

GROUP RETREAT

REFLECTION

*A Whisper
will be Heard*

A NEW LOOM
ORG



Group Retreat Reflection

A Whisper will be Heard

INTRODUCTION

Can you imagine being in the temple when some upstart young rabbi comes through shouting about how we've made his fathers' house a den of thieves and throwing tables around? There must have been a lot of people trying to understand, perhaps trying to grapple with the poignancy of those events.

St Anselm of Canterbury who was a Benedictine monk, philosopher, theologian and archbishop from 1093 had the motto 'faith seeking understanding'. There's something important we need to realise in our post-truth, post-secular culture about engaging more deeply in our spiritual journey. This reflection uses scripture, image, prayers and poetry to help us discover the depths of Christian Spirituality – to have a faith seeking understanding.

There are a variety of resources here, please feel free to use whatever is appropriate for your context.

POEM : 'THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE RIGHT'

From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring
The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a yard
But doubts and loves dig up the world
Like a mole, a plow
And a whisper will be heard in the place
Where the ruined house once stood.

By Yehuda Amichi

This is a poem about being in our comfort zone and how, if we want to experience growth in our Christian journey we need to move beyond that place. We need to let the doubts dig up the world – that's when a whisper will be heard, it's in the brokenness that we hear the whisper of God in our lives.

Have you experienced this in your own life?

How can we 'create' these moments in our lives?

What does 'letting the doubts dig up the world' mean to you?

READING – JOHN 2 (NRSV)

13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 15 Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” 18 The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” 19 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” 20 The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” 21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body. 22 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 had spoken.

REFLECTION

John’s gospel invites us to see further, beyond the surface... he doesn’t tell the story in the same way as the other gospels. John is perhaps slightly more creative in his delivery. For example, he doesn’t put things in chronological order like the others. This reading is from chapter two and comes straight after Jesus turns water into wine. Our reading does not form part of the passion story in John’s gospel so what’s he saying?

John is trying to set the tone for what he wants to say in the rest of the gospel and he believed this story would help do this. Both water into wine and the cleansing of the temple point towards a deeper reality in Jesus – an old way of doing things and a new way of doing things. The temple is failing, it’s not even finished being built but never the less it’s failing. Had the authorities taken their eye off the ball? Had people forgotten why they were there, what the temple was for? It seems like Jesus is saying ‘you’ve missed where the temple points, it’s just pointing to itself’.

John points towards deeper realities that Jesus embodies – a new relationship with God and each other that Jesus makes possible, he takes the eagle eyed view, beyond the temple, beyond death even, to the resurrection... John sees beyond the chaos to restoration.

Group Retreat Reflection

A Whisper will be Heard

IMAGE



Royalty free image

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are your preconceptions about this story?

What emotions does this image bring up for you?

Which character in the story best represents you (Jesus, Disciple, Trader, Pharisee etc)?

Who or what might Jesus be looking at?

Under what circumstances do you 'lash out' in a similar way?

Group Retreat Reflection

A Whisper will be Heard

CONFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

This is a time to sit in the presence of God and ask forgiveness for all we've done wrong in thought, word and deed. You are invited to find a coin (from the temple floor) and hold it as we reflect on what we need to confess before God.

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world
and knows our every thought, word and deed.
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

PRAYER

Merciful Lord,
cast your bright beams of light upon the Church:
that, being enlightened by the teaching
of your blessed apostle and evangelist Saint John,
we may so walk in the light of your truth
that we may at last attain to the light of everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ your incarnate Son our Lord.

Further Resources

- Songs
 - Mylon LeFevre's "Turn the Tables on Me" from his 1989 album Big World.
 - Jesus Cleanses Temple – Johnny Cash
 - Clear the Temple by Ken Saurajen
- Art
 - Casting out the money changers by Giotto
 - Christ driving the money changers from the temple by Jan Sanders van Hemessen
 - Christ Cleansing the Temple by Bernardino Mei
 - Expulsion of the merchants from the temple by Andrei Mironov