The Gospel of John
**2.4—CONVICTION & COURAGE – JOHN 2:14–17**

**INTRODUCTION**

Whose agenda are you most in touch with? Yours? Your spouse’s? Your company’s? Your political party’s? Or God’s? And what do you do when this world’s agenda is in contradiction with God’s? Whose agenda do you stand for? And how strongly do you stand for it? Though we’ve already studied the event of Jesus cleansing the temple, my spirit was provoked so deeply by the Lord this week as I read the passage again. He revealed to me another important—and very relevant—issue that this passage unveils, and as I prayed, I knew He wanted us to revisit these same verses. So what do you do when the God you serve says one thing, and the world around you says another? Do you justify or make excuses for the world’s point of view and their disregard for God and His Word? Or do you stand for God and what He says is truth? Today I felt led to teach about “Conviction & Courage.” The kind of conviction we see Jesus displays in this scenario. The Church in America, generally speaking, lacks conviction. And many who have conviction, lack courage. Most church goers are not in touch with God’s heart and perspective on many modern-day issues, and as things get darker in this world, it is imperative that we, the body of Christ, become keenly aware of what God believes. It’s also important that we have the strength to stand with God, and for Him. This kind of conviction and courage comes from, “the fear of the Lord.” The fear of the Lord is not the belief that God is a cruel and evil tyrant, but rather that God is far above all men in wisdom and might, and therefore opposing Him in any way is ultimately futile.

**Let’s read John 2:13–17 once again.**

**WE’VE ALREADY STUDIED THE PASSAGE IN GENERAL, SO LET’S NOTICE KEY PHRASES THAT HELP US SEE WHAT GOD IS SAYING TO US TODAY:**

V14 – “He found those”

* Not everyone was compromising the house of God, only those who:
	+ Were selling oxen, sheep and pigeons
	+ Changing money

V15.1 – “And making a whip of cords”

* Jesus did not lose His temper, or “fly off the handle”
* He took time to prepare His response … a strong one

V15.2 – “He drove them all out … He poured out the coins…”

* He didn’t wait for others to join Him
* He stood alone against what appeared to be a whole system of compromise

V16.1 – “He told those who sold pigeons, ‘Take these things away’.”

* He didn’t gather a crowd to protest
* He told them exactly what to do

V16.2 – “do not make My Father’s house a house of trade”

* Jesus somehow knows that it’s Father God’s house, and not the High Priest’s, chief priests’, the Sanhedrin’s, or the house of all of the Jews.
* He’s not only deeply aware whose house it is, but also how Father God wants things to be done in His house

**OUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WAS DESIGNED TO BE “OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE.” AND I BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO CONTEND FOR THAT. BUT WHAT JESUS UNDERSTOOD IS THAT THERE IS A KINGDOM ABOVE THE GOVERNMENTS OF MEN, AND THAT THAT KINGDOM IS “OF GOD, BY GOD, AND FOR GOD.” AND HIS ACTIONS HERE MAKE THAT VERY CLEAR.**

**OH, THAT BELIEVERS TODAY WOULD KNOW WHAT BELONGS TO GOD, AND TO RECOGNIZE HOW HE WANTS THINGS TO BE DONE**

**Psalm 24:1 (NIV)** The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

**In Job 41:11 God said,** “… Everything under heaven belongs to Me.” (HCSB)

**IF THAT’S TRUE, HOW MUCH MORE THE TEMPLE OF GOD IS JERUSALEM?**

**AND IF THAT’S TRUE, HOW MUCH MORE A REDEEMED, BLOOD-WASHED BELIEVER ON EARTH?**

V17 – “Zeal for Your house”

* Zeal for Your house … holy, excited conviction for God and His house

V17.1 – “has consumed Me”

* Such conviction took hold of Jesus that He did things that pleased God, even when it did not please other people

**OH, THAT WE WOULD BE SO CONSUMED!**

**OH, THAT I WOULD BE SO CONSUMED!**

**EX –** In Daniel 3, King Nebuchadnezzar made a decree that when the instruments were played, everyone must bow down to the golden image that he had set up … but when the music was played, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not bow down. So they were arrested and brought before the king. They had an opportunity to renege… to compromise to save their own lives … but even in the face of a tortuous death, they would not bow.

**WHAT IS THIS WORLD IMPOSING ON YOU THAT YOU ARE BOWING DOWN TO?**

**WHAT FEAR OF RETRIBUTION HAS YOU MORE CONVICTED THAN THE FEAR OF THE LORD?**

**THANK GOD THAT HE DELIVERED THOSE THREE HEBREW BOYS**

**EX –** In Daniel 6, some high officials and governors wanted to take down Daniel … but he had impeccable character, so they came up with a plan and went to King Darius and asked him to make a new law that whoever makes a petition to any god or man besides the king in the next 30 days would be thrown into the lion’s den. Daniel knew that document had been signed, and yet he prayed three times a day with his windows open toward Jerusalem.

**WHO DO YOU FEAR THE MOST?**

**WHO’S EDICTS EFFECTIVELY COMMAND YOUR OBEDIENCE?**

**WE ARE LIVING IN DAYS WHERE CONFORMITY IS BEING REQUIRED. IT’S NOT OKAY TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO BELIEVE DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU … NO … THE SPIRIT OF ANTI-CHRIST IS DEMANDING ALLEGIENCE … AND EVEN SILENCE IS NO LONGER BEING TOLERATED**

**EX –** Christian physical education teacher was placed on administrative leave after declaring in a speech that he would not "lie" to his students and "defile" god by affirming that "a biological boy can be a girl and vice versa," he began his speech like this, "My name is Tanner Cross, and I am speaking out of love for those who are suffering from gender dysphoria." He went on to voice his opposition to new transgender-affirming policies pushed by the school district that required all staff to use a student's preferred gender pronouns and permitted transgender students to participate in activities consistent with their gender identity, rather than their biological sex.

**GOD IS LOOKING FOR THOSE HE CAN FILL WITH CONVICTION AND COURAGE.**

**Joshua 1:9 (HCSB)** “Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

**THE ENEMY IS USING UNGOLDLY LEADERSHIP TO CAST GREAT DECEPTION ON OUR NATION AND THE ENTIRE WORLD**

**ROMANS 1 SPEAKS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO KNEW THE TRUTH, BUT TRADED IT FOR THE LIE…**

**Romans 1:21–25 (ESV)** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Claiming to be wise, they became fools, **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. **24** Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, **25** because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

**EX – EMPEROR WITH NO CLOTHES –** There was an emperor who spent all of his time and money on new clothes. He loved new clothes so much, he was constantly buying, making and wearing nothing but new clothes. One day, two swindlers said they could weave the most magnificent fabrics imaginable. Not only were their colors and patterns uncommonly fine, but clothes made of this cloth had a had a wonderful way of becoming invisible to anyone who was unfit for his office, or who was unusually stupid. The king thought, this would be a great way for me to discern who is qualified for his position or not. So he commissioned the swindlers to weave him some clothes with this extraordinary fabric. So they requested the finest silk, gold and other expensive materials, and they proceeded to pretend to work very hard on weaving the new fabric. Soon everyone in the city had heard the rumor about this extraordinary new fabric. One day, the emperor decided to send someone to check on their work, so he chose an honest old minister to go. When the minister realized he couldn’t see anything on the empty looms, he questioned to himself, “Am I unqualified? Am I a fool?” So… not wanting anyone to think that of him, he began to compliment the pretend fabric. The swindlers joined in and described its colors, pattern and textures in great detail. The minister listened so that he could relay the description to the emperor. Later, the emperor sent another trustworthy official who had the same experience and reported similarly to the emperor.

It was decided that the emperor should wear clothes made of this new fabric at a great procession that was coming. When the emperor was presented with the pretend clothes, he too thought, “I don’t see anything. Am I a fool?” But he joined in with everyone else and praised the beautiful clothes. On the day of the procession, no one in the city dared admit that they emperor had no clothes. Not only would that be an insult to him, but they would be exposing themselves as unqualified or stupid. So they all ooed and awed. Until on small boy yelled out, “But he hasn’t got anything on.” People began to realize that they weren’t the only one to notice and word began to spread. Soon, everyone was admitting that they never saw clothes on the emperor. But the emperor, though suspecting that they were right, continue to pretend and he walked more proudly than ever, and his noblemen also played along and acted as if the charade was real.

**WHAT’S THE POINT? THERE ARE MANY LIES BEING IMPOSED ON OUR SOCIETY TODAY, AND MANY ARE PLAYING ALONG, SOME OF WHICH REALLY BELIEVE THE LIES. IN THE PROCESS OF TIME, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO WILL HAVE A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO. AND AS YOU KNOW, WICKED PEOPLE WHO HAVE ULTERIOR MOTIVES, MAY NEVER STOP LYING.**

**I BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WILL FACED DOWN THESE GIANTS THAT OTHERS ARE AFRAID TO FACE**

**EX –** David fought a giant no other man in Israel would fight

**EX –** This week I saw a video of a pendulum ride at a carnival that—according to one of our staff members `whose family owned and operated a carnival for years—was not blocked and leveled properly. As the riders were being propelled up across and back down in a motions like the hands of a clock, the whole ride looked as if would tip over backward and crash. There was a safety rail and platform in front which was being elevated in rhythm off the ground as the riders were at their highest point in the sky. You could see a man, who seemed to me to be the ride attendant, jump off, then grab the safety rail as if the try to stabilize it, but then back off again. And then in one of the videos, another man ran up to the safety rail and climbed up with onto the platform with his feet through the rails to use what little weight he had to try to stabilize it. Then another man, and then another. soon there were what looked like 15 people hanging on the rail, and it appeared as if it helped stabilize the ride.

**WE NEED PEOPLE LIKE THAT ONE MAN**

**IN THE SEASON AHEAD, THERE WILL BE MANY OPPORTUNITES FOR EACH OF US TO DO THE RIGHT THING WHEN NO ONE ELSE WILL … OR WHEN NO ONE ELSE AFFIRMS IT. I’M NOT TALKING ABOUT DOING FOOLISH THINGS … I’M TALKING ABOUT DOING RIGHT THINGS. WE NEED THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DISCERN THE DIFFERENCE.**