

**THE MAN WITH A WHIP IN HIS HAND**  
**John 2:12-17**

Back to John 2. – It's a chapter of stark contrasts and big surprises:

HOW do we explain this Jesus of Nazareth, this Christ of Christianity? – One day, He's in Cana at a wedding, turning water into wine, blessing marriage and causing celebration. –

Then, just a few days later, He's in Jerusalem cleansing the temple, making a whip, chasing people away, overturning tables.

Over here, Jesus is full compassion, rescuing a troubled situation. – But over here, Jesus is furious, causing trouble and bringing judgment. – *Is this the same Person? – Can this be the same Person?...*

Indeed it is. – Remember what we saw in 1:14 – Reread...

This is John's goal for his entire Gospel. – John wants us to join in this "we". – Through this book, he wants us to share in this greatest of all discoveries, seeing the glory of Jesus' deity, that He is God the Son!

And if Jesus is God, that means He too will share in all of God's attributes, perfectly and fully. – I.e., "full of grace and truth".

So that's how you explain these apparent paradoxes we're about to see in John 2: Jesus is full of both "grace and truth", simultaneously and consistently. –

100% gracious and loving, 100% true and holy – 100% both, undiluted, undiminished, undivided. – Few places in the Bible capture that blend more vividly than in John chp 2.

+ C.S. Lewis' helps us imagine this with all of his biblical imagery:

In one of the Narnia books, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lucy & Edmund come across a pure white lamb in the middle of a beautiful green field, with a gorgeous blue sky overhead. – This lamb then cooks a breakfast of fish for them – the most delicious meal they'd ever tasted!

Then they begin discussing with the lamb about how to get the land of Aslan (i.e., Heaven). – As the lamb begins to explain, a marvellous thing happens: "His snowy white flushed into tawny gold and his size changed and he was Aslan himself towering above them and scattering light from his mane."

The Lamb becomes a Lion. – Sound familiar? – This is Christianity, this is our Saviour & Lord. – This is John's own vision later, in Revelation chp. 5. – He sees the loving Lamb slain for us, yet also the mighty Lion of Judah who reigns:

Gentle and humble. – Yet also regal and fierce and wrathful against sin.

One day, Revelation tells us, the world will face Jesus' holy rage in a way that makes the temple cleansing pale in comparison.

People will “call to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’” (6:16)

BUT before that terrible, final day comes, Scripture gives us glimpses and forewarnings of Jesus’ fury. – One of those glimpses is here in John 2, when Jesus cleanses the temple. –

Here we see that lesser known, unpleasant but necessary side of Jesus’ deity & His glory. – Here we see a jealous Jesus, an angry Jesus, an intolerant and an outraged Jesus. – Let’s find out why:

Stand, Read & Pray:

v. 12 – Capernaum was to become ‘home base’ for much of Jesus Galilean ministry (1+ yrs.?). – Looks like His family are still supportive at present, though it will not last.

Oops, so much for the Roman Catholic myth of Mary’s perpetual virginity. – Looks like these are half-brothers of Jesus, later children Joseph & Mary bore after Christ was born.

Give title...

So does Jesus cleanse the temple twice, or once, in His ministry? – Matthew, Mark & Luke all tell us about Jesus’ cleansing the temple at the end of His ministry, after His triumphal entry, right before His passion week and death.

What then is John doing here? – Best answer: Jesus cleansed the temple twice. – And why not? – If those money-makers never repented, how long until they’d be back at it again, lining their pockets at the next Jewish festival, preying upon all the worshippers? – Not long at all.

Here’s why we say there must’ve been two temple cleansings: (a) there are noticeable differences in the two accounts – from what Jesus says and does, to how the people respond;

(b) John has been careful here about his references to time and sequence, so we cannot disregard this. – Clearly, it is long before Jesus’ final march to Jerusalem and His cross.

→WHAT does this tell us then, if Jesus did this twice? – If Jesus’ outrage cause Him twice to clean house and purge the temple? – That Jesus bookends His entire ministry in this way? – Of all the ways for Jesus to begin & end His public ministry, why this awkward, disturbing, severe incident? –

Here’s why (I believe):

*Because Jesus’ temple cleansing encapsulates His entire ministry and powerfully displays His deity. –*

*In this one act, Jesus demonstrates His authority to purge Israel’s worship and replace it with something better, with a new temple, Himself. –*

*In this one act, Jesus also foreshadows the future destruction of this temple in 70AD....*

*In this one act (of temple cleansing), Jesus shows His all-consuming passion, the single motive that would drive His entire ministry – a zeal for His Father’s glory.*

*And in this one act (of temple cleansing), Christ strikes at the root of all Israel’s problems, and all of ours too.*

→ See, at the core, our greatest problems in life are not financial, relational, or physical. – At the core, our greatest problems are not vocational, political, marital, or family-related. –

NO, our root problem, beneath & behind everything else, is a *worship problem*. – We fail to love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength (Matt. 22). –

ALL of life’s problems can be traced back to this: *a worship problem*. (that we entertain idols, that we’ve allowed worldly distractions to drown out God’s presence, etc.)

~ Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*: *With our loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine presence. We have lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence. Modern Christianity is simply not producing the kind of Christian who can appreciate or experience the life in the Spirit. The words, “Be still, and know that I am God,” mean next to nothing to the self-confident, bustling worshiper in [this age].*

~ ‘Modern man worships his work, works at his play, and plays at his worship.’

**\*THREE ASPECTS of Jesus’ attack on irreverent & impure worship:**

## **1. vv. 13-14, The SITUATION**

v. 13 – Ever since it was first commanded in Exodus, obedient Jews commemorated this great festival. – It was a time for remembering God’s glorious redemption, delivering them out of bondage in Egypt through the blood of a lamb. –

And Jesus kept the Law of God fully to “fulfill all righteousness” for us, so that included keeping Passover.

This was the peak event on the Jewish calendar. – Most of life & business across Israel came to a halt during this time, so that all could flock to the temple in Jerusalem. – You didn’t want to miss it.

It is estimated that some 1 million Jews descended upon Jerusalem at this time. – That 4x the normal population of Jerusalem then. – Talk about max capacity! – Every room & bed and loft must’ve been in use, and then some! – The city would’ve been bursting at the seams, teeming with this sea of worshippers.

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, the Temple would’ve been a prominent site – one of the most magnificent buildings in the whole ancient world. – Back then, there was no Muslim ‘Dome of the Rock’ marking Jerusalem’s skyline. – Only the Jewish Temple, at that time, the famous ‘2<sup>nd</sup> Temple’.

First built under Zerubbabel in 516 AD, after Israel returned from exile. – Then, nearly 500 yrs later, just before Christ was born, in 20 BC, Herod the Great began to greatly expand and beautify the temple. – It was still under construction in Jesus' day.

This was the temple, the hub of the entire Jewish nation, the centre of their faith, the heart of their worship, the symbol of their whole identity as Hebrews.

As Jesus and His entourage approached the city, they would've seen the cream colour of the Temple's marble walls, the "gleaming gold of her pillars, illuminated by the morning sun," and the roofing of carved cedar.

We can only imagine how the vastness and beauty of this temple would have inspired worship. – It reminded man of his smallness in comparison to the greatness of the Most High God.

To approach the temple, you would first have to enter the Court of the Gentiles. – If you were not a Jew, this was as far as you could go, and no further, no closer.

The Court of the Gentiles was this great 'patio' or foyer around the Temple itself. – This court was a few rugby fields in size, massively spacious, to house the tens of thousands of worshippers that would descend upon that place.

This portico was supported by rows of magnificent columns. – Josephus tells us they were each some 12 m. high. – And they were so wide around that three people could join hands (in a circle) around the base of one pillar.

There in this courtyard, Gentiles were invited to come and pray, to seek the living God, to call upon His name. – Like the Melchizedeks & Rahabs, the Ruths & Namaans of long ago, the nations came to give glory to the God of Israel.

Recall: This was God's whole reason for making the Jews a great nation: Gen. 12:3, 'In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' – God had not blessed the Jews for their own sake, but so that through them the nations might be reached.

Isa. 56:7, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." (which Jesus quoted later, at His 2<sup>nd</sup> temple cleansing)

*Which makes what happens next all the more repulsive:*

v. 14 – Some background: Passover pilgrims (coming from afar) needed two main things when coming to the temple: the right animal & the right money.

(a) the right animal – kosher sacrifices;

No doubt, there was a HUGE market for this: Massive numbers of animals being sold in the city, slaughtered there, and burnt in the Temple – priests could hardly cope –

Josephus claims that one year (AD 66) 255,600 lambs were sacrificed, just for one Passover in Jerusalem.

(b) the right currency – not filthy Gentile coins, but approved coinage that was also kosher.

NB, the Temple treasury was a big bank operation. – Every Jewish male, 20yrs. and older, had to pay their temple tax. – And of course, the whole operation was owned by the high priest, Annas, and his family. – How convenient!...

So WHY BOTHER sending people over to the Mt. of Olives, as they used to do, to purchase their sacrifices and exchange their money?

Why not be more pragmatic, more practical, make worship more convenient, give people what they want?... And if it was working, who could question it? – We're getting results, right?...

People also figured (cf. Mk. 11:16), 'Hey, I'm coming into town with a heavy load on my back, why bother going around the temple, as if it were something so holy and special? –

It is far too inconvenient and uncomfortable to carry this burden all the way around the temple and into the city. – Why not just take a shortcut here through the Court of the Gentiles, as sort of thoroughfare?'...

Are you starting to see what angered Jesus so much?...

Yes, these animals & money exchanges were necessary business. – But there were *two major problems*:

(a) they were doing business in the wrong WAY ("den of robbers"), the religious leaders lining their pockets off of poor pilgrims, overcharging, heavy exchange rates (up to 12 %) etc;

(b) they were doing business in the wrong PLACE, the very courts of God's temple, the sacred place of worship! – Complete sacrilege! –

Merchants shouting from their stalls to customers? – Noisy, pushy customers haggling over a purchase or an exchange rate? – Combined with the bawling of the animals, with all their lovely deposits of dung everywhere?!...

It would've been like the Rand Show & the Stock Exchange all in one!

By now you should be hearing the noise, sensing the chaos, and even smelling the stench of this violation of true worship, this commercialising of religion, of turning God into big business.

~ "Instead of solemn dignity and the murmur of prayer, there is the bellowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. Instead of brokenness and contrition, holy adoration and prolonged petition, there is noisy commerce." (Carson)

Being a devout Jew, and being the Son of God, Christ would've been filled with the OT. – As He walked into the temple that day, you wonder if some of these texts didn't come to mind:

Isa. 1:11-15...

OR

Amos 5:21-23...

This helps us understand something of Jesus' hostile reaction here.

→HOW do we make sure our worship is not an irritation to God, does not invite His anger and invoke His wrath? – By looking to Christ and learning from how He reacted here...

More specifically, one other OT text might've especially been in Jesus' mind:

Mal. 3:1-4...

That prophesy had begun to be fulfilled in this unlikely individual – this carpenter from Nazareth, this rookie rabbi from Galilee who had just arrived in Jerusalem.

## **2. vv. 15-16, The REACTION**

Jesus was the greatest of all Reformers – greater than Hezekiah & Josiah in the OT (2 Chron. 30; 2 Kgs. 23), greater than Luther & Calvin in the Protestant Reformation....

~ “Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, is a concept that has been so overworked that many today preach and follow a Christ who has no resemblance to the Christ of the New Testament. That Jesus is an idol, drained of his deity — a weak, good-natured deity whose great aim is to let us off the hook.” (K. Hughes)

~ “When the holiness of God and His worship was at stake, Jesus took fast & furious action.”

v. 15a – There would've been cords everywhere, tying animals down, tying crates together that held doves, etc. – Picture Jesus putting together this makeshift whip....

v. 15 – What a disaster – tables & benches flying everywhere, crashing down, people scrambling for their stuff, animals panicking, etc.!...

I had never noticed before this one critical little word (bumped fwd in the original Grk also for emphasis): “ALL”, lit., “all he drove out”. All of what?

Look back at v. 14 – All of the sellers, and all of their animals. All of the for-ex, and all of their currency. – “ALL” of it.

v. 16a – NB, Jesus is not out of control; not irrational, or abusive. – But He's determined to make a point. – Imagine in such a setting, how Jesus' must've had to shout to be heard....

Big QUESTION here, which many commentators seem to sidestep: HOW in the world did Jesus get away with this? – He was still a nobody from Galilee, with a whole 5 disciples so far it seems. – No major following, no hoardes of fans in Jerusalem to stick up for Him.

Plus, there would've been some 300 Jewish temple guards at this time. – Plus the Romans up at the Antonia Fortress supervising everything in case *anything* got out of hand. – Plus the sheer numbers of tens of thousands of worshippers. – Yet NOBODY stopped Him?...

How else do you explain this, if not a miracle?

Kind of the opposite of one of His other first miracles when back home in Nazareth (Lk. 4) – they take Him to the cliff to throw Him off, He’s in the middle of the mob, but then He disappears and escapes! –

Now Jesus is in the middle, and everyone else disappears! – Business over, operations closed, shut down, done – at the command of one complete stranger and country boy from Galilee.

He scatters them – just from His one little puny whip, no other weapon!...

Repeat: 1:14, “We have seen His glory, the glory of the only Begotten of the Father”. – Jesus is God. – How else do you explain this complete purging of the temple, by a man with no official authority whatsoever?!...

~ “Not by this slender whip, but by divine majesty was the ejection accomplished, the whip being but a sign of the scourge of divine anger.” (Grotius)

Makes me think of: Ps. 46:6-11...

Or Ps. 97:5, “The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.”

Hab. 2:20, “the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.”

Beloved, you must understand: Never in the Gospels is Jesus this animated, this worked up, this agitated. – Only here, the two times He cleanses the temple. – It’s the only time He uses force, the only time we see Him wielding any sort of weapon, the only time He is furious and outraged. – WHY?...

Listen to His rebuke that He must have repeatedly shouted out in the courtyard:

v. 16b – Not “the Father”, but “MY Father”. – Incredible for any Jew to say; they didn’t speak this way: “My Father”. – Only the Son of God spoke that way. – Cf. 1:1-2, 14, 18...

+ Recall, Jesus has used this language long ago, when He was only 12 yrs. old... “Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house, about My Father’s business?”

Did Joseph & Mary realise on that day that His Father’s business would include something this astonishing – singlehandedly cleansing the temple by divine power and in divine fury and holy anger?...

My Father’s house = Ps. 27:4; 73:25; 84:10...

That’s what this place was all about – about HIM, not us!...

YET: v. 16b...

I.e., ‘You are not just exchanging money and trading in business. You have no idea what else you have traded in and exchanged:

'From God's house to a stock market. – From a sanctuary to a shopping mall. – From something all about God, to something all about you. – From pleasing the Father to lining your pockets.

'You have turned worship from a privilege into a product. – You have gone from being a contributor to a consumer, from being a worshipper to being a purchaser.'

→YET today, secular business principles RULE most churches, thanks to the seeker-centred movement. – Scripture says Sunday church is for the saints. – The church growth movmt says Sunday church is for the world....

So you do everything you can to secularise and 'de-churchify' Sunday – from the building, to the clothing, to the style of music, to the length of the sermon, etc., etc.

Repeat: v. 16b...

+ YET today we hear of church sanctuaries being used for: rock concerts; disco balls; SA Idols?!...

...Presidents & politicians in the pulpit; offerings for the pastor's birthday; 'Super Bowl Sunday on Sun. PMs'...

Muslim prayer on Fridays!...

Repeat: v. 16b...

~ Calvin, "We ought always, therefore, to keep before our eyes the majesty of God, which dwells in the Church, that it may not be defiled by any pollutions...."

~ R.C. Sproul: "The truth we need to grasp from this incident is one that has almost completely vanished from the landscape of contemporary Christianity – it is the truth that God is particular about how He is to be approached in the sanctuary. ...It is a serious thing to impede HIS worship." (Sproul)

→Does this mean a church should never have a bookstore, or a coffee shop, etc.?....

Answer: Maybe NOT, IF the motive is to use worshippers to make a profit. – But, if the motive is simply to provide resources for spiritual growth & opportunities for fellowship, it could work (as I've seen done in many appropriate ways). – And if it is done in an undistracting way outside of the sanctuary, it would not seem to violate Jesus' principle here. (More on this in a moment....)

→Where is "God's house" today? – I have no problem with calling the church building the sanctuary, as Christians have ridone for centuries – b/c of the sacred things we do there, not b/c of some sacred bricks or windows.... And how, how unique & sacred is corporate worship, yet so neglected & undervalued today!...

[~K. deYoung, "I may worship God everywhere I go; but this is the only place to I get to worship Him with the body of Christ, receive the sacraments, and celebrate His resurrection every Lord's Day; let's set this apart in some way." (p. 121, *Why We Love the Church*)] –



YET the radical message of the NT is that God's house = not a place, but a people – you & me – 1 Cor. 3 & 6, 2 Cor 6 & Eph. 2. (And as we've already seen in Jn. 1, JESUS is now the sacred place & Tabernacle where we meet God.)

→HOW THEN have you been treating God's new temple, His house – your soul, and us corporately?...

- (a) Corporately – WHY do you come to church? – For self, or for God? – For friends, personal gain, profit, networking, image, therapy, etc. – Or for God & His pleasure?...

~ K. Hughes: *...corporate worship is important. The way we worship reveals what we think about God. ...Irreverence toward God is only a symptom of an idolatrous image of God that is man-made. Dry ritualism indicates that our God is far away and dead. Joyless performance reveals an arid Deity. But on the other hand, reverence for God indicates our belief that he is great, awesome, and powerful. Joyful worship makes known the living God.*

*...How wonderful it is to worship with God's people — hearing the call to worship, waiting reverently upon God, having our hearts lifted to him by singing glorious hymns — not just with our lips, but with our hearts — joining in corporate prayer, having the Word of Life taught to us. When I die, I want to die in church, worshipping God with a body of believers. We cannot overemphasize the importance of our worship.*

- (b) Individually – WHERE have you been taking God's house, your life? – What have you been filling God's house with lately – your time, thoughts, viewing, habits, speech, private life, friendships, etc.??...

+ Some years ago, a scandal was exposed among truck drivers for a food company – using their trucks (that were empty on return journey home) to carry garbage for another undercover operation. – Imagine, the same trucks that deliver your food to the store, also carrying rubbish. – Never!

Or KIDS: Imagine today taking your cat or dog's food bowl and serving up your lunch, just for a change?! – Never!

WHY NOT? – Because that is not what it is for! – *How much more then in the spiritual realm?!...*

How much more ought we to be careful not to confuse the holy and the profane, the sacred and the common?!...

Reread v. 16...

### 3. v. 17, The EXPLANATION

Jesus' disciples must've been dumbfounded at what had just happened – standing there, gazing at Him when He was done – looking at His silhouette, bending over, out of breath, heaving and panting. – This could only mean one thing:

v. 17 – Ps. 69, which was Messianic, was being fulfilled in Jesus. – A psalm where David was persecuted for his commitment to the temple and to pure worship....

+ Like Phineas in Num. 25 with the immoral couple in the tent, he executed them because he was consumed with God's own jealousy for His glory...

+ Like Moses coming down from the mtn and seeing the people around the golden calf...

+ Like Nehemiah when he sees the Gentile living in a room in the temple in Neh. 13 and Nehemiah is outraged and evicts him!...

+ Like Paul in confronting false teachers – warns that they are “dogs”, says they should “emasculate themselves” because of the harm they're doing to God's people...

So here, supremely, with Christ: It ate Him up inside, w/a holy jealousy, to see God's name so dishonoured! – Repeat: v. 17...

I.e., this zeal eats up every other lesser desire/emotion (fear, indifference, pride, greed, etc.) that might've prevented or dulled such a righteous reaction...

In a very literal sense, Jesus' zeal for His Father's house [for purity, etc.] did consume Him by bringing about His death for the world (cf. 6:51, etc.)....

~ **J.C. Ryle on true zeal:** *A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, thorough-going, whole-hearted, fervent in spirit. He sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed-up in one thing — and that one thing is to please God.*

*Whether he lives — or whether he dies; whether he has health — or whether he has sickness; whether he is rich — or whether he is poor; whether he pleases man — or whether he gives offence; whether he is thought wise — or whether he is thought foolish; whether he gets blame — or whether he gets praise; whether he gets honor, or whether he gets shame — for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing — and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory.*

*If he is consumed in the very burning — he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn, and if consumed in burning — he has but done the work for which God appointed him. Such a one will always find a sphere for his zeal. If he cannot preach, and work, and give money — he will cry, and sigh, and pray.*

*Yes, if he is only a pauper, on a perpetual bed of sickness — he will make the wheels of sin around him drive heavily, by continually interceding against it. If he cannot fight in the valley with Joshua — then he will do the prayer-work of Moses, Aaron, and Hur, on the hill. (Exod. 17:9-13.) If he is cut off from working himself — he will give the Lord no rest until help is raised up from another quarter, and the work is done. This is what I mean when I speak of "zeal" in religion."*

So it was with Christ, the personification & embodiment & example of all zeal.

→What eats us up most, w/a burning zeal, a holy hostility; what kindles Your jealousy?...Personal agendas, or God's agenda?...

~ Can we say with one preacher, that “If I am a God-admirer...the indifference of the world to God's glory must wound me. It is robbery.” (Thornwell)

Cf. Acts 17:16, Paul “greatly distressed” at idols in Athens...

Ps. 119:136, "Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for Your law is not obeyed."

We pray, "Hallowed be Your name" – but do we ache when His name is not hallowed, but is profaned instead?

Perhaps this is why we cannot understand the imprecatory psalms, like the end of Ps. 139??...

~ Henry Martyn, famous missionary to Persia (modern day Iran): "I could not endure existence if Jesus was not glorified. It would be hell to me, if He were to remain dishonoured."

+ Abridged Calvin, castrated Calvin, taking out all polemics, outrage, etc. against the RCC (the Prosperity gospel of its day); no wonder we haven't had a reformation!...

+ Strange Fire conf. Last year and all the pushback (and MacArthur used Ps.69 as defense)...

-'the greatest crimes happen in the worship of God', the most dangerous place to be is the worship of God...

...my growing concern that the modern addiction to a certain kind of charismatic praise/worship is becoming deadly & damning..

+ Pioneer missions can seem more important, yet others are called to purify & reform (rechurch, renew, etc.)...

CONCL. – Restate points...

→1 Pet. 4:17, "Judgment must begin with the household of God".

That's why we self-examine at Communion 2x per month, lest we provoke Jesus' anger & severity....

→Kent Hughes: *Jesus cares about His temples and comes with a whip in hand.*

He came twice to cleanse the temple. – But He will come *again and again to cleanse our lives if they are not what they are supposed to be — temples giving glory to him. When He comes, we should praise Him for His whip and His wrath toward the sin in our lives.*

*Let us be known for our hatred of sin and idolatry. We must not apply the whip to others, for we are not Christ, but let us apply it to our own lives. Let us be people so zealous, so overflowing, so burning, so full of Him that nothing else can intrude.*

PRAY

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## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How could Jesus ever attack anyone or anything? Are you sure this is the same Jesus of the rest of the Bible? Where else does Scripture show that Christ is jealous, angry, and furious against sin and impure worship (Mk. 11, also cursing the fig tree, and 2<sup>nd</sup> cleansing of the temple; many other rebukes of unbelief in Gospels; see esp. Book of Revelation....)

2. How can we know if our worship is the kind that God rejects, plugs His ears, and says, 'Stop it!'
3. What are ways today that you see God's house being turned into big business? How can we stay vigilant against this at Antioch and in our own hearts?
4. What should zeal for God's house look like today? Why is it that many other things tend to "consume" us more than this? How can you start changing that in your own life, specifically, right now?
5. Look more closely at Ps. 139 – how David begins with much praise, then turns to imprecation/judgment against God's enemies, then ends with self-examination. How should this shape our prayers and attitude today?