Turning tables

John 2:13-22

Jesus overturning the tables in the Temple is a shocking act but seems nothing compared with what he says next. The Temple was believed to be a space where heaven touched earth, but Jesus speaks of destroying it and rebuilding it in three days. However, Jesus isn't speaking about the physical Temple, but his body. Jesus signals that his death and resurrection will give everyone access to God, through him.

Read this week's passage:



WATCH

To understand today's passage, it is helpful to understand a bit more about what the Temple was all about. You can find out more about the Temple from the Bible Project; this video reminds us that each Christian is now a 'temple' of God's Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

DESIGN

Injustice has often inspired works of art as a form of protest, e.g. *Am I not a Man and a Brother*, Josiah Wedgwood. Design your own protest artwork or poster to raise awareness of injustice today.

HELP

Sometimes anger is justified, but sometimes it can hard to manage and painful to live with. Young people in particular can struggle with their emotions. Research ways of supporting those who struggle with anger management. You could start with charities like Mind.

Living Scripture

'...he overturned their tables.' John 2:15

What is going on in your community that just isn't on? It's easy to see injustice at global level, but what about closer to home? Examples might be plans for building on greenbelt in poorer areas, taking down healthy street trees, reducing community services, or accessibility issues in buildings and public transport.

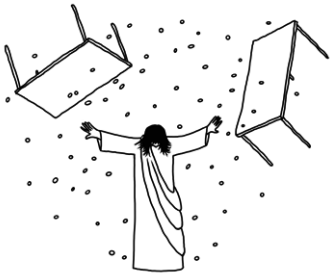
It's easy to dismiss any of these as unimportant when they don't affect us directly, but injustice isn't about you, it's about others, human and other-than-human. The money-changers weren't taking Jesus' money, but he saw that they weren't acting fairly, so he took radical steps to do something about it, even though it made him unpopular. Sometimes taking action against injustice adversely affects you while having a positive outcome for another. That is why Jesus is honest with us, admitting that following him sometimes requires sacrifice.

So why do it? Would it not be a better idea just to stay quiet and stay out of trouble? In Jesus' case, it's because he loves the people around him, even if they've never met him. When God sees people struggling, he can't stay quiet, instead he sends his friends (us!) to do something about it, even if that something means just sitting quietly with someone in need.

So what is the equivalent where you live? And what are you going to do about it?

First impressions

- When is it right to get angry?
- What would Jesus want us to angrier about in our world today?
- What would Jesus call out in our lives, our churches or our communities?



Pray

Loving God,
to live a Gospel life is to live the life of a table-turner,
but it is hard when it is an inconvenience to ourselves.
So help us to put others first,
and dare to make a change from which we can never go back.
Amen.

REFLECT

Reflect on what it means for you to be a living temple. Take some time to reflect on the idea that your life is a place where God's Holy Spirit dwells. Ask Jesus to help you to 'drive out' anything that is not fitting within that calling and purpose.

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