

March 3, 2024 (Lent 3 B)

John 2:19-22

“JESUS: Crazy . . . or . . . Credible?”

Life can be rather crazy and complicated at times. But – God’s Word cuts through all the FOG and makes things crystal clear for us. The main point of our sermon today is so incredibly **simple**: *It ALL boils down to Jesus*. Literally – *everything* in life (and for all eternity) comes down to this One polarizing Figure who divides all of humanity into 2 camps: those who believe what He says in the Bible – and – those who don’t. Is the **Jesus** of Holy Scripture . . . **crazy – or – credible?**

We see that stark division right here in the verses for our consideration today. Jesus was enraged at all the noise in His Father’s House – He was disgusted with the stink of the animals / and even more so with the stink of greed and corruption. This was at His first celebration of the Passover during His public ministry, and He’d have to clear out the Temple yet again on Monday of Holy Week some 3 years later. Jesus ruffled a lot of feathers here. Jesus said and did things that seemed totally **crazy** to people. Well . . . *do we TRUST Him, or not?* Some do . . . and some don’t. Some think He’s **crazy**, and some think He’s totally **credible**, when, for example, He says what He did right here: **John 2:19–22** (NIV 11)

19 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” [That word “destroy” is an imperative! He was indeed challenging them, but it even went beyond that, He was telling them / commanding them to go ahead and DO this! The religious leaders thought He was totally crazy, and they also totally misunderstood what He meant by “Temple”.]

20 They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

The “Temple” was where God made His dwelling among men – His (seemingly average) human body **was THE Temple** – in a much more REAL and literal way than the big stone building behind Him. Indeed they were also connected as we see in the verses beforehand where He took their desecration of the Temple very personally. You

might also recall the curtain dividing the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was torn in two when He died on Good Friday.

The **miracles** themselves proved that He was God made flesh – and, though the religious leaders didn’t really have a problem with the miracles He performed – they sure had a problem with what He SAID. In **John 8:58** He said, **“I tell you the truth – before Abraham was born, I am.”** He claimed that He was GOD. He also called them hypocrites – and that stung. He constantly outwitted their traps – and that was frustrating. He gathered the crowds by His teaching – and that made them jealous. His **words** / His CLAIMS were what drove them into a frenzy where they tore their robes and shouted, **“BLASPHEMY!”** Then, finally, **“CRUCIFY HIM!”**

But, by the Spirit’s power, some people believed in what He claimed and said. In **John 1** we’re told that, to all those who believed in Him, God has given us the right to become His children. In **John 3** Jesus told us that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life and will not be condemned. In His shocking sermon in **John 6** He drove the crowds away because they were so disgusted by His seemingly “crazy” words – but the disciples said, **“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”**

The WORDS of our text must have seemed rather crazy to them at the time. But – He’s the Son of God – He’s always right. So, they trusted in Him, and, those words came back to them after the resurrection when they finally understood what He meant. By the power of the same Holy Spirit **we** believe in Him and in His WORDS too. And yes – many people think we are crazy to believe in everything the Bible says. We believe it because Jesus said the Scriptures are God’s Word / they are Truth / they testify about Him / and they cannot be broken.

And . . . as **crazy** as it sounds in our modern “enlightened” age – we believe the world was created in 6 days roughly 6,000 years ago. We believe Adam and Eve were the first human beings created when the world was brand new, and that Satan tricked them into sin through a talking snake. We believe God destroyed the world through a global flood, and that all the animals on the planet are descendants of what Noah had on the ark. We believe that Moses led the people of Israel through the Red Sea on dry land – with a wall of water on either side. We believe that Balaam’s donkey talked to him, and that Jonah was swallowed by a sea creature and lived to talk about it. We

believe that Jesus walked on water and that it wasn't a sandbar. We believe He raised people from the dead and healed those born crippled. We believe He rose from the dead Himself (He said **I** will raise this Temple) and **HE** is the only way to eternal salvation.

We believe all these things because we believe in **miracles!** We also believe we've experienced God's miracles ourselves – many, many times. We believe our faith in Christ itself is a miracle. We believe that every baptism we've seen is a miracle. We believe the Lord's Supper is miraculous – that His Body and Blood is really there to bring us God's forgiveness. We believe the Word of God is miraculous itself – that God breathed these exact words for us, and that they are connected to the Holy Spirit's power.

But . . . *do people out there know you believe all this “crazy” stuff?* Well, we might say . . . no, we keep that to ourselves (for the most part) because we don't want people to think we're totally nuts. We might even be a bit “on the fence” about certain things in Scripture. We generally don't have a problem with the things we like in Scripture – *but* – when He takes a whip and exposes our lack of zeal and passion for worship / when we get excited about sports and have little to no passion for being in God's House / when He tells us our priorities are all messed up / when He tells us to repent of the sins we kind of like / when He tells us all things (even the really painful stuff) in life will work out for good, and that He's still in control of all the things that seem totally **OUT** of control . . . well . . . we might struggle with those things because **we** sort of like to pick and choose, and we only want to believe and do the things that make sense to us. Some of the things in the Bible might just be a bit too **CRAZY** for us. Well – then Jesus punches us in the gut like He did in our Gospel lesson last Sunday where He said, **Mark 8:38** *“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.”*

If those words mean nothing to us we're in deep spiritual trouble. But, if those words knock the wind out of us – *that's GOOD* – for He has mercy on His pathetic sons and daughters who have been brought to their knees by His righteous demands. The **ZEAL** and **PASSION** He showed on that day were for us! He wanted our souls and He demanded that they destroy **HIS** Body so that He could save

us. His passion for our souls knows no bounds, and He proved it when His words came to fulfillment on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

He also tells us not to worry if the world thinks we're crazy (they thought He was crazy too) – and what really matters is that **HE** considers us His people / His children. He reminds us we don't have to (nor can we) convince anyone about Him and His Word – simply tell the truth and let the Holy Spirit do the work. He tells us if they mock, hate, persecute, or even kill us for what we believe and proclaim about Jesus . . . not to worry about it; for we are blessed! After all, we don't have to understand everything right now. The disciples didn't understand half of what Jesus said until after Pentecost, and – *one day* – you'll understand everything too. As for right now we simply **TRUST** that Jesus is always proven right.

And so, we take up our crosses and follow Him through this crazy life in this crazy world. For Jesus flips it all **upside down** for us. Society is crazy – not the Bible. It's not crazy to believe in Scripture – it's crazy not to. It's not crazy to trust in Him – it's crazy to trust in ourselves or in whatever happens to be popular among the crazies out there today. It's not crazy to hand our lives over to Him, it's crazy to try and live for ourselves and for happiness or pleasure. It's not crazy to be in church on Sunday mornings and to get excited and be passionate about being in God's House – because here we see and experience His miraculous power over and over again.

Jesus is the only One you can truly count on 100% - for only He is 100% reliable, truthful, and credible. Stick with Jesus and His Word – that's all that really matters in life. And, don't be ashamed to tell friends and family about Him. They will notice the passion, zeal, and joy we have being here in God's House. They may think you're nuts – or – they may want to come and learn more about Him, and why you're so passionate about being with Him and listening to His Words. Well, when it comes to some people you love, you might think, *“Well – **that** would take a miracle!”* Yeah – but miracles happen, and you're not crazy to believe in them. After all – the fact that we're sitting here in God's House to hear His Word and worship Him with brothers and sisters in the Faith is itself **proof** of His miraculous power!