



Under construction

John 2.13-22

A dramatic scene of Jesus creating chaos in the Temple by driving out the money changers and animal sellers. The Jewish authorities are not pleased and demand to know who he thinks he is, at which Jesus predicts his death and resurrection in a metaphor about rebuilding the Temple.

Now read **John 2.13-22** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

This passage offers three ways in which we can think about the Temple: the physical space to worship God, Jesus' body as God here on earth, our own bodies to honour God. Do you find a physical place is important in your relationship with God? What does Jesus' message about his own death and resurrection mean to you today? In what way do you see yourself as a temple, built to honour God?

STONE TOWER



On stony beaches, you often see pebble towers that others have built, like natural sculptures. Gather together some suitable pebbles or stones and take some quiet moments to build a tower yourself. You might like to write a letter on each to spell 'Jesus'. Take some time to build your tower several times over, reflecting on the passage and using the images of these pillars. In what ways are you 'under construction': being shaped and moulded into something special? What might be getting in the way? What do you need to add more of, to build yourself up?

PLAY

Play a game of Jenga™, where you have to remove blocks from the tower without it falling down. Each time you remove a block, read the next verse of the Bible passage and come up with a question you have about that verse. If you are playing the game with others, see if anyone can answer your question, or offer their ideas about it. If you are playing on your own, write the questions down and share them with someone from your church, next time you catch up.

DAILY BUILDING

At the start of the week, cut up some paper into brick-shaped pieces and clear a board or space on a wall. Towards the end of each day, find a time to reflect on some things you did that day which showed something about God or what it is to be part of the Church – God's spiritual house. If you live with others, you could talk together about the things you're writing down on the brick-shaped paper. Each time, stick your bricks onto your board or wall, and build a structure over the course of the week.

SPACE

Watch the market-place scene from *Beauty and the Beast* [PG] (www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tMoE8siNo8) and notice the busyness and an environment where people are keen to sell their wares.

How does that make you feel?

Can you imagine the Temple as Jesus found it, full of people doing business?

What are the things in this environment which distract us from God?

In the light of social distancing, is the busyness as part of this passage an uncomfortable thing to imagine?

Have you missed the busyness of being and worshipping together in a physical space, or have you enjoyed the new opportunities for quietness in the space – in church or at home?

LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

This week, choose something to give up – just for the week. It could be meat, or sugar, playing video games, or anything else. During the week, whenever you think about or want that thing, let it remind you that you too are 'under construction' and God is at work in you. Ask God to show you more about what you can be, and what the Church can be, too. Place a reminder of what you gave up in your garden tray or on your garden page (that you've been progressing throughout Lent). Try to place or draw the items so that you make the tray or page begin to look like a sculpture garden.



Thinking it through...

Let's face it, people don't always understand what we've said. Can you think of times when you thought something was really clear – that you had agreed what you were going to do – but, when it came to it, what happened wasn't what you were expecting? It's often only with hindsight that we truly understand.

It was no different for Jesus and his disciples. That day in the Temple when he cleared everyone and everything out would have been something they wouldn't forget. But what was it all about? How could he possibly talk about destroying and rebuilding the Temple in three days? It had taken nearly 50 years to build.

It had been the same when Jesus had told them he would die: it just didn't make sense.

It was only after his death and resurrection that they put two and two together, and made the connections with other things he had said. Jesus wasn't talking about the building in Jerusalem: he was speaking about his own body. Although early Christians loved meeting in the Temple to pray, they also quickly realised that they didn't need a place to be close to God because Jesus was now the 'place' where they could make that connection. It was still hard to explain to other people. Paul found this. Jesus' death as a criminal seems really stupid until you understand the whole story.

It can be like that for us too. Do we understand it all? Have we made all the connections? Being a follower of Jesus means recognising that we are on a journey where we need to allow time and God's wisdom, (not necessarily worldly wisdom) to guide us. We are not fully formed. We are growing into the knowledge of God. Even the disciples had to work it out over time, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Recognising that we are not fully formed, that we are under construction, is when we begin to rely on God rather than ourselves. Have we realised that? Do we allow others the space and time to grow and develop?

Next week is Mothering Sunday – don't forget to join us at 10.00 a.m. for our Morning Praise Family Worship



Daily Readings for week commencing 8 th March 2021		
Monday	Jeremiah 7: 37-52	John 7: 37-52
Tuesday	Jeremiah 11: 18-12:6	John 7: 53-8:11
Wednesday	Jeremiah 13: 1-11	John 8: 12-30
Thursday	Jeremiah 14	John 8: 31-47
Friday	Jeremiah 15: 10-end	John 8: 48-end
Saturday	Jeremiah 16: 10-17:4	John 9: 1-17

Pray for those in need...Sally, Zena, Katie-Louise, Pam, Sue, Bryn, Evelyn, Shane, Pat, Heather, Dorothy, Mandy, Joyce and Pete. **Please remember those who mourn the loss of loved ones at this time...especially Bettie, Hasan and Jayne.**