

45 And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were selling, 46 saying to them, "It is written, 'AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN." 47 And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him, 48 and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging upon His words.

Discrimination has been in the news this week. Our ears have been trained by the news media to immediately associate that word with evil. Discrimination is evil. Discrimination is always used as a negative. Bad people discriminate.

Pam and I both like those bags of tangerines that they have at the grocery store. Cuties. But, have you ever picked up those bags to have a look at those things before you buy them, and you find one of them is mushy and turning green and emits a foul odor. There's a moldy one in the bag.

So you pick up a different bag to find a bag of them that is un-affected. Why? Well for one thing that green stuff is contagious. It spreads from cutie to cutie until if left for a long enough time, they will all become green.

Now, if you're a good son of Israel, or like me, perhaps a thrifty scotsman, that's right, I'm a MacDonald, you can take that bag with the green one to the produce lady and she'll remove the green one and mark the remaining ones in the bag half price. I've done that, but even though a scotsman, I'm also lazy and that's more trouble than it's worth.

Just find a good bag and pay the 4 bucks instead of taking the trouble to get them for 2 bucks. Everything I've just described to you is discriminatory. Since Pam is working hard and I live a life of retired ease, I do a lot of our shopping these days. And being a good scotsman I try to get the most bang for what few bucks we have at our disposal. Few and getting fewer since inflation and taxes are having a race to see which can go up faster.

The entire time I'm in the grocery store I am discriminating. It's very personal. I am doing my best to make the best choices possible from all that is available

to me on those shelves.

Our lives are non-stop discrimination, all day every day. And according to Pascal, the mathematician and philosopher, every choice we make is guided by what we believe will make us happiest in the long term. All day long we make discriminatory choices.

At the end of the day I'll want to veg out and watch a movie. And I look through the Netflix titles trying to find something that might be interesting. That's discrimination. There are filthy things to watch. I don't choose those. That's discrimination.

Right now Broke Back Mountain is in the top ten movies and it keeps flashing on my screen. Watch me. Watch me. No, I'm not going to be watching that movie. Discrimination.

Discrimination gets it's negative connotation from the past 50 years of the media speaking daily about racial discrimination. That kind of discrimination is actually evil. It is negative. To discriminate against another image bearer because it pleased God to create them with different levels of melanin than someone else is a form of insanity. That kind of discrimination is evil.

But now our fabulous media sources are using the same rules that have effectively given race discrimination the negative connotation that it deserves and they are paralleling those same negative behaviours onto discrimination of people who are LGBTQ++. Our culture is being told by our media sources; It's equally evil to discriminate against those folks as it was to discriminate against people of different color.

Is that a fair parallel? Not biblically. It's not evil to be the color that it pleased God to create you. It is evil to engage in sexual activity in any case at all except for the design of God that young people of the opposite gender are commanded to leave father and mother and cleave to each other in marriage and to bring children into stable families.

Other than that, all sex outside of marriage, not just the LGBTQ stuff, all of it, is evil. All of it is an abomination that God hates. God doesn't just single out the LGBTQ folks in His discrimination, he hates all sex outside of marriage. That isn't new. That has been the teaching of the church of God, from this book, for 20 centuries. And it was the teaching of the jews for 20 centuries before we adopted it. We discriminate against sin. A pure church is a powerful church. A holy people is a God pleasing people. There is power in holiness.

As we speak, the powers that we elected to rule over our land are busying themselves in the effort to remove government funds of any kind from christian schools that discriminate in any way against people of any lifestyle that is forbidden for christians. Any school that discriminates against lifestyles defined as sinful in this book are classified as evil discrimination by our government. Woe to that nation that calls evil good, and good evil.

20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who turn darkness to light and light to darkness, who replace bitter with sweet and sweet with bitter. 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight....Isaiah 5:20,21

The government is going to punish those evil christian places that hold to the same doctrines that the church has held to for 2000 years by withholding funding that originates with the tax payers.

Arguably, those schools brought that problem upon themselves by ever forming alliances with government sources of money in the first place. Those folks would have been wise to have been more discriminating in where the money comes from to make their schools viable.

Right now it's mostly student loans and ties to the NCAA that are wielding the easiest pressure on christian schools. Those areas are the low hanging fruit that will get picked first. Easiest inroute to pressure christian schools to not be christian.

But it's a short reach higher in the fruit tree to remove the accreditation process and when that happens, the schools become valueless to those who attend. Why pay for a school that cannot provide a recognized certification that you worked for a degree in your learning. The government and the culture can cause schools to be non-viable in the immediate censure of their accreditation recognition.

The problem is discrimination. Our secular culture sees the black and white discriminations clearly mandated in scripture for the purity and power of God's people as evil threats to the autonomy of humans to do as they please, and according to the culture; even to be.

They argue "*this is who I am.*" Your discrimination says that I cannot be who I am. You are erasing me. If your discrimination stands I cannot exist. That's a powerful argument.

So powerful that the majority of the people in our land have bought into it to the point that it is now widely believed that anyone who thinks what the Bible clearly proclaims is the standard must be eradicated and stamped out. Discrimination based in the crystal clear black and white words of this book is evil. That's where we're at. Sort of waiting for the inevitable knock on the door.

In our passage that we want to consider this morning, Jesus clearly engages in some discriminatory behaviour and it's going to be an interesting and useful lesson for us who have a biblical mandate to be discriminators. We have a pattern here that Jesus engaged in, in His righteous discrimination.

This is the day after the humble triumphal entry on the foal of a donkey. A group of political activists who hate Rome and probably chafe under both Roman rule and the harsh religious rulers of Israel, have collaborated to receive Jesus as King. They want Jesus to be King. This is His first act as a would be King of Israel. We elected you to be King. We spread the palm branches and our outer garments in the road to make a highway for the King. What will you do first . . . as King?

45 And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were selling,

Jerusalem has three feasts each year where the Israelites all crowd into Jerusalem for a religious feast and celebration. Three pilgrimages each year. Pesach (the feast of Passover), Shavuot (the feast of Weeks or Pentecost), and Sukkot (the feast of Tabernacles, Tents or Booths) with by far the most important to attend being Passover. If you can only make one of these, choose Passover.

Jerusalem at the time when Jesus did these things was overflowed with pilgrims. Some say up to 2.5 million people may have been crowded into Jerusalem at this time.

And for the rich men who control the temple, the chief priests and important movers and shakers of Israel's religious life, this is a time where they can get rich selling sacrificial animals and also changing foreign money which isn't allowed in the temple treasury into money that is allowed.

You've walked 3 days to get to Jerusalem, you're not in a position to argue about prices. A perfect lamb for the sacrifice, declared perfect by the folks in charge, can get 3 - 10X what you can sell a lamb for back home. So you pay the exorbitant price.

Maybe you're too cheap to do that so you bring your own lamb all the way from Galilee or wherever, and the priest declares it imperfect. No good. It has some flaw that he finds. Get in line and pay the thieves.

And all of this buying and selling is happening on the temple grounds, and the closer you are to the religious leaders in the croney and interfamily system, the better your spot in the malay.

It was going on inside the temple. In the court of the gentiles, it looks like a country fair. In the court of the women, it looks like the swap meet at Hot August Nights. It's a disgraceful display, and the guys at the top of the

pyramid are the chief priests and elders of Israel. Rich corrupt men.

*45 And He entered the temple and began to **cast out** those who were selling,*

The word, cast out, ekballo, is a word that is steeped in discrimination. The etymology of the word goes back to produce. A produce sorter casts out the produce that is no good. Nobody buys green moldy oranges. You ekballo those. You cast them out. You winnow the wheat from the chaff and you cast out the worthless chaff.

But it grew to mean anyone casting anything out. The bouncer at the night club ekballo's the drunk who is causing problems. Out he goes. When the boat that Paul was on was sinking in the Mediteranean storm, the crew ekballo's the cargo. They cast it into the sea trying to save the ship. The demons ask Jesus not to cast them into the pit. Cast them into the pigs instead. And he does. Same word.

I watched a video of a guy in Canada, some kind of a preacher, maybe Catholic, but the face mask nazi's show up and this guy casts them out. He orders them to leave and does it loudly and continually until they all left. Then he continues to shout at them until they get in their vehicles and depart. They didn't have a warrant and he ekballo'd them from the premises until they get one, which I'm sure they will. They interrupted his Easter services.

It's a strong word. It's not a gentle removal. You throw the worthless produce out. With force. Very direct involvement in the casting away.

The first time Jesus did this at the beginning of His ministry, He tipped over their tables and forced them out with whips. Jesus must have been a powerful guy. Nobody really argued with Him when He throws them out. It was a discriminatory act. He didn't throw everyone out. He singled out a group and threw them out. The business for profit people. The impure and corrupt inside the Holy house of God are separated and thrown out.

I wonder what Jesus would think of the coffee bar churches. When it comes

to churches generating money, coffee bars are probably the least of the offenses. Actually He might go right up on stage and throw a lot of preachers out these days. Preaching for profit.

Jesus discriminately threw out the sellers. He discriminated against a distinct group of people, and threw them out. It wasn't race based discrimination. But it definitely was righteousness based. Purity based. Jesus discriminated against a group of people who were doing unrighteous acts in His Father's house.

46 saying to them, "It is written, OK, we need to stop right there. Jesus is acting in a discriminatory way based on what is written in a Holy Book. Jesus is ejecting evil people based on words that are a standard.

We didn't just make this up yesterday. The judeo-christian system of morality is word based. *46 saying to them, "It is written, We believe that the words in the book have authority because they are revealed by God and written down by men who were under the direct inspiration of God.*

The words of this book have all the authority of the God who created everything. The God of heaven speaks, and what He says, is **the** standard. Authority in written words, revealed to men, written down by inspiration. God breathed.

Was it necessary for Jesus to use this approach? Using the authority of scripture to accomplish His task? Not really. He's God and everything He says is the Word of God. One time He spoke and a whole Roman regiment fell down like dominoes. Those guys came back without Him and when the officers who sent them questioned why, they said, "Never a man spoke like this man speaks!"

Jesus could have just ejected those sellers because He's Lord of the Sabbath and He said so. Out you go. He had authority to actually do that, but He doesn't. He shows us for all time, those of us who have no authority of our own to speak and it must happen, He shows us by example that the authority

to discriminate in matters of righteousness and purity of God's people is based in words in a book.

Holy words in a Holy book that have authority outside of us. I have no authority. I have no opinions. Nothing I can say or do means anything. I have no power. But this book has all the power of the Creator, the King of Heaven and earth behind it's words. We must do what it commands, even if it makes the world hate us and bring us harm. These words are authoritative.

Unlike me, Jesus does have authority outside of this book, but He graciously chose to show me how to approach discriminatory ejections based on the words of this book. *46 saying to them, "It is written, 'AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."*

He quotes the prophet Isaiah and the prophet Jeremiah. Things already written down. He is saying, I'm ejecting you based on scripture written in history past by Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Isaiah 56:7

I will bring them to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar, for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations."

That's actually a millennial prophecy that reaches even beyond us. The context is the future, when Messiah is reigning in Jerusalem on the throne of David. At that time, this prophecy will have it's ultimate fulfillment.

That was the ultimate plan for God's house. In the future, when Satan is deposed and vanquished, the Nations will come to Jerusalem and worship the King of kings in the house of God, the new temple, and it will be called a house of prayer.

That's the model. That's the ultimate goal and standard. That's what's supposed to happen in God's house. A house for worship and thoughtful

prayers. A place where people come and meet their God in dignified worship. A house where God accepts the sacrifices and offerings of a people who are purchased and cleansed and made pure and holy. Communion with God is based in holy living.

But instead, business for profit. And not even decent legal profit margins. Extortion is what's taking place in the house of prayer. Ugly ugly extortive business ventures. Inside God's house!

Then He quotes; Jeremiah 7:11

Has this house, which bears My Name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Yes, I too have seen it, declares the LORD.

Supposed to be a house of prayer . . . IS a den of thieves. From scripture. Unarguable. Jesus ejects the for profit business people out of the temple, based on the words of the prophets which are the very words of God. Get out thieves! Get out robbers. Out! Action! Based in scripture. Action based in Holy Authoritative words.

And the filthy rich rulers of Israel whole heartedly agreed and said You're absolutely right Jesus, that needed to happen, and the scripture is clear support that what you did was righteous altogether. Right? That's what happened, right? I mean what else could all those fine religious men say?

Those men who are filthy rich in that culture based on the extortions of the sellers that Jesus just ejected. Jesus just got into their pockets. It's not only a rebuke, it's costing them money, directly. Did they react?

47 And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him,

Rome could care less about Jesus. Rome doesn't get involved in "in-house" religious problems in Israel. If they had some people on the ground watching the show, I'm sure they would have been amused.

But the group of men who are the movers and shakers in the false religion of Israel during Jesus time are furious. They are beside themselves figuring out a way to destroy Jesus. They don't just want Him to go away, they want Him dead. All of the most important men in Israel want Jesus dead. Not ejected. Dead. But . . . How to do it. They have a problem.

Look again at the example Jesus gives to us about acceptable worship in God's house of prayer. After He ejects the for profit business sellers, what is the form of worship inside God's house?

How does He approach worship? Does He put on scarlet robes and funny hats and parade around the place in a great show of liturgy? Does He march up and down isles with flags and vials of potions and who knows what else in a theatrical liturgy? Does He chant or howl or roll around or perform? Maybe we can learn something from Jesus about acceptable worship style; *And He was teaching daily in the temple;*

Why is it in evangelicalism and beyond in the larger tent that calls itself christian, that real exegetical teaching from this book is so rare? Jesus went every day to the temple and taught the people.

I was lucky. I grew up in a sound teaching ministry. And the man I began with is still doing exactly that 52 years later in the same place. He's 81 years old now. And he has never stopped teaching from this book. Verse by verse exegesis.

If you took this book away from me, I'd be out of business in 30 seconds. I've got nothing else to offer except this book. Nothing. None of the qualities that people look for in a preacher. No theater, no style, no nothing. But I can teach from this book. A one trick pony. Jesus had lots of other tricks He could do. But He showed up daily in the temple and . . . taught.

48 and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging upon His words.

They can't just seize Him and murder Him without a revolt. The people think Jesus is going to seize the rulers and be King. That's what they want. They're hanging on every Word He says. No one has ever taught them like Jesus teaches them. The words of this book have inherent power. So the ruler's hands are tied.

That's providence at work by the way. God has orchestrated every second, every breath of every player in this drama. Jesus is the lamb of God, who will be hanging on the cross at the very time that all of the sacrificial lambs are being slaughtered in the temple.

God's Lamb. God's sacrifice. God's timing. These angry rulers cannot touch Him for a few more days. It's tuesday and the last supper will be on thursday. Meanwhile, Jesus is going to come daily to the temple and teach.

What is our take away this morning? How and when does the church discriminate? Is it mandated by this book to discriminate? How do we react to the world around us? Why do the WWJD blue letter Bible people not spend much time in this passage. What would Jesus do? Sometimes the right thing for Him to do is drive people out with a whip, turning over their money tables.

What about us? Things are happening at an accelerated pace it seems. In Edmonton, Alberta Canada, not far from where our dad attended Prairie Bible Institute, a Bible honoring church was seized by the government and a 2 perimeter fence was installed along with a full time security force to keep the members out of their church.

Does that shock you? At all? We meet in our cozy historic building in our sleepy little town in the middle of nowhere and we seem so well insulated. Oh, that could never happen here. People tell me that all the time. Nothing to worry about. Don't be a false paranoia spreader.

Let me set a framework for you. There are two warring unseen powers waging a war over possession of this tiny planet we call home. One is a

usurper who exerts ownership by controlling the inhabitants because of sin. His name is Satan. And the whole world lies in the power of the evil one, according to John the apostle. Jesus called him the ruler of this world.

The other unseen force is God, the creator of everything that **is**. He is rightful owner and has revealed to us in His Word His plan to retake this fallen planet, to depose and incarcerate Satan in chains, and to judge all evil, all sin, all rebellion against Him as King of kings and Ruler of all. That's the sweet by and by for all who believe in Jesus for forgiveness of sinful rebellion.

But meanwhile, in the nasty now and now it's a drama with the world, with all of it's duped sinners mindlessly obeying the ruler of this world in conflict with a remnant of people who have come out of this world and belong to God.

So when we see a government seizing a church's property and putting up a double layer fence to keep the christians out, we're not that surprised. As evil grows worse and worse, a sign of the end times, we expect to see that a lot more, and worse. BTW the pastor of that church was locked up in a maximum security prison in solitary confinement for 35 days before this latest attack and siezure of church property.

This same government that locked down a true man of God also turned pedophiles and sex offenders free, back into society while they held a Bible teaching pastor in confinement.

What's most confusing though is all the dirty laundry that gets aired on line. Something like this happens and thousands of people who identify in some way as believing christians are hurling insults upon the faithful preacher and those who faithfully continued to meet together mandated by God in His word. Christians shouting at christians as the world laughs at the display!

I would offer some clarification for those of you who might also be confused. Go and read again the parable of the wheat and the tares. Or the net that catches every kind of fish. The tares will be sorted out by God and cast out. The worthless fish in the net will be sorted out by God and cast out.

After 100 years of social gospel and 60 years of easy believism are we surprised that the fields are white with tares? Wheat is thin on the ground these days. I'm always pleasantly surprised these days when I find another wheat. It's like a rare thing.

What about the question of discrimination that we learned first hand that Jesus engaged in. Do we as christians and as a distinct fellowship of believers in Jesus together as a local body, do we discriminate? How do we approach this question in view of Jesus discriminating against business for profit sellers in His Father's house. Jesus discriminated while cleansing God's house of ungodly sellers.

It's in the news this week. Christians are in trouble with the world over discrimination. Some christians. We could segregate the christians real quick. Bible believing christians that believe this book clearly defines a morality that all christians must be in submission to.

Christians who believe the clear words of this book have authority over how they live and what they may and may not do. Those christians are in trouble this week. In the news. Our government is seeking ways to inflict pain on those folks.

Now, down to the nitty gritty. Do we discriminate in this church? You better believe we do, on many levels. If I die this week, or you folks dismiss me as your pastor for whatever reason, maybe this sermon, you are to be totally discriminating in who you call to fill this pulpit.

In Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 there are 21 qualifications that must be met in order to be an elder. And there is a second and nearly equal list in order to be a deacon. The only qualifier that is different between an elder and a deacon is that an elder must be able to teach this book.

I believe our other helpers and teachers and those who minister at any level in this church must meet the qualifications of a deacon. We are blessed with

folks who do meet those qualifications and who serve us faithfully.

Folks, that's discrimination any way you cut it. Sorry, but the drag queens can't teach sunday school here after they finish reading to the kiddies at the library. Not gonna happen on my watch. That's discrimination. We are discriminators here.

The very definition of a shepherd is a person who discriminates. You sheep are welcome, come on in. Get fed and watered with loving protection. Sorry wolves. No wolves allowed. Not even in sheeps clothing. Sorry wolves, you can't come in. Discrimination is a good thing. God requires it of His shepherds and His sheep. Don't hire a sex offender to babysit the kids.

Paul says, I speak as if mad. Well, the world has gone mad, and when we speak with any sensibility the world is outraged at us as if we were the ones who had gone berserk.

Finally, do we discriminate against sinners. Every color and type of sinner? No, of course not. We welcome all sinners to come and hear the word of God for as long as it takes for them to become submissive to God and repent. We welcome all sinners with open arms. Come to the waters and drink. We love sinners. Every stripe of sinner! Welcome.

That's how we all got here! Sinners who came and heard the good news of free grace and forgiveness in Christ Jesus who died for us. Every christian became a christian . . . as a sinner. We remain sinners at some level. Submissive sinners who come again and again to Jesus for washing as we battle against our inner sinfulness.

However, if there is no repentance and the sinner chooses to remain in rebellion, that person can't be made to feel like a member of our little family. We welcome you to listen submissively to the Word of God, and we pray for your repentance and salvation.

But after a time, if there is no ultimate submission to Jesus, if you are not

willing to leave Satan's world behind and flee to safety in the kingdom of God, if your intention is to engage in an ongoing lifestyle of what this book clearly defines as sin, we have to separate ourselves from you.

Also, if someone becomes factious, if an unsound doctrinally person is trying to spread the cancer of unsound words, Titus 3:10 instructs us to separate from such a person after a first and second warning.

Beloved, everything I've just told you is easily catalogued as discrimination. We are discriminators. And we are not surprised if the world is offended by the discrimination that God has mandated us to in His book. No surprise at all.

Finally, is there some necessary wisdom for us? Of course. Of course. We don't need our gatling guns blaring everywhere in all directions at all times. We want to be like Daniel who silently, in his room, with his windows open for all to see, prayed to his God. Classy discrimination. Then we'll take what comes.

Beloved, for twenty centuries Satan has been at war with the church of God. And Satan is wise. He isn't stupid. He is crafty. He knows that the church's power is directly connected with her purity. And for 20 centuries he has attacked that area of the church. An impure church is a powerless church. That's his goal.

Has he been successful? Corruption lets all the power out. Sin allowed is power deflated. The history books are there for you to read.

But this is the first time where that attack is frontal, where the powers that be have declared holiness defined by this book is evil. Purity defined by this book is evil. If you believe the things in this book and do them, you are evil and we're going to use all the power of government to stop the evil of your definition of purity.

Our government says it's evil to be holy. It's evil to be pure. It's a direct

frontal attack. It's evil to believe the words of this book. And people who call themselves christians are standing with the government leading the charge. It's like a perfect storm.

It's a great time to be a wheat.

Life is for sowing. The harvest is not here.