

The Sanctuary Is for God

by George Warnock

The sanctuary is for God's abiding place in the midst of men, and He needs us for fellowship, not just service, to fulfill His plan.

Scripture: Exodus 25:8, Romans 3:22

Topics: "Fellowship With God", "God's Presence"

Description

George Warnock emphasizes that the sanctuary is primarily for God's presence among His people, highlighting that the Gospel centers on God rather than human needs. He points out that all humanity is equally sinful and estranged from God, and that God's desire is for fellowship and companionship with those created in His image. Warnock critiques the notion that we are merely saved to serve, asserting that God seeks a true habitation within us for relationship rather than just service. He illustrates this with the story of Mary and Martha, showing that God values our fellowship with Him above our works. Ultimately, God's plan is to create a sanctified people who reflect His glory and are united with Christ.

Transcript

"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8).

This, we believe, is the key verse in this whole subject concerning the Temple of God. How it would help us in all our Christian service and ministry, if we could recognize this one important principle: the sanctuary is for God's abiding place in the midst of men. The whole message of the Gospel is off-center unless it is properly centered in God. We are inclined to relate the Gospel primarily to ourselves, from the standpoint of our need, our lost condition, and our approach toward God. But actually it begins in God, centers about Himself, and reaches forth toward man for the delight of His own heart. The greatest of all sins is our failure to recognize His supreme Lordship in our lives. Before God all men are equally estranged from Him, and therefore equally sinful. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22-23). When the glory of God becomes the standard of our acceptance before Him, then all men come equally short of that standard.

God begins from His own heart, reaches out toward man, and draws him unto Himself, for His own glory. I need God, that is true. But because I am so unlike God by nature, and so lacking in His attributes of love and mercy and truth that long to flow forth from His being, I fail to recognize that He needs me. Oh, yes, we would quickly acknowledge that He needs us for service... because He has no hands but my hands to serve Him... no feet but my feet to carry the gospel of peace... no mouth but my mouth to speak forth His

Word. We picture Him as being so helpless as a Spirit--Being that He must have us to do His work! But that is far, far from the truth. For He really does not need us so much for the service that we can render. Ten thousand times ten thousand stand at His beck and call. And if these were not sufficient, by the word of His mouth He could create ten million more to "post o'er land and ocean without rest." We have all heard that old slogan of the Church: "We are saved to serve!" But this is far from the truth. It is like a man saying concerning his bride, "I married her because I needed a slave."

God does need us. But primarily for fellowship, to satisfy the eternal longing of His own heart for companionship and friendship with one in His own image and likeness. He needs a place where He might live, a place that He can call "Home." When He lives within us He will direct us in paths of service as the need arises, but this is secondary. He really desires, and He will have, a true habitation for Himself in the Spirit--a Home, with sons and daughters that are obedient unto Him as they grow up in His family, from babes to maturity. Without such a home God continues to be the lonesome God that He was before creation, with no one to share His own heart of love and mercy and truth and long-suffering and kindness.

Martha was surprised that Jesus would spend so much time just talking to Mary, when He knew there was so much work to be done; and Mary should have been helping her--helping her to serve the Lord who had come to visit them. But Jesus told her plainly that Mary had chosen the better part, and that no one was to take this portion from her. Evidently He took greater delight in fellowshiping with Mary, than He did in Martha's efforts to prepare Him a good meal. Now the Marthas are beloved of the Lord too. They are busily engaged in the work of the Lord, trying to get the job done. Yet too often they do not recognize what God really desires, and how He intends to accomplish the things that need to be done in the earth. For truly God's plan is not merely to "get the job done." He is creating a people that will be to the praise of His glory. And this can only come about as they submit to His Word and Spirit, and become vitally one with Christ Himself; and consequently one with His many brethren. What instruments and resources God may use from time to time and from one generation to another in working out His purposes in the earth are really quite incidental. Nor do we mean to criticize any of the "means" that men are using today to evangelize the world, if God is indeed giving direction. But we are rather amazed that men will continue to ignore the one and only way that God has ordained for the world to see and hear the Gospel, and know that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God. For He has shown us clearly that the world will know and believe only when God has a people "sanctified" unto the will of the Father, and made one with the Lord Jesus, as He is one with the Father. (See Jn. 17:17-21.) God's people have always been prone to turn from God's way when they judge it to be impossible; and then do it their way if it seems to be more practical. Men of faith are not concerned as to how God may bring to pass what is impossible. They simply believe what He has declared, embrace the promise, and wait expectantly (though with much trial of faith) for the performance of that which God has decreed.

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