

## Introduction

John's story about Jesus cleansing the Temple comes between the miracle at the wedding in Cana, when he turned water into wine, and the secret conversation he had about being born again with the leading Pharisee, Nicodemus. So between a community event and a personal conversation we have a public, nationally significant, drama. Jesus went up the Temple for one of the most significant national festivals.

He comes to Jerusalem as the Jewish nation is preparing for Passover, when the people recall how in Egypt they were saved from the Angel of Death who was killing every first-born son in every family except those whose doorposts and lintels were daubed with lamb's blood. After this the Egyptians let the Hebrews go. Jesus bursts onto this scene on a collision course with the Temple at Passover time.

We can feel the outrage of Jesus as he drives out the animals from the Temple precinct and turns over the money tables. If there was reticence about his mission and identity in the water-to-wine miracle, then here is his public declaration. He intends to reform the nation and restore its spiritual heart. It's no surprise therefore that Nicodemus comes to him and asks for an explanation of what all this means.

## Jesus Connects

Jesus connects with us at every point of our lives. At every level he is our foundation. Whether at the level of our personal choices or daily patterns of life and faith, or our community events and important celebrations, or the life and work of our regional or national institutions which mediate so much of how we collaborate together for our society, Jesus connects at every point. He is significant at every level.

In the Temple drama Jesus is challenged, and the question is put to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" In other words, "Who do you think you are?" Questions are also put to Jesus at the wedding event about what he's going to do, and then, in the private conversation with Nicodemus, about how what he says can happen. At every level the challenge is, "So, show us how you are connected here."

There are many ways we could explore Jesus as our foundation, but John introduces the most basic one. It is simply this, that at every possible level of our lives Jesus' death and resurrection are significant. He has become part of everything we are, in all its goodness and its sinfulness. He participates in our lives.

In our personal life, in our family and community life, in the life of our regional and national institutions, Jesus is here. The meaning of the incarnation is not that Jesus came and went away, having saved us, but rather that he came and is still participating by the Spirit in all our lives. He's with us now.

In Jesus, everything died that was sinful in all aspects our lives. In Jesus, everything that is good rose again. He is therefore with us in the contradictions of being human, of living with sin and yet knowing we are made very good. He is, for Christians, as it says in Ephesians, 'the Cornerstone' of everything.

## Jesus Connects with the Cathedral

The Cathedral has seen so many good things happen over the last year – the completion of the *Kings and Scribes* project, the agreeing of the *Calling and Vision* document, and the appointment of new colleagues. We have also seen, but I won't be naming anything, those things which we know are sinful. In Jesus all that has been good has been raised up; in Jesus all that has been sinful has died with him.

As we go forward with Jesus as our Foundation into this new year, let us go on asking him, and let us encourage each other to ask Jesus, "How do you relate to us at this point? And how, dear Lord, can we see more of your resurrection of all that is good, and of you putting to death all that is sinful in our lives?" In this place there are many private conversations, there are many community events, and there are also regional and national gatherings that play out the drama of our lives. Jesus is connected to all.

So as we reflect on this past year and also look forward to the next year, may the words of the disciples become ours: 'After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus has spoken to them.' *Amen.*