May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

There was a time when I heard this story as being mostly about anger. Jesus got angry. I get angry. So, it’s ok to get angry if you’re angry about the right thing. Maybe, but I think there’s more to this story than that. I wonder if what we see Jesus doing might not be an expression of his deepest compassion for life, for the temple, for the world, for you and me.

There was a time when I thought Jesus was upset about the animals and the moneychangers being in the temple. Maybe, but again I think there’s more to this story than that. I don’t think Jesus was surprised by the animals and money changers. He grew up as a faithful Jew going to the temple. He didn’t show up this day and say, “Wow! There are animals and money changers in here. I didn’t know that. This is wrong.”

The animals and money changers had always been there. That’s how the system worked. It was business as usual for them to be there. Business as usual meant changing Roman coins to temple coins, purchasing an animal, and offering a sacrifice.

I think business as usual is the issue. The animals and money changers are not the problem. They are the symptom that something else is going on.

I think Jesus went to the temple that day for one purpose and with one intention; to throw out and overturn business as usual. There are times when we need the tables of our life overturned and the animals thrown out. It’s just so easy to fall into the trap of business as usual.

Haven’t there been times in your life when you realized that business as usual was costing you your life? Haven’t there been times when you realized that business as usual was leaving you spiritually bankrupt? Haven’t there been times in your life when you were keeping on keeping on but nothing changed?

Business as usual can happen anywhere: in friendships, marriages, parenting, work, church. It’s all the habits and routines we fall into that cause us to sleep walk through this world. We look but we don’t see, we listen but we don’t hear, we speak but don’t say anything.

It happens whenever we push the auto-pilot button and life becomes mechanical. We go through the motions. We show up but we’re not really there. Have you ever smiled that I’m-good-and-everything-is-fine smile but behind the smile there was an emptiness, you felt hollow, and your heart was breaking? That’s carrying on with business as usual. Or maybe you wake up in the morning and you’re as exhausted as you were when you went to bed the night before. Business as usual. Have you ever felt like you were just not yourself? Nothing seemed right? Boredom overcame creativity. There was no enthusiasm, wonder, or imagination. It was just business as usual. Sometimes we look at life and the world and it all seems in vain. Is this all there is to me and my life? What have I accomplished? Who am I? We’re busy but not really getting anywhere. There’s no depth or meaning, only business as usual.

When we forget that we are the temple of God, the very residence of God, life can easily become a series of transactions. Relationships and intimacy are lost. Priorities get rearranged. Our world is small. Making a living replaces living a life, and the life we have becomes a marketplace rather than a place for meeting the holy in ourselves and one another. And it’s business as usual.

That’s what Jesus is overturning and driving out of the temple. Here’s why I say that. When the authorities ask for a sign from Jesus for what he is doing he says, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”* (Jn 2, 19).

The temple he is talking about is the temple of human life.

“*In three days*” – what does that make you think of? What happens on the third day? Resurrection, a new life, a new beginning, a rebirth. It’s no longer business as usual. Over and over again Jesus interrupts, disrupts, overturns, and throws out business as usual.

It was no longer business as usual for the Samaritan woman. She is no longer the woman who had five husband and lives with a sixth man. She is a well of living water. It was no longer business as usual for man who lay paralyzed on his mat thirty-eight years. He took up his mat and walked. It was no longer business as usual for the 5000 empty and hungry people. They left that mountainside full and satisfied. It was no longer business as usual for the woman caught in adultery. *“Neither do I condemn you,” Jesus said, “go your way”* (Jn 8, 11). It was no longer business as usual for the man blind from birth. *“One thing I do know,” he said, “though I was blind, now I see”* (Jn 9, 25). It was no longer business as usual for four-days-dead Lazarus. He came out of the tomb.

If those stories tell us anything they tell us that we are not intended to live a business-as-usual life. It’s too small for us. Lent is a season that invites us to look at the ways our life has become business as usual, to make changes, clean out, and prepare for a new life, a new day, the third day.

I wonder what business as usual looks like in your life today? What tables need to be overturned? What animals need to be driven out? What does the temple of your life need today?

And what are you willing to do about that? Amen.