

Dedication of the House of God

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of dedicating ourselves and our resources to God as the true essence of the house of God, which is His people, rather than the physical building itself.

Duration: 52:30

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 5:1-2, 2 Chronicles 5:12 - 6:1, 2 Chronicles 6:4, 2 Chronicles 6:11, 2 Chronicles 6:41

Topics: "Dedication"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having the presence of the Lord in our gatherings. He explains that if God's presence is with us, His glory will be manifested. The speaker also discusses the difference between being religious and being spiritual, stating that the presence of the Lord is what distinguishes the two. He highlights the need to satisfy God in order for Him to come into rest among His people. The sermon concludes with a call to praise and pray, acknowledging that God's work is just the beginning and that we should anticipate His future plans for His glory.

Transcript

We'll return to 2nd Chronicles, chapter 5. 2nd Chronicles, chapter 5. We'll read from the first verse. 2nd Chronicles, chapter 5, verse 1. And all the work was finished that Solomon made for the house of Jehovah. And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, and the silver and the gold and all the vessels he put among the treasures of the house of God.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the fathers of the children of Israel to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves to the King at the feast, that of the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark.

And they brought up the ark and the tent of meeting and all the holy vessels that were in the tent. The priests, the Levites, brought them up. And King Solomon and all the assembly of Israel that were assembled to him before the ark sacrificed sheep and oxen which could not be counted nor numbered for multitude.

And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah to its place, into the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim. And the cherubim stretched forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and its staffs above. And the staffs were long, so

that the ends of the staffs were seen outside the ark before the oracle, that they were not seen without.

And this verse in the original has another rendering which says, And they drew out the staffs. And there they are to this day. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put there at Horeb.

When Jehovah made a covenant with the children of Israel and when they came out of Egypt. And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place, for all the priests that were present were hallowed without observing the courses. And the Levites, the singers, all they of Asaph, of Haman, and of Gethsemane, with their sons and their brethren, clad in vices, with cymbals and lutes and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets.

It came to pass when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one voice to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah. And when they lifted up their voices with trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music and praised Jehovah, for He is good, for His lovingkindness endureth forever. That then the house, the house of Jehovah, was filled with a cloud.

And the priests could not stand to do their service because of the cloud, for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of God. Well, let's read a little more. Chapter 6, verse 1. Then says Solomon, Jehovah said that He would dwell in the thick darkness, but I have built a house of habitation for thee, even a settled place for thee to abide in forever.

And the king turned his face and blessed the whole congregation of Israel, and the whole congregation of Israel stood. And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel. Chapter 7, verse 1. And when Solomon had ended praying, the fire came down from the heavens and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of Jehovah filled the house.

And the priests could not enter into the house of Jehovah because the glory of Jehovah filled Jehovah's house. And all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down and the glory of Jehovah upon the house and bowed themselves with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and thanked Jehovah, for He is good, for His lovingkindness endureth forever. I believe we are all familiar with how David had in his heart to build a house for the Lord.

Even though he was not allowed to build that house, but his very desire to build it pleased the Lord exceedingly. May we say his very desire to build that house touched the Lord's heart because it was in the heart of the Lord to dwell among His people. David was not allowed to build it, but because of his love for the house of the Lord, he prepared a great deal of materials for the house.

Out of his affection for the Lord, he set apart gold and refined silver for God's house. And it was his son Solomon who built it. Wisdom built the house.

Solomon spent seven years in building the house of God. He spent nothing in building it. Of course he built it according to the pattern that was given to David by the Lord, but the Lord Himself by His finger drew the pattern to David.

And David passed the pattern to Solomon. And Solomon built everything according to the pattern that was given. And he spent nothing in building it.

Now after seven years the work was finished. And what did he do after the house was built? Or what happened after the house was finished? And that is something we would like to share this afternoon. Now

of course, I believe it is probably in most of your mind about that house that the Lord has just given to you.

Now remember, the house that the Lord has just given to you is not the house of God. It is but a facility. Just like these chairs.

The Lord needs some facilities. And because there is a need of facilities for the building of the house of God, that's the reason why the Lord gives you a physical house. That physical house is not the house of God.

It never is. And it never will be. It is just a facility.

I hope that from the very beginning we do not make any mistake in this. You know, often times we think of the church as a physical beauty. And we use that term so carelessly.

We say we go to church. By me, what we mean is the church at the square. Or the church at the corner.

But that is just a building. That is not the church. The church is God's people.

Out of every nation, every tribe, every tongue, every people, God called them out and gathered them together unto that name which is above every name. And that is the house of God. The house of God is not built with stones, with bricks.

The house of God is built with living stones. As we come to the Lord, we all become living stones. Being built up together into a spiritual house.

A holy priesthood. To offer spiritual sacrifices. Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

So dear brothers and sisters, even though that house may be in our mind, yet do not make any mistake. That is not the house of God. That is just a facility.

Something to be used. For what purpose? For the building of God's house. For the building of God's people.

For the testimony of Jesus. For the service of God. That His name may be exalted.

But even so, we would like to mention a few things. As, what will happen? Or what shall we do? What does the Lord expect of us? If He shall give us some kind of a facility. That can be used for His purpose.

Of course here you find the dedication of the temple. And in dedicating the temple, you find at least there were three things mentioned. It may surprise you to find that the first thing that was done to the house of God, to the temple, was not bringing the ark into the temple.

Now we will think that certainly this will be the first thing to do. Why was the house built? It was the house, the ark of the covenant of the Lord. So after the house was finished, certainly the first thing was to bring in the ark.

But no. That was not the first thing. You find in chapter 5 of 2 Chronicles, in the first verse.

And all the work was finished that Solomon made for the house of Jehovah. And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated. And the silver and the gold and all the vessels he put among the treasures of the house of God.

After the house was finished, the first thing that Solomon did was to bring in the dedicated things that David his father had dedicated unto the Lord. Gold and silver and all the vessels he put among the treasures of the house of God. If you turn to 1 Chronicles.

In 1 Chronicles, chapter 29. And King David said to all the congregation, Solomon, my son, the one whom God has chosen, is young and tender. And the work is great.

For this palace is not to be for man, but for Jehovah Elohim. And I have prepared according to all my power for the house of my God, gold for the things of gold, and silver for the things of silver, and brass for the things of brass, iron for the things of iron, wood for the things of wood, onyx stones and stones to be set, glistening stones and of diverse colors, and all manner of precious stones and white marble in abundance. And moreover, in my affection for the house of my God, I have given of my own property of gold and silver for the house of God, over and above all that I have prepared for the house of the sanctuary, three thousand talents of gold of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver to overload the walls of the houses, gold for the things of gold, and silver for the things of silver, and for all manner of work by the hands of artificers.

And who is willing to offer to Jehovah this day? You will find that David, in preparing for the building of the house, how much materials he had prepared. He prepared gold, silver, iron, brass, stones, marbles, everything that he could think of. Out of the spoils of his battles, he set apart these things for the Lord.

Out of his own property, he set apart these for the Lord, because he loved the Lord. And when Solomon built a house, it was built with such gold and silver and stones, we might think that, certainly, in building that house, both Solomon and his father David must have exhausted all their resources. But no.

Even after all the work was finished, there were still dedicated things that David had dedicated unto the Lord. There were still gold and silver and vessels of all kinds to be put into the house, so the house will not be a poor house or an empty house. Isn't that tremendous? Now, brothers and sisters, what is the meaning of dedicated things? In the case of the children of Israel, when they dedicate anything to the Lord, they may dedicate, say, a lamb to the Lord.

They may dedicate a book to the Lord. They may dedicate, say, a house to the Lord. They may dedicate a field to the Lord.

And some may dedicate themselves to the Lord to be a Nazarite for, say, 30 days or so on. They dedicate these things to the Lord. In other words, out of what the Lord has given to them, because they are constrained by God's love, they love the Lord so much, therefore they set apart something that the Lord has given them to the Lord to be used of the Lord exclusively.

Now, that's what the children of Israel did. But what does the Lord expect of us today? Brothers and sisters, what will that building be if there be no dedicated things to fill it up? It will be an empty house. It will be a poor house.

It will never serve God's purpose. If ever that house can be used of the Lord for His glory and for His purpose, there must be dedication. In other words, those who are going to use that house, those who are going to use that building, must go in with a heart of dedication.

Brothers and sisters, are we a dedicated people? God does not require of us to fill that place with gold and silver. No. God requires of us to fill that place with dedication.

That is to say, as we go to occupy that house, are we as those dedicated things? It is not a matter of set that house, that building apart. You know, sometimes we have that kind of feeling, well, that is God's house. It is holy.

It's His sanctuary. I remember during the war, when I was in Singapore. You know, when we were in Singapore, we were bombed day and night by the Japanese.

And the bomb did not have any eyes, so they were fall all over. And one morning I remember a young brother, oh, he very early in the morning, he came to me, and you can see he was panic stricken. He came to me and said, Oh, brother, have you heard that a bomb had fallen into a church? Yes.

A bomb had fallen right through the roof of a church building. And he said, now, if a bomb will fall into a church building, where is our protection? This is God's house. God should protect that place.

That's where we go when there is bombing. Oh, brothers and sisters, do we all more or less have that kind of sentimentality? Or mentality? However we think that, oh, that is a holy building. That is the church.

That is a sanctuary. Surely God will protect that building. There seems to be a magic in it.

Brothers and sisters, not at all. It is just a building. What really needs to be dedicated is ourselves.

If the Lord should give us better facility to serve his purpose, we need to rededicate ourselves for the use of a better facility. Otherwise it will be a poor house. It wouldn't serve any purpose.

Dear brothers and sisters, I do believe that we have dedicated ourselves to the Lord once before. But in view of our bigger facilities, it requires a deeper dedication. Before we go to occupy that place, one thing is necessary, and that is, we need to be those dedicated things to be brought into the house.

Gold and silver and vessels of all kinds. Gold represents the nature of God. Silver represents the redemption of Christ Jesus.

Vessels represent the work, finished work of the Holy Spirit. So here you'll find what God requires of us is that there may be such an abundance of dedication. There may be gold and silver and vessels.

Whatever God has wrought in our lives, whatever is of Christ, it is the result of his redemption. Whatever is the patient work of the Holy Spirit. Brothers and sisters, these are the things that have to be brought in.

If these are not brought in, that house will be a poor house. It will not serve God's purpose. Are we ready for that? Before we can bring the Ark of the Covenant into the house, these dedicated things must be there first.

Before we can expect the presence of the Lord, there must be that love dedication of our lives to the Lord. That is the first thing. And after these things were there, then, of course, the main thing, the most important thing, even though it may not be the first thing to be brought in, but this is certainly the most important thing, and that is the Ark of the Covenant.

David loved the Lord. And because he loved the Lord, he inquired. While he was still a fugitive, he inquired where the Ark of the Lord was.

And he discovered that it was hidden in the forest, in Kergerim. It was almost forgotten. But as soon as David ascended to the throne, the first thing he did was to take Jerusalem, and the second thing he did was to bring the Ark for Kergerim into Mount Zion, to his tent.

So the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord was on Mount Zion. But the Temple was built on Mount Moriah. So King Solomon, he brought the Ark out of Mount Zion to Mount Moriah, to the Temple of God.

He didn't make the same mistake as his father did. Do you remember when David brought the Ark out of Kergerim? He followed the way of the Philistines. He put the Ark on a new cart, drawn by oxen.

And sure enough, the ox slipped, and the Ark began to fall. And Uzzah stretched out his arm, and the Lord smote him to death. And David was angry and afraid.

So the Ark went to the house of Obed-Edom for several months, until David began to see his fault. And then the Ark was brought to Mount Zion. But here you find Solomon didn't make that mistake.

The priests, the priests, they bore the Ark on their shoulders. They brought the Ark out of Mount Zion and into the Temple on Mount Moriah. They put the Ark into the holiest of all.

And you remember Solomon when he built the holiest of all? In that holiest of all, there was absolutely nothing. But when he built the holiest of all, he built two cherubim of gigantic size. Two cherubim, their wings stretched all across the room of the holiest of all.

So when the Ark was brought in, the Ark was brought in before the two cherubim. So here you find the four cherubim. Two on the mercy seat, and two standing in the holiest of all.

And they took out the staffs of the Ark. In other words, now the Ark of God had come into rest. There was no need for the Ark to travel anymore.

God has come into His rest. And when they put the Ark there and came out, oh how they lift up their voice and praise the Lord. The trumpeters and the singers were of one voice.

And when that voice went up, then the house was filled with cloud. And the priests could not stand to do their service because of the cloud, for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house. Now of course we know the Ark of the covenant of the Lord represents the presence of the Lord.

Because God dwells on the Ark within the, on the mercy seat, which is upon the Ark, among the two cherubim. So the Ark always represents the presence of the Lord. Now brothers and sisters, this temple was built to house the Ark of the Lord.

Even though in the temple there were other things, such as the brazen altar, or the brazen laver for washing, and the golden candlesticks, and in Solomon's temple you find ten golden candlesticks, and table of showbread, and the golden altar of incense. In the house of God there were all these things, but these were secondary things. The primary thing for which the house was built was to house the Ark of the covenant of Jehovah.

In other words, this house was built for God, and therefore His presence was the purpose and the meaning of the house. If the Ark was not brought into the house, you can bring anything, everything into the house. You may have the brazen altar, you may even have the golden altar of incense, but if the Ark was not brought in, then the house did not serve its purpose.

The house would have no meaning at all, because the house was for the Ark of the Lord, that God may come into rest among His people. That was the purpose. So when they brought the Ark into the temple, and drew out these steps, then the cloud filled.

Of course, the cloud speaks of the glory of the Lord. The Ark speaks of the effect of His presence. The cloud speaks of the consciousness, or the manifestations of His presence.

You know this temple of Solomon. When it was dedicated to the Lord, after the Ark was brought in, the fact of the presence of the Lord was established, then the manifestation of His presence became known. That was how it was filled with cloud.

But later on, you remember how. The Ark disappeared. When the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, the Ark just disappeared.

When the Jewish remnant returned from captivity to rebuild the temple, there was no Ark. What's behind the door was nothing. It was empty.

There wasn't anything there. And no wonder, after the temple rebuilt by the remnant was finished, there was no cloud, no fire, no glory of the Lord. How important it is that there must be the Ark there.

How important it is that because the Ark is there, there will be the cloud, the glory of the Lord. You know the temple at the time of our Lord Jesus? Once the temple rebuilt by this Jewish remnant, and enlarged by King Herod, for 46 years he enlarged that temple and adorned it with precious stones. But the problem was there was no Ark there.

There was no glory there. The Lord Himself was the temple, the real temple. And the glory of God was in Him.

You remember John says, we have seen His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. He was the real temple. Not that physical temple on Mount Moriah.

Now dear brothers and sisters, of course, today God does not dwell in any physical building. Today His house is His people. What will be the meaning of our coming together? What will be the purpose of our meeting together, say, in that building? If we do not have the presence, there is nothing more important than the fact of His presence.

Brothers and sisters, if His presence is with us, then His glory will be manifested. If His presence is not with us, then there will be no cloud, no fire, no glory. I sometimes think, what is the difference between being religious and being spiritual? You know, by all outward appearance, you cannot distinguish what is religious and what is spiritual.

You cannot. Several years ago I was in Manila, Philippines, and one day a few of us went to a mountain for a kind of getaway. And when we were on that mountain, we saw a little chapel.

So we went into the chapel. And when we entered into the chapel, I noticed that at the front there were a few white statues, kneeling there. And when I looked more attentively, I found that these were not statues, these were sisters, nuns.

They were dressed in white. And they were kneeling there praying, and you could not see any movement. And my first reaction was, how spiritual.

But, was that spiritual? Or was that religious? You cannot see the difference. What is spiritual, what is religious? You know, in the whole Bible, there is only one place where the word religion is used. Do you know where it is? James, that's right.

In the letter of James. True religion. Now, true religion is true spirituality.

But unfortunately, we can be very religious, and yet it is not spirituality. Now, what is the difference? What makes the difference between religious and spiritual? The presence of the Lord. If the Lord is in it, it is spiritual.

If the Lord is not in it, it is religious. If it is religious, it is bondage. If it is spiritual, it is liberty.

That makes all the difference. The presence of the Lord. Brothers and sisters, let us remember from the very beginning that what we do desire is nothing but His presence.

We do not care for anything else. If only His presence is there, that is what we desire. Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.

What does it mean, thy two or three gathered together unto my name? It is not just a matter of calling, using His name. In Matthew, you find people who say, Lord, Lord. Lord, Lord.

I cast out demons in Your name. I preach in Your name. But the Lord said, I never know you.

I do not approve of you. What do you mean by gathered together unto His name? It means if we gather together under His headship. If we put ourselves under His authority, then we gather together unto His name.

And if we gather together unto His name, we bring the ark into the house. And if the ark is in the house, there will be glory. There will be cloud.

There will be fire. That is the manifestation of His presence. So, this is the second thing.

I would like to remind you, brothers and sisters, we need to look to the Lord that His glory may be manifested. And the manifestation of His glory is the result of His presence. Now, it is very difficult to explain what glory is.

No one has ever seen God because He is invisible. God is a spirit. He is invisible.

But whenever God is seen, it is glory. In other words, what you see is not God. It is His glory.

The glory of the Lord. When the invisible God becomes visible, that is glory. You see glory.

And Brother Sparks, the Austin Sparks, had a very good definition of glory. He said, whenever God is satisfied, then glory appears. Now, brothers and sisters, will God really come into rest among His people? The stairs were taken out.

No more traveling. Because God was satisfied. And God said, I will rest here.

I'm going to stay. I'm not going to move around anymore. Is this what we desire of the Lord? Oh, that He may come into rest among His people.

And if we want Him to come into rest, we must satisfy Him. Unless He is satisfied, He cannot come into rest. And that's the second thing.

Now, thirdly, you find Solomon in dedicating that house, he did three things. Number one, he praised the Lord. You see, in chapter 6, verse 4, and he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel.

He blessed the Lord. He blessed the Lord. Now, of course, the word blessing, or bless, has several meanings.

The first meaning of bless or blessing is to praise. To praise. To praise the Lord.

The second meaning, of course, when you bless something, you know, you bless a person. In Hebrews it said, It is the greater that blesses the lesser. Now, not in that sense with God, of course.

This is another meaning. It is to give a benediction to somebody else. But here, when Solomon blessed the Lord, it means that he is praising the Lord.

He is making God happy. How can we make God happy? By praising Him. By recalling what He has done for us.

How good, how faithful He is. And when we are recalling these things, and when we bless Him with these things, we glorify Him. And we make Him happy.

Now, that is the meaning of blessing. What is the house of God? The house of God is the house of praises. In the house of God there should be praises.

Day and night. And you find David, how he set apart the Levites for praises. And the praises ascending up to God day and night without ending.

Without ending. And that is what the house of God is. So dear brothers and sisters, Solomon dedicated this house with praises.

And this house was dedicated for praises. So praises continue on in the house without ceasing. That glorifies God.

So what we should desire before the Lord is that, oh, that we may be a people who will praise Him, who will bless Him, who will make Him happy and satisfy, glorify Him. So may there be more praises unto Him. Ceaseless praise to the Lord.

Number two. Solomon not only blessed the Lord, he prayed. And in chapter six you'll find it is a record of his prayer.

He prayed to the Lord. He prayed and said, Lord, verse 18, that will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built. Yet have respect unto the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, Jehovah my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee, that thine eyes may be opened upon this house day and night upon the place in which thou hast served thou wouldst put thy name.

To hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place, and hearken unto the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel, which they shall pray toward this house, and hear thou from thy dwelling place from the heavens, and when thou hearest, it is a house of prayer. The house of God, it is a house of prayer. A house of prayer for all nations.

A house of prayer for all occasions. A house of prayer for all people. Prayer should extend to God from that house.

And because the name of the Lord is there, His ear and His eyes are there, therefore He will hear. He will forgive. He will also judge.

And not only those who belong to Him, but even when the nations, when they hear of the name of the Lord and they shall pray in this house, God hear them too. So brothers and sisters, as we come together to be God's house, may there not only be praises unto Him, but may there be prayers, not just for ourselves. Yes, we need to pray for ourselves.

We need to ask for forgiveness. We need to ask even sometimes to see God's judgment. We need to pray for all nations.

If they do not know how to pray, then we should pray for them. It is a house of prayer for all nations. How sad.

When our Lord Jesus was on earth, He had to say, You make My Father's house to be a house of merchandise. A house of prayer to be a robber's den. But the house of God is a house of prayer.

And number three. After Solomon had prayed, and the prayer did not end with Solomon, because that house was dedicated to prayer. As long as the house exists, prayer continues.

And then thirdly, Solomon and the children of Israel, they offered sacrifices without number. And if you read, say, chapter 7, you will find verse 12. Then Jehovah appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him, I have heard thy prayer, and I have chosen for myself this place for a house of sacrifice.

The house of God is a house of sacrifice. Now, brothers and sisters, do not forget that. It is a house where we offer spiritual sacrifices.

That is to say, we offer back to God the Christ whom He has so bountifully given to us. And as we give back the Christ that He has given to us, we pour ourselves upon Him as drink offering. So it is to be a house of sacrifice.

Not just sacrifice once, but it begins with sacrifice, and it continues with sacrifice. It is a house of sacrifice. May we give back to God the Christ that He has given to us.

And when we give back the Christ He has given to us, we pour ourselves upon Him too. It is a house of sacrifice. And I do believe that if this is the way we start with, now, often times, you know, when we are thinking of doing certain things, and by the grace of God that thing is done, then we sit back and say, it is finished.

And it is finished. It will be finished. Unless we see that is just the beginning.

It is just the beginning. Oh, brothers and sisters, you do not know what God will do. Nobody knows.

You do not know if He has more facilities, if He has more hearts, more dedication, more praise, more prayer, more sacrifice. Who can limit God as to what He can do for the glory of His own Son? So let us look forward to it. Not as the end, but as the beginning.

May the Lord prepare our hearts for the future. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee that Thou art the One who is from everlasting to everlasting. There is no beginning and there is no end with Thee.

O Lord, we pray that Thou will deliver us from any thought that we have come to the end. But Lord, we pray that we may always see Thou has far more to do with us, in us and through us, for Thy own purpose. We pray that we may rededicate ourselves to Thee.

That Thou mayst have a greater place in our lives. And we may be of greater service to Thy purpose. And to Thee be all the praise and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

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