



Cleanse all Distractions

One foggy, stormy night at sea, a ship's captain caught sight of what looked like the light of another ship heading straight toward him. He ordered his signalman to relay a message to the oncoming ship: "Change your course twenty degrees to the north." Immediately came the reply: "Change your course twenty degrees to the south." The light was getting closer, so the Captain responded firmly, "I'm a Captain, and I tell you to change your course north!" But the reply was equally firm, "I'm only a seaman, but you must change your course south!" Outraged at such insolence as the light boomed nearer and nearer, the Captain fired back the message, "You idiot! I'm giving you one last chance to change your course north. I am a battleship!" To which he received a cool reply, "I'm giving you one last chance to change your course south. I am a lighthouse."

The people in the Gospel today react similar to the Captain of the ship - self centred. They demand, "what sign can you show us for doing this?" Instead of self reflecting upon Jesus' action and words. Jesus is defiant, forceful and angry. The wanton proliferation of commerce within the temple precinct is tantamount to desecrating the house of God. Jesus' action is not directly only against the moneychangers and sellers of animals but also against the temple authorities who allow people to turn God's house into a 'marketplace.' Furthermore, Jesus' words "destroy this temple (Jesus' body), and in three days I will raise it up" remind us what true worship entails. It is not enough to worship in the temple, but the spirit of praising God must be taken to heart and show out in a life of loving and service. When we actually live Jesus' message we will find it easier to forgive those who offended us, eager to reach out to heal broken relationship. May this Lenten season cleanse us from greed, anger, prejudice, jealousy and any thing that distracts us from making room for Jesus.



*Destroy this sanctuary,
and in three days
I will raise it up.*