

Home Group Leader's Notes
Week of September 12, 2021
"The Church is a Temple"

Sermon Series: *Four Metaphors for the Church*

SHARE A MEMORY

When you were a kid, what or who was a special place to visit? What made it special?

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

"The Church is a Temple" is often a little understood topic. We did not grow up with God's temple in the center of our community. So, the idea of a temple can feel a bit foreign. If you haven't yet, listen to the message with this title available through our website or app. You can also view an explanation of "temple" at this website:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTnq6I3vUbU>

Definition of "temple:" Derived from a word meaning "to dwell," a temple was a place

- From the beginning of creation, God dwelled (was present) in the earthly dwelling with people. Eden was where God walked with people. All of creation was God's temple, a place where He rests and rules.
- Old Testament temple: The place where God lives and rules as king. (But this doesn't mean that this temple contains God.)
- After people failed to worship and honor God and live as His people, God's Spirit departed the earthly temple.
- But the Old Testament spoke of another future temple which God would inhabit forever with His new priesthood.
- In the New Testament, Jesus made it clear that through Him, God's presence and rule was coming into the world in a new way. He was the true temple. It would expand out to include all of creation.
- After His resurrection, God would come to dwell in believers
- In multiple passages, believers are now the true temple
- In Revelation 21:3, God declares that He will dwell (tabernacle) with His people forever.

Read each of these passages and write about what we learn about the church as God's temple, the place where he dwells.

John 2:18-22 – Jesus is the temple where God resides and rules

1 Corinthians 3:10-17 The church is the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells within us.

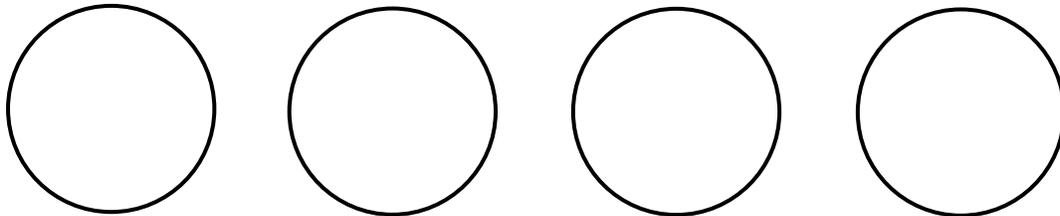
John 14:16-17 Jesus asked the Father to give us the Spirit of truth to live in us.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 Being God's temple means a change in our behavior and associations.

1 Peter 2:4-5 We are still being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood through Jesus Christ.

Revelation 21:3 In the end of time, the dwelling (tabernacle) of God will be with people.

In the four circles below, how would you draw and explain God's work in the world to be a place where God rests and rules?



Genesis 1

Genesis 3

1 Peter 3:18

Revelation 21:3

Genesis 1: God's made the world to be a place of rest and rule – His "temple"

Genesis 3: Sin separated us from God. We were no longer dwelling with God in His place of rest and rule.

1 Peter 3: Jesus came to bring us to God, to restore our opportunity to dwell with God. Now, God dwells in all who trust in Jesus.

Rev 21: We will one day live with God on the renewed Earth.

What does it mean to you that God dwells in us? How does this affect how you see life?

DISCUSS TOGETHER

It is clear that we (plural /together) are now the temple of God. How should this affect our view of our relationship with God? Our view of each other?

It is so easy to replace the “we” with “me” as God’s temple. It’s true that we are each a part, but the emphasis should be on the “we.”

Knowing that infinite almighty God dwells in US should call us into deeper worship and thankful living. No one could have dreamed up such an amazing privilege.

When we are with each other, we should remember this and honor one another – they are the temple of God Himself.

In 1 Peter 2:1-5, we are a “royal priesthood.” What does this say about our identity and role? (This is repeated in 2:9) We have the privilege of being near to God, of representing Him in this darkened world (2:9), of declaring His praise. This also means that we live with different morals and overall behavior (2:11-12). We represent God among the lost and should live such good lives among them that they see our “good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” (2:12).

In our troubled times, how does the fact that we are the temple, the place where God rules, intersect with our world? How do we represent the presence of the living God in our world?

Not a day goes by that I don’t hear someone speak about the darkness in our land. We, as God’s temple, live in His presence and for His glory. We can choose to look at or dwell in the world, or dwell in God’s presence, His goodness and grace.

Paul tells us how to interact with people in the world: with His wisdom, His grace, with salt, and God’s answers.

How should understanding that we are God’s temple affect our unity? (see Ephesians 4:3) Our morality? (see 1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

As we have learned in many passages, unity is glorifying to God and essential for our mission to bring the good news to people. Knowing that God dwells in each of us should result in kindness, humility, and respect.

Our morality should reflect the character of God who lives in us. In addition, as His priests/priestesses, we have the high calling of living to represent Him in how we live.

May God fill you with His love and grace as you reconnect.

Steve