

Jesus Knows What Is in Us

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The apostle whom the Lord loved, wrote a unique account of Jesus. Rather than giving a biography, the Gospel of John focuses on the theological purpose of Jesus. In the first half of the book, John shows readers seven signs that point to God's new creation in Jesus, the Messiah (John 1-12).

In the second chapter, John writes about Jesus cleansing the Temple. John's account places the Temple cleansing at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Conversely, Matthew, Mark, and Luke document the Temple cleansing at the end of Jesus' ministry. Given the differing accounts, some have concluded that Jesus cleansed the Temple twice. Just a word of advice: don't feel obligated to "harmonize" the Gospels. They were not written to be a biographical jigsaw puzzle.

The Temple cleansing occurring at the beginning of Jesus' ministry seems to make sense. It would help explain why people traveled back and forth between Jerusalem and Galilee (Mark 3:22, 7:1). Regardless, Jesus cleansing the Temple was risky.

Jesus made a bold, public display of His anger towards the leadership of the Jews. They had allowed the Temple to be misused. The Temple's abuse was evidence of the moral and ethical corruption of the Jewish leadership.

After Jesus turned over tables and ran out the dealers and money changers, He declared, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). The Jews did not understand what Jesus was doing or saying. Confused, they responded, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days? (John 2:20).

It would be many years later before anyone understood what Jesus was doing and saying. John explained what this meant: "he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken" (John 2:21-22).

This was a decisive moment for Jesus. He elicited reactions. The leadership was angry and confused by Jesus. Others, however, were excited by Jesus. Likely, there were ordinary Israelites who viewed Jesus as a hero, exposing the corruption of their leaders. As we read this, we might think this would be a good way to gain a following. Yet, the text describes a strange reaction by Jesus.

John wrote, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust

himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man” (John 2:23-25).

Jesus did not trust the reactions of the people, not even those who believed. But, why? Jesus knew what was in man. This is a striking acknowledgment by John. We will consider the implication of this in the balance of this article.

Jesus...

1). Knows. The knowledge of Jesus cannot be overstated. Jesus knew His purpose. Jesus knew exactly what He was doing when He cleansed the Temple. No one else did. When some saw His signs and believed, Jesus knew their belief was emotional and superficial.

Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves. Do we have enough humility to believe this? We tend to think that “no one knows me better than me.” This is not true. We have a propensity for self-deception. We can justify our sin. We can ignore our problems. We can think more highly of ourselves than we should. Or we can develop an inferiority complex. The Bible often warns us of the danger of our ways of thinking (Prov. 3:5,7).

Jesus knows us through and through. In the book of Revelation, there are seven letters written to seven churches in Asia. They were dictated to John by Jesus. In every letter, Jesus says, “I know...” Jesus knows our works, patience, and endurance. Jesus knows where we dwell. Jesus knows when we have left our first love. Jesus knows when we have become lukewarm. Jesus knows of our love and faithfulness.

2). Searches. Jesus knew what was in the hearts of the people for one reason. Jesus searched their hearts. Being criticized by the scribes, “Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” (Matt. 9:4). On another occasion at the Temple, Jesus perceived the malice of the Jewish leadership (Matt. 22:18). By searching their hearts and exposing their evil, Jesus held them accountable.

In His letter to the church at Thyatira, Jesus wanted all the churches to know that, “I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works” (Rev. 2:23). Nothing can be hidden in our hearts from Jesus. Thankfully, Jesus does not just know and search our hearts. There is something hopeful Jesus can do for our hearts.

3). Cleanses. Jesus searches our hearts in the hopes we will allow Him to cleanse our hearts. But how? Jesus cleanses our hearts when we believe in His power and share in His work. We must believe in Jesus and obey Him. When our hearts are cleansed, we can become useful to Jesus. This is part of what Jesus was trying to show when He cleansed the Temple.

Through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus, we can be forgiven of our sins and share in the righteousness of God. John would later write, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:7-10).

Conclusion

Jesus knows what is in man. Jesus knows what is in us. Jesus knows what is in you. Do not try to hide from Jesus. We must allow Him to search and cleanse our hearts.