

SUNDAY 23 February 2025 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am HC2.5

Introduction

Hymn TIS 409 - O Breath of Life

O breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and power;
O breath of life, come cleanse, renew us,
and fit your church to meet this hour.

O wind of God, come bend us, break us,
till humbly we confess our need;
then in your tenderness remake us,
revive, restore: for this we plead.

O breath of love, come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive your church in every part.

Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,
equip your church to spread the light.

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Sentence of the day

His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."
John 2:17

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Prayer of the Day

Jealous God

Give us zeal for the house of your Name, your kingdom. You have enthroned Jesus Christ on its throne which you have established forever. You are his father, and he is your Son, and your love will never be taken away from him. Make us jealous citizens of your kingdom, keeping spiritual fervor, serving the Lord, being joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer and sharing with the Lord's people who are in need, and we ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 11b-17

¹ After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." ³ Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you." ⁴ But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: ⁵ "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?'" ^{11b} "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'" ¹⁷ Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 69:1-9

¹ Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.

² **I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.**

³ I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God.

⁴ **Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal.**

⁵ You, God, know my folly; my guilt is not hidden from you.

⁶ **Lord, the LORD Almighty, may those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me; God of Israel, may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me.**

⁷ For I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers my face.

⁸ **I am a foreigner to my own family, a stranger to my own mother's children;**

⁹ **for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.**

Roman's 12.9-13

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

John 2:13-22

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

¹³ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

¹⁸ The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

²⁰ They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

This is the gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon - John 2:17 - Zeal for God's House

Question Time

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Gracious God, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

The Confession

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn TIS 483 - Lord, in the strength of grace

Lord, in the strength of grace, With a glad heart and free,

Myself, my residue of days, I consecrate to thee.

**Thy ransomed servant, I restore to thee thy own;
And, from this moment, live or die to serve my God alone.**

The Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Loving God, we thank you for this world of wonder and delight. You have given it to us to care for, so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that when we turned away from you, you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us, and bring us back to you. He showed us how to love you and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross Jesus took away our sin, all that keeps us from each other and from you. He frees us from hate and fear, from all that destroys love and trust.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the saints and angels, we rejoice and praise you, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us. Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made. Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen

**We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.
The gifts of God for the people of God.**

**Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance
that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.**

After Communion

**Father of all we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us
in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us
grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen
life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to
the world. Keep us in this hope that we have grasped: so we and all your people will
be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.**

Hymn TIS 111 - Praise to the Lord the almighty

**Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation.
Come all who hear, brothers and sisters draw near,
praise him in glad adoration.**

**Praise to the Lord who in all things is wondrously reigning
and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining:
have you not seen all that is needed has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?**

**Praise to the Lord, who will prosper our work and defend us;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend us:
ponder anew what the Almighty can do
as with his love he befriends us.**

**Praise to the Lord, who when darkness of sin is abounding,
who, when the godless do triumph, our best hopes confounding.
sheds forth his light, scatters the horrors of night,
saints with his mercy surrounding.**

**Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.
Let the Amen sound from his people again:
gladly for ever adore him.**

Notices

Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Sermon - John 2:17 - Zeal for God's House

I'd like to start by reading from the *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW), 4 March 1850. *The Bishop of Sydney arrived here on Friday, the 22nd of February 1850. On Saturday, the consecration of Christ Church took place, the foundation-stone of which was laid by his Lordship (then Bishop of Australia) exactly five years ago. On the Bishop's arrival at the church, he was received by the Rev. E. G. Pryce, B A., minister of the district; the Rev. E. Smith, incumbent of Queanbeyan ; and by several gentlemen of the district ; one of whom, W. A. Brodribb, Esq., J.P., read the petition requesting his Lordship would be pleased to consecrate the church and burial ground. The appointed service then commenced; the Rev. E. Smith acting as the Bishop's Chancellor. After morning prayer, the Bishop preached from John, ii. 17, to a congregation of about sixty persons, and administered the Holy Communion.*

You may wonder, as I did, how can you preach an entire sermon on a single verse. If you have heard my sermons, you should have noticed that I prefer to preach on much larger passages of scripture - usually about a whole chapter at a time, but today I thought I would challenge myself by, as Bp Broughton did, restricting myself to the single verse.

The first thing we must notice is that the context of the verse is Jesus overturning the table of the money changers in the temple. Apparently someone asked an AI program to generate an image of this, and you can see the result on the screen - Jesus flipping over a temple table.



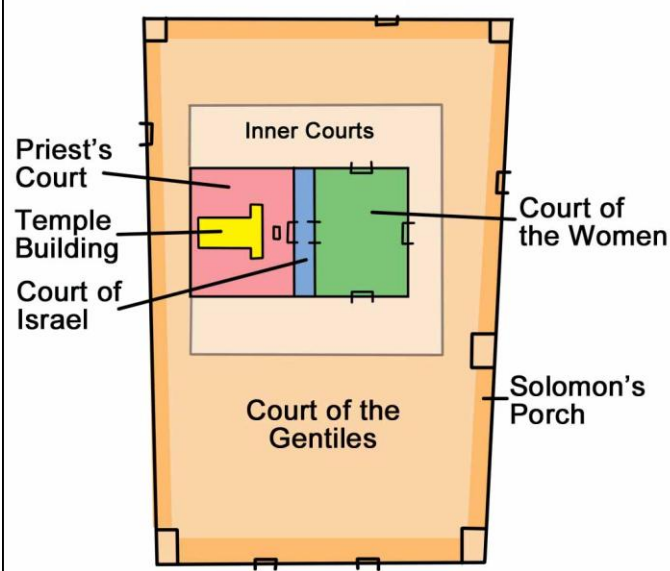
That obviously wasn't what happened. As I'm sure you know, when Jesus was visiting the temple, he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.

What was happening was that some entrepreneurial people had realised that dragging your sacrificial sheep, goats and doves from all over the country to the temple to sacrifice was a pain in the neck, particularly if you had to ensure they were still ritually clean. They set up stalls in the

outer courts of the temple to sell sacrificial animals to the pilgrims. Similarly, since Roman currency had the image of Caesar imprinted on it, it was not considered appropriate for temple offering and had to be exchanged for suitable temple currency. Again, this made stalls in the outer temple courts mighty convenient.

However, Jesus took quite an exception to this practice. He made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!"

The Temple in Jesus' Day (simplified)



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The temple in Jesus's day was a series of concentric courts. In the middle was the true temple building, which included the Holy of Holies, where only one suitable chosen high priest could go, once a year for the atonement sacrifice and meet with God. As you move out from this, you get the priest's court, the court of Israel, the court of women (that is, Jewish women), and the outermost court was the court of Gentiles. In effect there was a hierarchy of holiness in Judaism - high priest, priests, Israelite men, then women and finally gentiles. Each group was only

allowed to go so far into the temple and no further. The issue that Jesus had was that the animal sales and money changing was going on in the court of the gentiles, and in effect crowding the gentiles out. It would be a bit like us letting only the priest into the sanctuary, men into the nave, women into the entrance hall - and then filling up the entrance hall with book stalls. It would send a message to the women as to how much we valued them, and in Jesus's day, filling up the court of the gentiles with this market place was sending a very unsubtle message to the gentiles as to how much Israelites thought they mattered to God.

So that's the context of our verse, and you can probably see how I preach a whole sermon on it.

As we get to the verse proper, the first thing you notice is that the disciples remembered: what they remembered was psalm 69, which we read as our psalm this morning. Note that it wasn't a particularly cheerful psalm. The psalmist describes himself as drowning in the miry flood, and worn out from calling for help. Yet he still had confidence in God: He prays 'may those who hope in God not be disgraced', and the section finishes with 'For I endure scorn for God's sake, and shame covers my face.'

The disciples were particularly remembering verse 9, which John quotes: '9 for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.' The psalmist has such confidence and zeal in God, as represented by the temple, God's house, and the last thing the psalmist wants is for people who trust in God to be put off because of the hard times and insults that the Psalmist, who also trusts in God, is going through.

Like Jesus, the psalmist does not want anyone who trusts in God, even gentiles, to be put off by discriminatory practices like insults, persecution for their faith or exclusion from meeting with God in the temple.

So what is the zeal that consumes him? In the Bible, the words translated as zeal in both the Old and New Testament mean strong emotion, either positive or negative. While the word is most often translated as zeal, some translators translate this strong positive emotion as passion, love or devotion. Where it is a strong negative emotion, it is usually translated as jealousy.

In modern western society, we often think that being even tempered is a virtue, and of strong emotions as sinful in some way. I recall from a scripture in schools lesson from many years ago that one student, whom I was quite surprised to have any knowledge of the Bible, was quite adamant that this passage showed that Jesus had sinned, because he had got angry with the money changers. Now the Bible certainly does warn against inappropriate anger - for example Ephesians tells us to Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger Ephesians 4:31, as does Colossians and 1 Timothy, but it also says that Jesus was angry with the Pharisees when they didn't want him to heal the man with the withered hand. God the Father is regularly described as angry with sin and sinners, both in the Old Testament and New. But the Bible's position is actually neatly summed up in Galatians 4:18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when Paul was with them. Strong emotion, be it zealousness, jealousy or some other passion is fine, provided the purpose is good. Zealousness certainly didn't stand in the way when Jesus selected his disciples: Simon Peter (the Rock) was nothing if not zealous, the other Simon was known as Simon Zealotes - or Simon the zealot, Judas Iscariot was named after the short swords, the sica, that sicarii or assassins used, and he gave James son of Zebedee and his brother John the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder".

No, zealousness or passion in the Christian is not a bad thing, provided it is properly directed.

Knowing this, we need to ask "Where was Jesus's zeal directed in our verse. It is clear that it was zeal for God's house that consumed Jesus, and in that immediate context, it was zeal for the temple, the physical Jewish temple in Jerusalem, with its Holy of Holies and inner and outer courts. Jesus was zealous that the temple was for all God's people, no matter their nationality, and effectively denying gentiles access to it really got his goat.

Jesus goes on to say "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." and they replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

Does that mean that Jesus was consumed by a zeal for his physical body? Does it mean that we, as his disciples, should have a zeal for Jesus's physical body? Given what Jesus's body was to go through later, I do not think that this is the case. I know a lot of churches do put a lot of emphasis on Jesus's body with statues and paintings of it on the cross and in other scenes of Jesus' life and post resurrection, but is this what Jesus meant? What precisely was the house that Jesus was consumed with zeal for?

Part of the answer is found in our Old Testament reading this morning. Before there was a temple, the Jews worshipped God in a tent or tabernacle during the Exodus out of slavery in Egypt to the promised land. Even after they arrived in Israel, they kept up the worship in the tabernacle. Eventually King David decided that God should have a proper, bricks and mortar house, and decided he wanted to build the first temple. He told Nathan the prophet this, and God replied, through Nathan "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: 12 When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

David thought his son Solomon would build this house for God, and Solomon certainly did build the first temple, but this wasn't the house that God was talking about, as

important as the temple in Jewish religious life. The house that God was telling David about was the house for God's name that was to be built by David's offspring, Jesus, who would sit on its throne forever. The house that God was talking about would be centred on Jesus, and Col 1:24 says that Christ's body is in fact the Church.

Getting back to our verse, which one was it? Did Jesus have zeal for God's house, the physical temple, for his physical body, or his body, the church? The truth is that it is true that Jesus was zealous for all these: the temple, his body and the church, the body of believers. All these represent good meeting with his people: God's old testament people, the Jews, met with him through their priests in the physical temple, Jesus took on a physical body that we might truly relate to him, and he physically died on the cross for his people, the church. His zeal was demonstrated by the amount he was prepared to descend from the glory of heaven for his church, and to die, taking away the judgement it deserved and was preventing the intimate relationship between man and God that was originally intended when Adam and Eve were created.

This just leaves us to ask where our zeal should lie?

Many Christians are zealous for our physical church buildings. Bp Broughton largely designed and funded Christ church Maneroo himself, and our forebears generously funded, built and maintained both Christ church and St Paul's, as well as the other church buildings in our parish. This is a good thing, and I pray that more may have a zealousness for the buildings we meet in, but it is not the main game.

Many also have a zeal for Christ's body, the church, and particularly the party of Christ's church that meets in Cooma and the Monaro region. This is also right and good, and i also pray for more to build up Christ's body in the Monaro and beyond.

However, and perhaps this is splitting hairs, but the thing I am most zealous for is Jesus himself. I am most zealous that I put my faith in his death on the cross for me, and that through his death and resurrection, I can have the perfect relationship with God forever, I can have the eternal, perfect life that God always intended. I zealously thank God for this, and just as zealously pray this for everyone in the Monaro. This zeal flows into my zeal for Christ's body and the buildings that protect

and symbolise them, but without the zeal for Christ, those other things mean nothing.

Do you have this zeal for Christ that led Bishop Broughton to design, fund and dedicate Christ Church Maneroo to Christ 175 years ago, that led me to put my faith in Christ for my salvation and eternal life, and to serve his people here in the Monaro? Is this your zeal, your strong positive emotional response to what Christ has done for you, and has done, and will continue to do through me, and through all who are saved through his body dying on the cross.

Do you have this zeal?