March 10, 2021 Lenten Devotional
Mark 11:15-19 - "Cleansing of the Temple"
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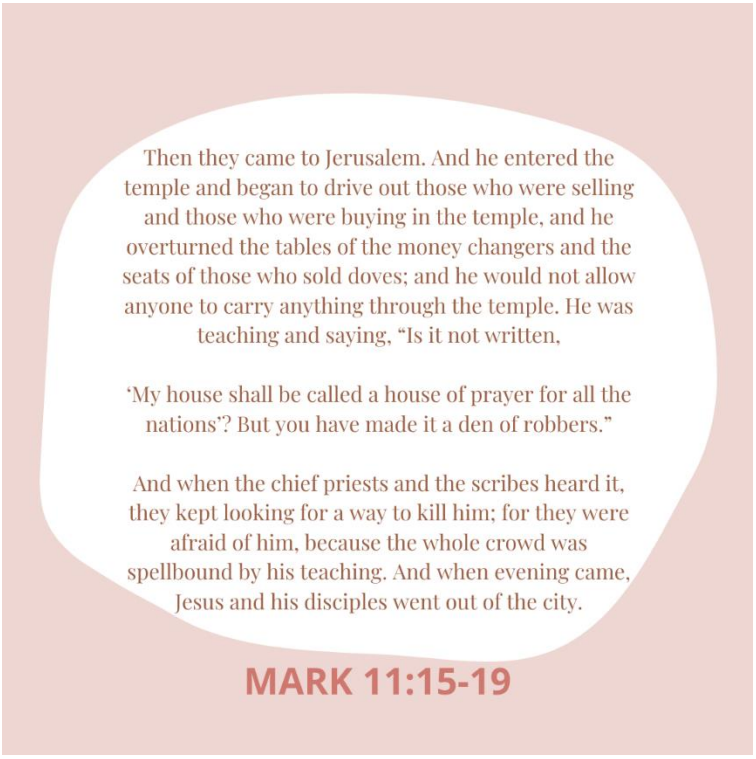

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, 'Is it not written,
"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations"?
But you have made it a den of robbers.'
And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city. -Mark 11:15-19

Reflection

Over the centuries, profound statements have been shared in a variety of ways. Either spoken, chiseled in stone, written in books or scrolls or, in 2021, on Twitter. Last week, I stumbled across a statement on Twitter by Steven Price that said, "*Father forgive me for the times I desired a seat at a table you would've flipped*".

As we read today's lesson, it may be easy for us to recognize why Jesus is so infuriated by those merchants and shoppers in the temple. Yet, I wonder how often we find ourselves sitting comfortably at other tables that would anger Jesus. How often do we use our privilege to sit at the exclusive table of comfort while others cry out? How often do we ignore injustices because they do not impact us directly? How often do we offer

empty platitudes to those who are oppressed or hurting because it is easier than calling or working for real systematic change?

Cleansing the toxic things from our lives can be challenging, frightening, and sometimes even painful. If we want to live the kind of life that God wants for us, with God and one another, then we must turnover the tables in our lives that keep us from being whole. We must turn over the tables that keep us from being in relationship with one another. Turn over the tables of fear and hate. Turn over the tables that excluded anyone one from God's table of grace and love. Turn over the tables that keep us from seeing each person as a child of God and a sibling worthy of love and life.

Through Christ on the cross, God turns over the tables of this world and redeemes each of us as beloved children of God. May we never stop flipping the tables of injustice, tables of hate, and tables of greed. May we flip the tables that keep us from God and one another. May we sit in the messiness and uncomfortableness of tables turned over all around us, and may Jesus sit with us there.

A Haiku Prayer:
Tables flipped all round
God's redeeming love surrounds
Heal this world O Lord