

**HOLY WISDOM & A NEW ORDER (JN 2:13-22)**  
Given by the Rev. Corinne Hodges  
Sun., March 15, 2009, St. John of the Cross, Bristol

- I. Anger
  - A. Last time you were really angry at someone or something
    - 1. How did you handle it
      - a. Lose control, blow up
      - b. Keep it bottled up inside
      - c. Hindsight: regret or feel justified
    - 2. Anger is normal human emotion
      - a. Perceived as bad—conflict avoidant/non-confrontational good
      - b. Avoid conflict/anger=missed opportunity to discuss and set things right; also effort to avoid inevitable, makes things worse
      - c. Tells us what we are passionate about
      - d. Gets us to stand up, speak up and take action when need to: injustice and unfair
    - 3. Interesting thing: Remember anger/fight, but not why—meaning is lost
- II. Gospel reading today Jesus is angry—WWJD one time not to follow Jesus
  - A. Acts out, loses control, whip, dramatically turns over tables, chases out animals and people
  - B. Outsider would call pure foolishness (disruptn, anti-establishment)
  - C. Jesus should have been wiser, not causing such a scene, drawing attention to himself, esp. since this act would be one that would bring him into direct conflict with the authorities who would seek his life
  - D. Maybe Jesus should have said Psalm 19 “Let the words of my mouth....”
  - E. Jesus working from a different kind of wisdom
- III. Wisdom
  - A. What is it? Bernie Madoff
    - 1. Book smarts (Greeks, intelligentsia, formal education and study)
    - 2. Street smarts (Experience, tough way, “school of hard knocks,” survival)
    - 3. God smarts (Holy wisdom) Truly wise is one who knows God
      - a. Can’t learn in books
      - b. Survival thinking gets in way/conventional wisdom
        - 1. Save/serve self vs. (Jesus) save/serve others
        - 2. Crisis give less vs. give more—God is true and will help
        - 3. Run! Save your life! vs. give it up for many
  - B. To non-believers like authorities, holy wisdom makes no sense, not rational, counter-cultural

- IV. Leads us to second part of Gospel, when Jesus explains why he is angry (more than demonstration against materialism)
  - A. Authorities do not find Jesus any less foolish
    - 1. "Temple" being built in 3 days/46 yrs.=not building but body
    - 2. Unopen to new interpretations and meanings, new ways of God working in world, J challenging the existing order, turning tables on present Temple system
    - 3. God presence in Temple on earth, Jesus is new source/presence of God
    - 4. Two different languages/messages=miscommunication/misunderstanding, the cause of so many arguments, conflicts and yes, anger
- V. We take from this message today, three things:
  - A. Anger—natural, necessary and helpful if used properly
  - B. Wisdom—kind of wisdom we value/cultivate in ourselves, world and people around us; earthly success where we put ourselves before others or holy wisdom where we follow Christ and take care of God's people as whole
  - C. Our own openness to God working in new ways, not hanging on to the old for the sake of avoidance, security, comfort
- VI. Psalm 19 said by many preachers before sermon. Good words for us as we practice using holy wisdom in our lives. Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.