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

Today’s gospel story found in all four gospels. Jesus enters the temple and begins wielding a whip and drives the animals out of the building. He overturned the tables of the money changers and disrupts daily temple business.

The temple was the center of everything to the Jewish people. Their whole lives revolved around temple and were wrapped up in its system. Jesus unsettles the temple system and I think Jesus unsettles the systems in which we become totally invested.

Jesus is overturning the loyalties that we put in the wrong places, the beliefs we have that our religious assumptions somehow describe life finally and totally. He is overturning our satisfaction with where we are spiritually. He is overturning the tables of greed that take advantage of too many people. He is overturning every part of every system that somehow suggests that God is not God in whom we trust.

What if this story of Jesus throwing around tables and chairs is not really about the animals, moneychangers, or anger? What if the animals and moneychangers who have taken over so much real estate in the temple are not the problem but rather symptoms of the problem? What if this gospel lesson from John isn’t about what is present in the temple but is deeply concerned with what is missing?

Jesus can see that the temple is filled with animals and moneychangers but is empty of life and soul. The people have lost their way and have forgotten that the temple is God’s house, that their bodies are God’s house, that creation is the God’s house, that the entire cosmos is God’s house. They have forgotten that the face of God is found in every direction.

When this kind of forgetting happens in our own hearts and minds, the temple of our lives become places of transaction rather than transformation, wholesale marketplaces rather than holy meeting places.

So, I say, “Jesus, come and overturn our tables. Make us uncomfortable because the place you take us to… is the deeper place. The place you take us to… reveals God, a God of rich immeasurable grace and love. After all, You are the new temple.” Amen.