selling of animals. No longer did one have to go the great temple in Jerusalem for God to really hear their prayer; people could go to their local synagogue. From then on, a different kind of offering was expected.

Concl. We don't have to go to Rome so God can hear us more clearly. We too can worship God in neighborhood churches. But we still have to bring *something* to offer: **ourselves**. When we go to a

birthday party and bring a gift for a friend, we don't usually bring it in the bag from the store with the price tag on it. We prepare it, often wrapping it in nice paper with a card. Or at least in a gift bag.

When we come to church for worship, we don't have to wrap ourselves up in fancy paper. But there are a few things we can do to *clear out some of the clutter* and prepare to make an offering to God *before* we come to the "temple". During the week we can:

*Use the parish app to listen to Pope Francis' daily Lenten video.

*Read the Sunday scriptures and ask what the Lord might be telling us in them.

After we get to the church there are a few other things that can help us shut down some of the "noise" from the busy world we live in:

*Arrive early and just sit quietly for a few minutes in the Lord's presence.

*Listen to the lectors and cantors not just with our *ears* but also our *eyes*.

*Really hear the words, "This is my Body given up for you." It *really does* become part of *our* body.

Certainly some days our struggles and pain make it difficult to worship. We know it is hard for others in our community to be there also. Those times we ask the Lord to bless and heal all that stuff. **What are other ways we can cleanse the temples of our hearts to give more reverence and respect to the Father?**