

10-14-18 John 2:12-25 "Who Does He Think He Is?" Series

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Today's sermon is in two parts. Part 1 is by a Jewish temple official from 30 AD. Part 2 is by an average modern-day churchgoer. Both, deep-down, are puzzled by Jesus. Both are asking the same question: "Who does he think he is?"

PART 1

Who does he think he is? Who does this Jesus -- this low-born, rural, pretentious teacher -- think he is? Jesus comes storming into the Jerusalem temple today, the holiest place in all our land. He comes into our house, and he acts all high and mighty. Like he has authority over us? Who does he think he is?

We are the ones in charge of the temple. We are responsible for the worship of the people. We are following all of God's commands about the sacrifices, the prayers, the rituals. We have been doing this for a long time, and we know exactly what needs to happen.

But I've never seen anything like what happened today. This ridiculous rabbi, Jesus, comes in the outer courts of the temple, and he sees the men selling animals and birds for sacrifices. Well, we put them there! We authorized them. People come from all over Israel to make their sacrifices to God, and they can't travel with sheep and doves. So we sell them here. And we have money changing tables set up, so they're not putting anything but silver and gold coins into the temple treasury. And, yes, we make a profit on all of this. But it all goes to support the temple, to keep our nation's spiritual center -- God's house -- pristine.

But today this upstart Jesus erupts. He takes a whip, and drives the animals out of the temple. He turns over the money tables, and sends the coins flying. In God's house! What unmitigated gall! Jesus acts as if he's in charge, as if his authority is supreme -- in our house! Who does he think he is?

"Get these birds and animals out of here!" Jesus shouts.
"How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

What? Is Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter's son, declaring himself to be the Messiah? The Son of God? You may not know this, but we have been waiting for centuries for God's promised Savior. We know that when our Messiah comes, he will do wonderful, amazing miracles, and rescue our nation from the Romans. And we've seen plenty of false Messiahs, believe me.

So we ask Jesus today, after his audacious display, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" And do you know what he says? "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

Who does he think he is? Our magnificent temple took decades for huge teams of builders to erect. And Jesus says, "Tear it down, and I'll rebuild it in three days?" What is he talking about? How can anybody take him seriously?

He's no Messiah. This Jesus is dangerous. He made an enemy of me and my associates today. And, mark my words, if Jesus isn't more careful, he's going to end up dead.

Who does he think he is?

PART 2

Who does he think he is? Look, I'm a Christian. I believe in Jesus. I go to church. But today it feels like he wants something more from me.

I've known about Jesus all my life. I grew up Christian. I went to Sunday School. My parents made me go to confirmation class. The whole nine yards.

So I pretty much believe what the Bible says about him. Son of God. Savior of the world. Friend of sinners. And I'm one of them. I know, I'm a sinner in God's eyes. So I appreciate that Jesus died on the cross. It's good that I'm forgiven, because of him.

I get all that. I get the part about heaven, and life after death. I'm thankful for all of that, thankful for Jesus.

But, man, when it comes to the day-to-day stuff I have to deal with -- the everyday stress, the demands on my time, the responsibilities I juggle -- I can't help wondering about Jesus. Where does he really fit in during the week?

I've got so many people pulling me in so many directions: my spouse, my kids, my parents, my boss, my friends, my neighbors. It's always something. My doctor's bugging me to lose some weight. I pull up to an intersection, and there's a guy with a sign, asking for help. I watch the news, and there's hurricane victims in North Carolina, in Florida, in Puerto Rico. Every day I'm getting up early, working late, running the kids all over the place, trying to spend a few minutes with my spouse, wishing I had time for staying in shape, feeling guilty over not calling my parents. You know how it is.

But here I am in church, most weekends. And I do the confession, the creed, the hymns. I listen to the Bible

readings, and pay attention to most of the sermon. I like the prayer request cards. I enjoy taking communion. I put my offering envelope in the plate. I bring my family, and we've got our regular seat.

So I give Jesus this hour in my week. But today it seems like he wants more.

I hear this Bible story about Jesus getting mad in the temple. He throws the money-changers out, and tells everybody off. Jesus is all worked up about how they're acting in his Father's house, and he really lets them have it.

This is not the meek, mild, good-natured Jesus I'm used to. This is authoritative Jesus, commanding Jesus, imposing Jesus.

And I can't help thinking, if he walked in here today, wouldn't he want to impose on me, too? Jesus wants to straighten me out. He wants to take charge. He doesn't want to just be that hour-a-week deity that I listen to the pastor talking about in church. Jesus wants to affect my priorities all day, every day. He wants to influence my everyday decisions, determine my moral values, impinge on my marriage, my parenting, my spending habits, my attitudes, my leisure time.

Who does Jesus think he is? I know he loves me. But is he really the supreme authority in my life?

What do you think? Who do you think Jesus is? What kind of authority are you going to let Jesus have in your life this week? I guess that's PART 3 in the sermon, isn't it? Amen.