

The House of God - Part 1

by Peter Brandon

The house of God is a place where God's presence, presidency, and power are demonstrated, and where believers can experience awe, peace, joy, and love.

Duration: 47:41

Scripture: 1 Timothy 3:14

Topics: "Presence of God", "The Church"

Description

Peter Brandon discusses the significance of the house of God, emphasizing that it is not merely an organization but a living organism centered around Christ. He highlights the importance of behavior within the church, the necessity of God's presence, and the power that should be evident in a true assembly of believers. Brandon warns against relying on traditions, practices, or personalities when choosing a church, urging congregants to seek a community governed by biblical principles and filled with the Holy Spirit. He concludes by stressing that the house of God should be characterized by awe, peace, joy, and love, all of which are manifestations of God's presence among His people.

Transcript

I want to speak on the house of God. It's not an easy subject. In the second half I shall be trembling as I speak on this subject.

But the house of God is the centre of our assembly fellowship. And that's what we're going to consider just for a few moments. Let's turn to 1 Timothy 3. Just a few verses.

We'll start at verse 14. These things I write unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.

Now the word behave thyself is absolutely important. If you're used to underlining anything in your bible, please underline those two words. It's behaviour in the house of God.

Then he goes on. Which is the church of the living God. Now notice that.

It's not just the church. It's the church of a living God. The church is not an organisation.

Hallelujah, it's an organism. And it's alive. And it's vital.

And we want to see the brilliance of that word. The church of the living God. Then he goes on.

Which is the church of the living God. The pillar and ground of truth. The pillar speaks of the structure.

The ground speaks of its foundation. And therefore each local church should not only be the church of the living God. But the structure and the foundation of all truth.

Now that really is tremendous when we really grasp the fact. But, don't worship the pillar. Don't worship the ground work.

Thank God for that. But worship the centre which is Christ. Now it's possible to even worship the principles of an assembly.

But we must learn that the centre of all things is Christ. So he goes on. And without controversy.

Great is the mystery of godliness. Now godliness has to refer to behaviour. And therefore again the emphasis is not so much on God.

As we see that which you'll see in a few moments. That's important. But on godliness.

The way we should behave in the house of God. God was manifest in the flesh. That speaks of the incarnation.

Justified in the spirit. That means the affirmation of the spirit concerning the person of Christ in his ministry. Seen of angels.

Now the word seen could mean helped by angels. You remember in the garden of Gethsemane. He was actually strengthened by an angel.

Preached unto the nations. Believed on in the world. And received up into glory.

And that's where we're all going one day. Maybe sooner than we realise we'll be all in the glory with it. Now God will bless to us the reading of this word.

Now there comes a time in our experience when we must associate with a local church. And we can do it under various settings. Our parents can influence us.

We could say mum and dad are good people and they go to that place of worship. So I'm going to that place of worship. And therefore our parents are the main influence of us joining a local church.

Now is that right? I have known people say this to me. My grandparents were in that local church. And their parents and their parents.

We can go back five generations. Therefore I'm not going to change. Well my dear friends our parents can be wrong you know.

And we all come from one parent Adam. And he was put out of the garden for stealing the fruit wasn't he? So can you see we can't rely always on our parents. Then some people join a local church because they like the practices.

Some people like it high. Some people like it low. Some people like it medium.

Some people like it musical. Some people like it as a theatre. But they join a local church because of the practices.

Now should that be right? Well instinctively you know there's something wrong there. Because the bible should govern us concerning what church we should join. Then thirdly you can join a local church because you like the preacher.

You might go along and hear him preach. And you say what a fine teacher of the word of God he is. And you may join that local church because you like the teaching and you like the preacher.

Well thank God for a good preacher and a good teacher. But sometimes they go and the congregation goes with them. I think one of the greatest two teachers of all times was Martin Lloyd-Jones.

He was an outstanding teacher of the word. But when he died they couldn't find a man to forfeit his place. So should we rely on the teacher? Certainly not.

Then some people join a local church because of principles. Now we're getting near to the church. They read carefully the word of God and they say something like that.

Scripturally that's the nearest church I can find. Now there comes a time especially in the lives of young people when they have to do that. Don't follow your parents.

Though good they might be. Don't follow the practices. Don't follow a preacher.

But look carefully into the scripture to see if this local church is governed by biblical principles. But there's a problem. A local church can be biblically correct.

Here it comes. But spiritually dead. I've seen it.

Exclusively they gather to the principles tenaciously. Nothing wrong with that. But there's no life.

It's spiritually dead. Now we must ask a big question. What makes a group of Christians the house of God? Have you ever asked that question? What makes a gathering of people that believe they're gathering to the principles of scripture? What makes it the house of God? Now that's not an easy question.

Because I'm going to put before you three things. In the house of God there is, now note the word, a demonstration of the presence of God. Now you might have the theory concerning the presence of God.

But that doesn't mean to say there's a demonstration of the presence of God. That's the first thing. So then you will say how to identify when the presence of God is manifested in the buildings.

That's what we're going to talk about. And it's not easy. Secondly in the house of God there is the presidency of the house of God.

That doesn't mean that you know all the theory concerning 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians chapter 4 and Romans chapter 12 where we have the gifts. It includes that but much more. God is so present that he's controlling everything in that local church.

And we take the reins and we give it to him. And when God is controlling that local church you're in the house of God. The real house of God.

And then lastly in the house of God there is power. Power. Think for a few moments of the greatness of God in creation.

It's mind-blowing isn't it? The greatness of God when he gave the 10 commandments and the whole mountain shook. The greatness of God when the Shekinah glory filled the tabernacle and filled the temple. The greatness of God when he came on the day of Pentecost with a rushing mighty wind and cloven tongues of fire set upon each other.

Is that power relevant today? Well the house of God is a place where his power is not only known theoretically but known experimentally. Beloved if we can get back to that we shall see the glory of God. Now let's go over that carefully.

First of all with the presence of God there is a sense of awe. Let me say it carefully. God among us.

The almighty God among us. Think of it. Right now God among us.

Abraham was very intimate with God. But in Genesis 17 the Lord came to him in such power as the almighty God he fell on his face. In other words the glory was so great it was too much for him.

He fell on his face in awe. Again you remember there was a time in the life of Jacob when he came to a place called Jabbok and a mystical angel wrestled with him on earth. What an encounter.

And then he touched the hollow of his thigh the secret of all history. And then Jacob left off trying to break from the man of God and he took his arms and he clung to him and he said I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And God did a wonderful thing.

He changed his name on that occasion from Jacob to Israel. A prince with God. And when this mystical angel left him he discovered that God was wrestling with him.

And he trembled. He was amazed that he was alive. God wrestling with Jacob.

Again many of you will remember that mighty man of God Moses. 40 years in Egypt learning the culture of that great nation. 40 years learning of God.

And then in the back side of the desert he saw a bush burning without being consumed. And that man of God slowly moved in the direction of that bush and he heard a voice saying take off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And he must have shook like a leaf in the autumn wind.

God, here I am. And that moment he was aware of the presence of God. Think of Joshua.

He looks at Canaan. He looks at the walls of Jericho and they were impregnable. And then he's looking at that place with great care and he sees a man with a sword in his hand.

And he goes up in his innocence and says are you for us or against us? He says neither. He came as the captain of the Lord of hosts. And what did Joshua do? He sat on his face prostrate.

And notice what happened. The Lord says take off thy shoe, not shoes, shoe in the singular of thy feet. Why? He needed one-shot feet for possession.

Go in and possess the lamb. The bare foot was the presence of the Lord. And he couldn't have possession until he had the presence of God.

What a lesson. Joshua, and have you noticed? All the wars there in Canaan were the wars of the Lord. They were all supernaturally won.

Why? Because they were living in the wake of the captain of the Lord of hosts. Wonderful. Take for instance that godly man Isaiah.

He stood before the children of Israel and what a surgical message he gave. Five times in the fifth chapter he says we'll answer you Israel. And what he said was right.

But he was in the sanctuary with his God and he got a vision of Jehovah. And he saw the Lord high and lifted up. And his train filled the temple.

And when he spoke even the threshold of heavenship. What was his response? Look. He falls before him.

And says where am I? A man of unclean death. Why? I've seen the Lord. Now here it comes.

Beloved when we're in the presence of God and God's presence is manifested. That awe is in the building. God and I have we lost.

Now notice. We cannot lose the Holy Spirit. The moment you are born of God you are filled with the Spirit.

And even your sinning does not break that field. But we can lose the presence of God in an assembly. The lampstand can be removed.

Now I'm just raising this. Are we fully aware of the awe of God? That's the house of God. But with the presence of God there's peace.

Now I'm not referring of justification by faith that brings peace. That's included but it's more than that. I'm not thinking of when we pass through deep troubles.

The peace of God can garrison our lives. It's more than that. Not peace with God or the peace of God.

It's more than that. It's the God of peace among us. Now the word peace in the Old Testament is beautiful.

It means binding together. You see if you look at sin carefully it disintegrates. When Adam sinned his body was the same up to a point.

His soul was the same up to a point that his spirit was dead. He lost contact with God. And through the sacrifice of an animal when God saw in it the death of his son.

That was restored. But you see sin always disintegrates. We see it in the modern world between young and old.

We see it in the modern world between children and their parents. Disintegration. But God's peace, note this, binds us together.

That's why when the God of peace is among us there can't be division. Why? He wouldn't be among us. He binds us together.

He links us up in his love of which you'll see in a few moments. And that is why in the house of God there's not only awe but there's peace. The binding together.

Now why should I say that? In the world in which we live people are living on tablets. Now if you are living on tablets and you are being medically cared for go on taking them. I'm not a doctor as you know but it's all indication that they can't find peace.

Therefore when God is really present among his people the unsaved should come in and sense the peace of God in our gathering. But isn't that beautiful? Secondly with the presence of God there's joy. Now can you see if it's just awe and peace there's something missing.

There's joy. Now those of you who have read the Psalms carefully will know that there are the psalms of exaltation. And especially with David in the presence of God he said there's the fullness of joy.

Not just joy but the fullness of joy. Why? Because man originally was made for the presence of God. We were made so that we might have intimate communion with God.

And that's the main purpose of our restoration that that should be restored. And when we are occupied with God and his glory there is the fullness of joy. Now I'm almost afraid because of the climate in which we're in to mention this but I think I will.

When David brought back the ark of God in the Levitical way, notice what I'm saying. What did he do? He danced with all his might. He was full of the joy of the Lord and I'm sure of this he didn't know that he was dancing.

Now I've got to be very careful now because there are people that swing on fans and chandeliers and we have to be very careful and do some assaults in the presence of God. Now we want to be careful of that because of the awe of God. But there is the joy of the Lord.

Just think of the wonder of being right with God through the blood of Christ. That should bring joy. Just imagine that there is in every believer in this room the Holy Spirit and he has all the fruits of the Spirit and they're all there.

And the first one is love, joy, peace, full of joy. When the Lord Jesus came into that upper room on that Pentecostal evening, the moment they saw him they were full of joy. Now I say this because I feel it's necessary.

Our meetings shouldn't be miserable and depressed. You see there should be a great sense of joy now at the Lord's Supper. When we turn to the resurrection of Christ our hearts should be full of joy.

When we come to the supper and we break the bread and we remember how that he died for our sins there should be tears in our hearts. But some of our meetings can be boring. Not when the Lord is present.

You know I remember as a boy and I was only about 12 when this happened, going to a breaking of bread and all over that meeting there were little quiet praises. Glory to God. Amen.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Now I've said this on many occasions.

We have given all the amens and all the praises to our charismatic friend. And all we have is an ignorant grunt. Isn't that so? Wouldn't it be lovely if when we were in the presence of God we were filled with joy.

But notice the balance. It's a joy that's balanced by awe. It's an awe that's balanced by joy.

And in between there's the peace of God. But there's something missing. What is it? God is.

Now love is not an attribute of God. God is love. All his attributes are marked by love.

God is light. God is light. That's not an attribute.

All the ways of God are marked by light. But when we come to the breaking of bread and when we break the bread, we go right to the heart of God's love and we see this great love that we call agape love. And God has spared his heart so that we could understand the depth of it.

Now immediately a person is saved. God cleanses him from all sin or her from all sin. The Holy Spirit comes in.

And what is the Spirit of God doing within us? The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Now that word shed doesn't mean it's poured in. It means it's almost poured in in torrent.

How can I present this to you? The first time I saw the Niagara I was dumbfounded. The river was in spate and I looked and I was full of awe. I noticed that there were people who had more money than me and they had uniforms on in a boat and they got the spray of the awe more than me.

But they only had the spray. Then I learned afterwards there were others that went underneath the waterfall and they got more spray they had protecting clothing on. But they only got the spray.

No one could stand underneath the Niagara, not when those blocks of ice were coming over and could take it. But thank God there's no blocks of ice in the love of God. It's poured into our hearts and the love is there.

And when we worship we are worshipped in the presence of a God. That's why there must be no bitterness at the Lord's supper. The love of God is there.

Now can you see why I'm calling this the demonstration of His presence? There's awe, there's peace, there's joy unspeakable, there's love. Have we got that? Do we sense it? Or is it just the theory? Secondly He must be president. What does that mean? He must take complete and absolute control of the earth.

We don't need men controlling it. Thank God for elders but they do not control an assembly. They're there as spiritual fathers to care for the plants.

It's the whole Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that control the gathering. Now let's look at one scripture that speaks of this very directly. Could we turn to Corinthians chapter 12.

There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit. There are ninefold gifts of the Spirit here in 1 Corinthians 12. Some of these gifts we believe were related to the 1st century because they hadn't got the scriptures.

Others are related for us today but they are all the gifts of the Spirit and it's the Holy Spirit that is there to control them, not man. Now we must remember that in the house of God. Then he goes on.

There are differences of administrations or services but the same Lord. Now what does this mean? There are the gifts of God given to the local church in Ephesians 4 and they are men. Now the gifts of the Spirit is something that's supernatural in men.

But the gifts of the risen Lord are men. An apostle is a man. A prophet is a man.

An evangelist is a man. A pastor is a man. A teacher is a man.

And these men are given to the church so that they might minister to the church. Now God will raise up evangelists but he's the one who does it. And it's God that sends him out and only God that will send him out.

The church will lay their hands upon him figuratively just so that they are associated with him. But it's the Lord that sends him out. We cannot make teachers.

We cannot make pastors. We cannot make prophets. It's the work of the risen Lord and he controls.

And it's lovely to be in a local church where people are being controlled by the Lord himself. And then look at verse 6. There are diversities of operations, powers, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. Now if I may apply this to the gifts of the risen Lord.

What is a preacher or an evangelist without the power of the Spirit? He's just annoying. That's all. What is a teacher without the mighty power of the Spirit? He's just a lecturer.

That's all. What is a pastor and we desperately need them? Without the power of the Spirit. He's just a man.

That's all. You see can you see what's happening now in the house of God? He's present and he's prevalent. He's our controller of everything.

Now I'm afraid. Now could I say this to you right from my heart as an older man? I'm now in my 87th year. I may not be back in Australia.

I don't know. I keep saying this every year. But may I say this? And we're slipping back to one man ministry.

I can see it. And once God has given you life, you mustn't go away from that life. And we're in a serious condition.

Now always remember this. That the Lord is present and the Lord is president. It's not man controlling it.

You see we all accept the headship of Christ. And thank God for it. Lovely to see it this morning.

But do we all accept the Lordship of Christ? That he's controlling the death. But then with the presence of God there's not only diversity. And then not only he controls all the gifts and empowers the gifts.

There is power. Now can I keep on saying that? In the local church where the spirit is unbridled and unquenched. There is the power of God.

You can't manufacture that. Now in gospel preaching and I have been preaching now for 64 years. I used to sense that mighty power in the local church.

I don't sense it now. What does that indicate? There's something wrong. When the Holy Spirit came he came in a rushing mighty wind.

That means an irresistible wind. And it speaks of the mighty power of God. When he came he came individually as clove and tongues of fire.

And it set upon each of them. And the scripture says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. So can you see what's happening? It's the wind that fills the house.

It's the clove and tongues of fire that bring the sealing of the spirit. One collective and the other individual. Now I'm not thinking so much now of the individual aspect of the Holy Spirit.

I'm thinking of the public manifestation of the Holy Spirit. God's power. Now if you go through the book of the Acts you will find that power in the first 10 chapters.

Peter goes out and preaches. And 3,000 people are convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit in their heart. And they cry out publicly.

Men and brethren what shall we do? That's power. And on one day they baptise 3,000 people. And 3,000 people were added to 120.

That's power. That's power. In the next chapter there's a man that's born lame.

And he's been at the beautiful gate for many years. And Peter and John are going to a prayer meeting. And they see this man and he cries out for arm.

And there's one source if theologian said he got legs. And I thought that was lovely really. And Peter and John said silver and gold have I none.

But such as I have give I thee in the name of Jesus Christ. Rise up and walk. And the men lift up.

Now if we could see miracles like that wouldn't it make people sit up and think. But it's the power of God. And then he preaches somewhere near the beautiful gate.

And we read 5,000 men believe. That's power. Just a handful of Christians.

Then we read that they're before the Sanhedrin. And after being before the Sanhedrin they come to their own company. And they prayed.

And when they had prayed the place was shaken. What does that denote? The mighty power that there is in prayer. Then we find there was a man called Barnabas and he gave his all.

Then we find that there were two others Ananias and Sapphira. And they pretended to give themselves to the Lord or to give all. But they kept half back.

They were smitten with death. So power in the chair. Behaviour in the chair.

Can you see it? Can't do what you like. Then because of persecution Philip goes down to Samaria and preaches Christ to them. And it seems as though the whole city was shaken.

And there must have been thousands of people saved. And yet at the same time he was called away from all that blessing to go to a place called Gaza. And preach to one man.

But it's all the power of God. But further. If you were alive in the first century.

And someone said to you who's the last person you would ever imagine to be saved. You would say without thinking. That rascal Saul of Tarsus.

And he was a rascal. On the Damascus road after seeing the death of Stephen. He saw a light.

Heard a voice. And he was gloriously saved. And gave us two thirds of the doctrine of the church in the New Testament.

What was it? Power. There was Peter just about to have a meal. And he was hungry.

And he still had a liking for the Jewish congregation. There was another man and his name was Cornelius. And he was seeking for God for every fiber that God had given him.

And the angel of the Lord gave him Peter's name and address and where he lived. And he sent a couple of soldiers to fetch him. And when he heard that the Lord wanted him to go and preach in a Gentile house he was nervous.

So he took a number of brethren with him in order to encourage him and help him. And as he was preaching the gospel it happened. The Holy Spirit moved in mighty power.

And they were all saved. What was it? Power. Then again you will notice there were a group of Christians in Antioch.

And they were concerned with the Gentile world. And they had a prayer meeting. And would you believe it I'll say this in a hushed voice.

Not feasting. Fasting. You will notice all our meetings are marked by food.

Their meeting was marked by fasting. And then after praying and fasting the word came. Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I've called them.

And those men went through Asia, Asia Minor preaching the gospel. And thousands were saved. It was the power of God.

Now I can see by your faces what you're saying. That's the first century Peter. Yes.

We're living in the 21st century. There's such a thing as Christendom. We're living in days of small things.

You can't explain it. Can I answer that? Would you let me? Is the Holy Spirit the same? Has he lost his power? Look what he's doing in China. Look what he's doing in India.

Look what he's doing in the Far East. Look what he's doing in Russia. And he can do the same in Australia.

Now I know what you're all saying. How can we get back to that? Can we? We can. If we're willing.

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