

## **Northwest Community Evangelical Free Church**

(March 20, 2016)

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Sermon manuscript

### **Sermon Series: Good News!**

## **PALM SUNDAY**

### **King Jesus...angry**

(Mark 11:1-18)

Study #4

#### **Introduction:** Road (and other) rages...

On Tuesday morning, I once again got angry at email. I get way too much spam AND I've set up my email accounts with world-class clumsiness. Makes me mad.

On Wednesday, I was cut off in traffic on 1604 near Bandera Road and I got mad.

On Thursday, I got really annoyed at the heavy traffic while leaving the AT&T Center after watching the Spurs beat the Portland Trailblazers. (yes, after watching the Spurs win, I got mad)

And then on Friday... (are you seeing a pattern?)

I know anger and maybe you do, too. And there are so many things to get angry about.

We can rage at the weather and the traffic, get mad about family and job stresses, and be angry about the economy and national politics as well as those social media posts that get our blood boiling.

We can be angry at so much. And then, in a quiet moment of reflection, we wonder if our anger is ever justified.

The answer to that question is "Yes." There is a justifiable anger.

Of course, there is unjustifiable anger - and much of mine is unjustified - but there is a time and a place for anger. That's why God gave the emotion of anger.

This morning in our time in the Bible, we are going to see a Jesus we may not expect to see. Today, we see an angry Jesus. And while there are several recorded incidents of Jesus, angry, here His anger turns violent.

Not that He lost control. Jesus was completely in control of Himself while He was angry. But this is extreme anger.

And as Mark gives us a narrative of Jesus' outrage, he shows us what Jesus cared about most passionately. I'm going to suggest that Jesus' anger tells us what should drive our passions, too.

#### *Going "up" to Jerusalem*

When we turn to Mark, chapter 11, Jesus and His disciples have finished an exhausting trek from the city of Jericho to Jerusalem.

That Jericho-to-Jerusalem hike is about twenty miles and it's uphill all the way. There is a 3,500-foot elevation gain. It was a tough road through dangerous territory.

This is Jesus' last trip to Jerusalem. He is going there to die on a cross for your sins and for mine. But there is something He is going to take care of first, before His death.

Just outside of Jerusalem were two small villages, really just neighborhood outside of Jerusalem, really. Jesus and His disciples stayed in one of them, Bethany, with their good friends Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

While there in Bethany, Jesus set in motion His plan for a grand entrance into Jerusalem. This is the Triumphal Entry of Palm Sunday!

## The King's Royal Entrance (Mark 11:1-11)

### King Jesus Orchestrates (vv. 1-7)

*Instructions (vv. 1-2)*

**[11:1] As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, [2] and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you (Bethphage), and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here.**

What we're seeing here is unlike anything we've seen from Jesus. He is ORCHESTRATING. He wants His entrance into Jerusalem to be "just so."

This is King Jesus - the Messiah - arranging His entrance to fit the pattern laid out by the Old Testament prophets who pictured Messiah's entrance into Jerusalem.

This is how Zechariah envisioned it:  
**[9:9] Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
 Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
 Behold, your King is coming to you;  
 He is just and endowed with salvation,  
 Humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
 Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

In the ancient world a king would ride a harmless donkey or a donkey's colt to make a very clear statement.

Riding that kind of a steed was like saying, "No worries. I'm not in battle mode. Relax. Peace is here."

And Jesus' choice of a donkey's colt said to the crowds who were streaming in to Jerusalem for Passover, "I've got everything under control. The Kingdom of Israel, the Kingdom of God is just where it should be. It's just where I want it."

So, He needed a colt. But Jesus' followers were not wealthy men. And Jesus didn't have money to purchase a colt. So, how was He going to secure this colt?

Simple. THEY WOULD TAKE IT! The King can do that.

You can almost see the questions forming in the minds of the two disciples He's tasked with getting the colt. They have concerns about how all this is going to play out.

Jesus told them how to handle any resistance that might arise.

*Preparations (v. 3)*

**[3] "If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here."**

Some people have wondered if Jesus had pre-arranged with the donkey's owners to have it tied up at just the right place? Maybe. Maybe He had made arrangements with the owner of a colt in Bethphage.

Or...

Maybe Jesus was simply exercising His divine, kingly right to do what He wanted to do, that He *knew* (omniscience) that there would be a colt tied up at a place the disciples would find, and that He *controlled* the responses of the colt's owners, in advance, from a distance (omnipotence).

Jesus is the King. He has the authority to control events. And He is controlling events on the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

*Mission: Accomplished (vv. 4-7)*

**[4] They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they untied it. [5] Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"**

**[6] They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission. [7] They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it.**

The disciples went into town, just as Jesus had told them to do. The colt's owners questioned them, just as the disciples had suspected they would.

And when the disciples replied as Jesus had told them to, the owners allowed them to take the colt, just as Jesus had said they would!

They brought the colt to Jesus and He began riding from the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem.

Don't miss this! Jesus is riding into town as a conquering KING, as the Messiah.

### **KING JESUS - For Once, NOT Incognito! (vv. 8-10)**

*Treated like royalty (v. 8)*

At that time of year (it was the Passover season) the road Jesus was travelling would have been crowded with Jewish pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.<sup>1</sup>

As King Jesus descended into the Kidron Valley and then rode up toward the wall that surrounded Jerusalem, He headed toward the Golden Gate, the gate through which the kings always entered Jerusalem.

On that day, the people on the road weren't there just to see Jesus. They were there because it was Passover.<sup>2</sup> But some of them recognized Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> Conservative estimates put the population in Jerusalem and vicinity at upwards of one million people during the Feast days.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus traveled to the city at the time of the Jewish Passover, the yearly festival that commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Passover specifically celebrated the salvation of the Jewish first-born males of those families which had sprinkled lamb's blood on the doorpost when the death angel came through Egypt. In Jesus' day, an estimated 3,000,000 Jews would have flooded

They had heard the stories of His miracles and His teaching. They had heard about how He had bested the Pharisees in some great "one-on-ones." They had heard that He was a Savior (after all, His name, "Yeshua" means "savior" in Hebrew).

And when this multitude saw Jesus riding on a donkey the last mile to Jerusalem, they put two and two together, and figured, "*This is it! He's come to set up the Kingdom!*"

And they began to treat Jesus the way people in a monarchy treat their King.

**[8] And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields.**

See, you don't want the King to get His feet dirty. You don't even want the King's colt to get dirty hooves. So they made a branchy carpet for Jesus' donkey.

They treated Him as their king. And they spoke to Him as people speak to a king. Each word in their cheer is significant.

*King Jesus, the Messiah (vv. 9-10)*

**[9] Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: "Hosanna!"**

When I was growing up, I thought of "Hosanna" as meaning about the same thing as "Hallelujah!" But "Hosanna" doesn't mean "Praise the Lord!"

It means, "Save us NOW!" It is a cry of desperation from someone who knows he needs to be rescued.

Here, the people shout "**Hosanna!**" realizing that HERE was a Man who held the key to their salvation.

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Jerusalem and the surrounding areas during the week of Passover, since Jews from all over the world were required to observe Passover in Jerusalem.

It is very likely that the salvation the crowds were thinking of was salvation from Romans tyranny. They didn't realize that Jesus had come to deliver them from the more terrible bondage of sin.

But, they *did* see their desperate plight. They *did* recognize that they could not save themselves. And they *did* beg King Jesus for deliverance.

Then they cried out, **[9b] "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord"**

That is a quote from Psalm 118, a Messianic psalm that was read as Israel's king led the people to worship in the temple.

In Jesus' day people quoted that line to express their hopes for the coming of the Messiah. All their hopes and dreams revolved around the coming of Messiah. And on this day, Palm Sunday, the crowds saw in **JESUS** the fulfillment of those hopes and dreams.

And THAT is Jesus' Palm Sunday the Triumphal Entry.<sup>3</sup>

On another occasion, people had been clamoring for Him to be crowned King and He put them off. You can read about that in John chapter 6, after the feeding of the five thousand.

John tells us that the crowds wanted to make Jesus King by force. At that time, He would have nothing of it.<sup>4</sup>

But here, on this Palm Sunday, He received the praise of the crowds. Here, He drank it up.

On this day, as He said in another place, if the crowds of people had been silent, the rocks would have cried out. (Luke 19)

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<sup>3</sup> Mark's telling of the Triumphal Entry is actually somewhat shorter than that found in Matthew, Luke, and John. His description of the cleansing of the temple, somewhat longer.

<sup>4</sup> He even preached a special message just for that occasion, too, (we refer to it as "The Bread of Life" sermon) and the upshot of that sermon was that His followers dropped from thousands to exactly twelve.

Granted, it was a short-lived popularity. It lasted as long as it took for Jesus to ride on the back of a donkey about one mile from the Mount of Olives to the Temple Gate. What could that be - an hour? Surely not much more than that.

Yet in that brief time span Jesus presented Himself, finally and irrefutably, as the king He truly was.

*Responding to King Jesus today...*

From the very beginning of His life, some people had understood that Jesus was a King.

Herod the Great, who reigned as the Roman-installed king of Israel when Jesus was born, was so convinced of Jesus' royalty that he ordered the slaughter of all the babies around Bethlehem so as to do away with his competition.<sup>5</sup>

The Gospel of John tells us that Nathaniel, one of Jesus' first disciples, said to Jesus, "**Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.**"<sup>6</sup>

But for most of His life Jesus was a King *incognito*, under the radar. He took on the mantle of a Servant.<sup>7</sup> He showed the way to greatness throughout His life by working His way to the back of the line.

And this morning we see the one shining exception to the general rule of His life's commitment to lastness and lowliness.

This was the day - Palm Sunday - when the veil was ripped away and He wanted everyone to see Him for who He really was: THE KING.

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 2.

<sup>6</sup> John 1:49 - This was after Jesus identified him as an Israelite in whom there was no guile.

<sup>7</sup> This, the Servant aspect of Jesus' life and ministry, is the special emphasis of Mark's Gospel.

It is hard for us Americans to know how to relate to royalty. In the United States, we see each other as our equals - including our leaders. We vote for or against our leaders.

But that's not how it is in a monarchy. And so, someone who lives under a monarchy has a head start in knowing how to relate to King Jesus, because he or she knows how to relate to their country's royalty.

And here's the quick and dirty low-down on how to respond to a king. You *submit* to him. You *obey* him.

"JESUS IS LORD" has been the cry of the church for two thousand years. And it is our cry this morning. Jesus is Lord. And what do you do with a LORD? You follow where He leads.

Today, Jesus is calling you and me, who have come to know Him as our Savior, to obey and submit, because He is also the Sovereign Lord.

### *Off to the Temple*

You may have noticed that we, here in America, are in the middle of a presidential campaign - and that's about all I'm going to say about that...☺

...except to say that there are all kinds of reasons for a man or a woman to want to be president. Among those reasons there is always an interest in power. That's not necessarily a bad thing.

Power can be used to get something positive done. Power can advance a just agenda.

Jesus' position as Sovereign Lord places Him above any human ruler, president or king. Jesus has power.

In what we about to see, Jesus used His power on the very day He offered Himself as king to the nation in a striking and significant way.

As we watch the action unfold, we will also see what it takes to provoke King Jesus to anger.

### **The King's Justifiable Anger (vv. 15-18)**

#### **Entering Jerusalem; entering the temple (v. 15a)**

##### *[15a] Then they came to Jerusalem...*

Mark lets us know that the event he is about to record occurred on the day *after* the Triumphal Entry.<sup>8</sup>

Jesus had entered Jerusalem on the first day of the week (Sunday), gone back to stay in the Bethany home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and then returned to the city on Monday.

It being Passover season, the scene within the city would have been hectic. The area inside the city walls was thick with thousands upon thousands of people.

Passing through the gate on Monday morning, Jesus and His disciples made their way to the temple.

In the Old Testament we read of a temple built by Solomon. This is not *that* temple. That temple was destroyed by the Babylonian army when Jerusalem was sacked by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.

A century later, the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel when he and other refugees from exile returned to Jerusalem to re-establish the worship of God in the city. This is not *THAT* temple, either, although this temple was built on the foundation of that temple.

This temple into which Jesus now walks is Herod's temple. Herod's temple was enormous, less ornate and beautiful than Solomon's, but much more massive.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The other Gospels that record the Triumphal Entry and the second cleansing of the Temple (Matthew and Luke) don't give a specific time stamp.

Once at the temple, Jesus saw something that made His blood boil. He saw marketplace activity within the temple precincts.

### **House-of-God Cleaning (vv. 15b-16)**

#### *The need for marketplace activity*

Now, the kinds of activities that Mark describes were perfectly legitimate and necessary activities.

The Jews were required to pay a temple tax. But that tax had to be paid in Jewish currency, so money had to be exchanged from Roman to the standard Jewish currency.

And there was a need for the purchase of animals - doves, goats, and many, many lambs at Passover - so that they could be offered as sacrifices.

#### *The Mount of Olive Market*

And for all of these transactions there was a market in place located on the Mount of Olives, outside the city walls of Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, historians tell us that there were probably four different markets in place on the Mount of Olives. They were arranged like a typical middle-eastern bazaar and they were operated by the Jewish Sanhedrin.

At these markets you could exchange your money and you could purchase animals for sacrifice.

#### *Temple protocol*

The reason the markets were placed far away from the temple was to keep marketplace activities separate from the temple and its

functions. The temple was for worship and the way worship was to take place was arranged for very purposefully.

Think of the temple as a building set up in a series of concentric circles.

At the center of the temple was the Holy of Holies, the place where the presence of God dwelt. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), to offer sacrifice for the sins of the nation of Israel.

Next out was the Holy Place. The Holy Place contained the altar of incense and certain furnishings used in worship. Only priests entered the Holy Place and only priests entered the Court of the Priests.

The next area out was called the Court of Israel, where Jewish men were allowed. And beyond that was the Court of the Women.

On the periphery, between the Court of the Women and the walls of the temple was the Court of the Gentiles. The Court of the Gentiles - the largest Court within the temple precincts - was the one place in the temple where non-Jews/Gentiles could worship the one true God.

Gentiles might travel hundreds of miles to visit Jerusalem and to worship Israel's God. They could worship in the Court of the Gentiles.

We understand why there was to be, under no circumstances, buying and selling in the temple. It was all given to worship.

And there was no need for buying and selling or money exchange in the temple because of the four markets that were already set up on the Mount of Olives.

However, a few years prior to Jesus arrival in Jerusalem, things changed.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Jerusalem was destroyed - along with Herod's Temple - in AD 70 by the Romans.

<sup>10</sup> So Lane, France, in their commentaries.

<sup>11</sup> The practice of purchasing animals for sacrifice in the Court of the Gentiles was a recent innovation, some believe dating only to about AD 30 (or within a few short years of Jesus' trip).

### *A Temple Market?*

Caiaphas, who was serving as the High-Priest at this time, made a calculated decision to open up new markets for animal purchases and for money-changing in the temple.

His temple market was in direct competition with the Mount of Olives markets, just like Sam's Club is in competition with Costco.

When Jesus walked through these temple markets they were little more than flea-markets.

As well, you should know that inequities abounded in the temple market. The merchants who set up shop there were selling animals at exorbitant prices.<sup>12</sup>

And money-changers were fleecing worshippers who had to exchange their currency for "temple coins."

A whole lot of what was going on in the temple market was corrupt and disgraceful. But - and more to the point - the market shouldn't have been set up there in the first place because the temple was for worship.

When Jesus saw what was going on, He became very angry.

*Jesus unleashed (v. 15b-16)*

***[15b]...And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; [16] and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.***

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<sup>12</sup> I've read that those who came to Jerusalem to worship would bring money to buy an animal for sacrifice, would pay their money and would then watch as the animal was taken behind a curtain. After they left, though, the same animal would be brought back out and sold to others throughout the day.

The misuse and the abuse of the temple was all it took to provoke King Jesus to anger.

His act of enraged violence was thoroughly premeditated. It was not an impulsive outburst. He made a plan and He carried it out.

Among the many ways in which this act was remarkable perhaps the most remarkable aspect is that nobody tried to stop Him.<sup>13</sup>

Whether He used a whip in this temple cleansing, as He did at the beginning of His ministry (recorded in John 2), we don't know. It wouldn't surprise me if He did. But we are to picture knocked over furniture, frantic, stampeding animals, and merchants forced out of the temple by this unpredictable, angry Jesus.

This is not the only time we see Jesus angry in the Gospels. But it is the only time we see Him violent. And He explains why He reacted so strongly.

### **House-Keeping for the Love of God's Love for People (v. 17)**

***[17] And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."***

If you had asked Caiaphas, "What are you doing, setting up a market in the temple?" he probably would have responded, "Hey, what's

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<sup>13</sup> I have always liked the way author John White puts it: "Jesus would have been sweating and panting with exertion, and yet there would have also been a calm purposefulness in His eyes that people could not face... Unsuspecting merchants arriving with more animals would be startled to find their way barred. They would find a whip gripped in the menacing fist of the Man with the unflinching gaze.<sup>13</sup> It is false to assume that there was something supernatural about the awe He created. He was God, but He called down no legion of angels to help Him, nor is there any evidence that a mystical terror paralyzed the merchants. His control of the crowds was by a moral force, forged by His total lack of ambivalence and the moneychangers' uneasy consciences."

*the big deal. It's not really the temple. This is just the Court of the Gentiles.*"<sup>14</sup>

Yes. That's where he set up the market - in the one place in the whole temple area where a non-Jew could worship God - the Court of the Gentiles.

Just imagine a non-Jew traveling to Jerusalem, hungry to find out about Israel's God. He or she arrives at the temple, knowing that there is a place for them there - and they find the way blocked by merchandise. There's no place to learn about God.

And it was this - GOD'S PEOPLE GETTING IN THE WAY OF OTHERS WHO WERE FAR FROM GOD COMING TO GOD - that provoked Jesus to violent anger.

Of course Jesus would have objected to the dishonest pricing and to the corrupt money-exchanging practices. But more than that, He objected to the whole enterprise of buying, selling, and transporting merchandise, and trafficking through the Court of the Gentiles.<sup>15</sup>

When King Jesus shut down the markets, He freed up holy space for those who were far from God to seek Him and to find Him.

The responses of those who saw this cleansing of the temple is fascinating.

### **Aftermath (v. 18)**

***[18] The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching***

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<sup>14</sup> Note "*for all the nations*" thus identifying the location as the Court of the Gentiles.

<sup>15</sup> A couple of centuries earlier, a Gentile ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes, had defiled the temple (164 BC) with the sacrifice of a pig on the altar in the Jerusalem Temple. Jesus sees what the Jews of His own day are doing as similarly a perversion of the purpose of the temple.

The crowd of onlookers saw Jesus bucking the authority of the religious elite. He was all about God and He didn't play by the rulers' rules. They are astonished - and probably tickled pink!

But the response of the chief priests and the scribes was darker. They wanted to kill Jesus. For exposing their dishonesty and for exposing their lack of care for those who were far from God, they plotted to put Him to death.<sup>16</sup>

As we wrap up this morning, I want us to reflect on what this angry scene might say to us.

### **Conclusion:**

Jesus experienced the whole range of human emotions. He grieved at the death of loved ones and rejoiced when His disciples did well. And He knew what it was to be angry, too.

He expressed anger at hypocrisy and at cold-heartedness and at spiritual apathy. But in all of those times when we see Jesus angry, the only times He gets violent and takes physical action is when He cleans out the temple so that those who are far from God can come near.

By this scene, we see King Jesus' heart for those who are lost. And we also see that He was passionate that His people should never put up unnecessary barriers that would keep those who are far from God from coming near.

If that is the point of Mark's telling of the cleansing of the temple, and I think it is, then what are we to do with it? I have three ideas.

First, the Bible teaches that we who have believed in Jesus are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:13-14) And what do you call something/someone who is indwelt by God's Spirit? A temple. You are a temple of God and so am I.

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<sup>16</sup> And they moved quickly. Just days after the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus will be put to death on a Roman cross.



All of us who are God's temple should be very careful that there is nothing in our lives that would be an impediment to someone who is far from God coming to Jesus.

The Bible gives lots of reasons why we who have believed in Jesus should pursue holiness and should put away sin. Here's one to add to our list.

When I'm tempted to sin, sexually, or when you're tempted to resort to crude language, or when we're tempted to fudge, financially, or to lie or to gossip or to post something iffy on social media, we should know that our slip-up could lead someone who doesn't yet know our Jesus to not take our witness seriously. Holiness is that serious.

So, Jesus' cleansing of the temple invites you and me to reflect on whether there is anything in our personal lives that might make our witness less credible to someone who is far from God.

Second, since we are - together - God's people, (1 Peter 2:9) there should be nothing about the way we relate to each other that would be an impediment to others drawing near to Jesus.

Jesus said that the way we love each other will be a dead giveaway to a watching world that we are His disciples. He also said that our unity will testify to the truth of the Gospel.

I can't think of a greater reason to love each other, to pursue peace with each other, and to deeply engage with each other than this: how we relate to other believers in Jesus can break down barriers to an outsider considering Jesus.

Third, we all know that there is no physical temple today. Our church building is a convenient place to gather, but it is not a New Testament replacement for the Old Testament temple.

However, in our culture, if someone wants to find out about God, a place that they might reasonably be expected to go to find about God is a church. So, we, during our open-to-the-public gatherings on

Sunday mornings should do nothing that would be an impediment to someone who is far from God coming to Jesus.

A few weeks ago, it was brought to the attention of the Northwest staff and Elders (thanks, Charlie Laughlin!) that there are lists on the Internet that tell what people who don't go to church often dislike most about church when they do attend.

Rated #1 on several of these lists was not Bible teaching, not prayer time during the service, not singing - either hymns or praise choruses. It was greeting time.

As we thought about that, it started to make a lot of sense.

If someone is not used to coming to church and they don't really know anybody here and if they happen to be anything but the most outgoing extrovert, what would be enjoyable about greeting people you don't know or - even worse - NOT being greeted as everyone else is happily greeting each other?<sup>17</sup>

And that is why we have tried the experiment last Sunday and today of not having a greeting time in the worship service.

It's not to say that we won't have greeting times in the future, but we decided to try it for these two weeks. We'll probably try other things in the future to help us be more hospitable to guests.

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<sup>17</sup> On Friday, I was given a wonderful experience and a vivid picture of what it is like to be in a culture with which you are not intimately familiar. Bart Fabacher's Change of Command ceremony at Lackland was rich with Navy with pomp and circumstance. The ceremony itself is built on over two centuries of tradition. Bart invited me to give the Invocation and the Benediction and I was very honored to do so. However, I didn't know anything about what protocol I was to follow, when I was to sit, stand, speak, or anything else. I am not familiar with Navy culture and found myself feeling a bit like a fish out of water. Fortunately, the Lackland Naval unit assigned someone to guide me through everything that would happen and he told me exactly what I was to do during the ceremony. It was a beautiful picture of hospitality and gave me a vision of what I would hope would be the experience of anyone visiting Northwest.

We will never stop worshipping God or singing songs of praise and worship. We'll always devote ourselves to hearing the Word preached and to praying.

But, we want to be as sensitive as we possibly can be to those who are with us who may not know much about church, who may not know much about Jesus, but who are hungry to learn.

Today we have seen something that was close to Jesus' heart. He was passionate and desperate that no barriers be put up that would keep those who are far from God from coming near. What we have seen of Jesus in the temple wakes us up to just how much He loves those who are far from God: A few days after He cleaned out the Temple He will die for them.

So, if our hearts would beat with the heart of Jesus we will make sure that we never do anything that would put a barrier between God and those who need the Gospel.