**Exodus 20:1-17 (ESV)**

And God spoke all these words, saying,

[2] "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. [3] "You shall have no other gods before me. [4] "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. [5] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, [6] but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. [7] "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. [8] "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, [10] but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [11] For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. [12] "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. [13] "You shall not murder. [14] "You shall not commit adultery. [15] "You shall not steal. [16] "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. [17] "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

**1 Cor. 1:18-31 (ESV)**

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. [19] For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." [20] Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? [21] For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. [22] For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, [23] but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, [24] but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. [25] For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. [26] For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. [27] But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; [28] God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, [29] so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. [30] He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. [31] Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

**John 2:13-25 (ESV)**

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. [14] In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. [15] And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. [16] And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." [17] His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." [18] So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" [19] Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [20] The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" [21] But he was speaking about the temple of his body. [22] When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. [23] Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. [24] But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people [25] and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

**“Zeal of Christ to Cleanse”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. A secular society has no use for the word, “holy.” Yet, there are still signs that depict holiness. Stay off the grass. Private property. Do not touch. Authorized Personnel Only. No Food or Drink. Caution Stay Behind This Line. All these sayings set something apart. Holiness tends to be this way. When God delivered Israel out of Egypt, it was because of His holiness. This was made known clearly by God at Mount Saini. Before giving the Ten Commandments the Lord told Moses, “And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, ‘Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death” (Exodus 19:12).

The Holy presence of God moved from being at Mount Saini to the tabernacle. A tent like sanctuary used for housing the Ark of the Covenant as Israel traveled in the wilderness. Later after settling into the Promised Land, the tabernacle became obsolete when Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem. Whether God was at Mount Saini, the Tabernacle, or the Temple there were shared characteristics. They were at the center of Israel. They were exalted above everything else. They were authoritative for life. They were finally and most of all holy. Of course, it was never the place or people, but God who determined this and it was only going to be for a time. The holiness of God is that foolishness now calling all to be cleansed in Christ Jesus.

1. **There was nothing foolish about Jesus cleansing the temple.**
2. When He arrived at Passover things were out of order in an orderly way.

* Buying animals for sacrifice became the center of attention.
* What they exalted was the ways of man that had taken advantage of God’s system of mercy.
* An authoritative life by faith in God’s Word turned to what was good for business.
* Of course, Jesus had an answer for how God’s holy law treats such wickedness.

1. We confess our disorder recognizing who alone who is holy.
2. **Yet, Jesus was far more than cleansing the house of God from unholy people.**
3. Others had done such things before, but this was the sign of someone greater in their midst.

* Zeal for His Father’s house was at the center, but it was Jesus own body as the sacrifice!
* He would be exalted by the cross for this system was God’s mercy of how He would save sinners.
* Christ’s death proclaimed His authoritative word as life for, “in three days I will raise it up.”
* The Law was never going to let men into the presence of God’s holiness, so God turned in Christ to bear all wickedness for the unholy.

1. Lent clears out the glory and wisdom of men to preach how God is stronger.

1. **Christ’s holiness is in His Church, but this foolishness is how God fully cleanses any.**
2. St. Paul proclaims, “For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

* At the center is nothing else than the zeal of Christ who is a jealous God seeking to justify sinners.
* What God has exalted is a system not of money, but the means of grace that generously makes us Holy in Christ.
* Authoritative life is now the Word of Jesus in our business reviving the promise of baptism.
* Rather than turning over tables, Jesus brings the answer of His Supper as the Holy way God celebrates with us.

Secular society needs more than signs of separation for holiness. Instead of “keep out” the Law’s judgment leaves us with Christ crucified. The power and wisdom of God is holiness made right by the Gospel. The holiness of God is that foolishness now calling all to be cleansed in Christ Jesus. Amen. Now the peace of God that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.