

# Spiritual House - Part 2

by Stephen Kaung

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*God's desire for a house is not just a physical structure, but a spiritual reality that is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the real temple of God.*

**Duration:** 1:17:58

**Scripture:** Exodus 25:8, 1 Chronicles 28:11

**Topics:** "Church Structure", "Jesus Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that the pattern of the church today is not found in rules or regulations, but in a living person, Jesus Christ. The New Testament, specifically the four gospels and the book of Acts, provide insight into the church and the life of Jesus. The speaker highlights the simplicity and primitive nature of the early church in the book of Acts, contrasting it with the development and organization of the Roman Catholic Church throughout history. Ultimately, the speaker suggests that the church's success lies in its ability to encompass all religions and that God provides the pattern for the church through Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Exodus, chapter twenty-five. Exodus, chapter twenty-five, verses eight and nine. And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.

And according to all that I shall show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the utensils thereof, even as shall ye make it. First Chronicles, chapter twenty-eight. First Chronicles, chapter twenty-eight.

Verse eleven. And David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of his houses, and of his treasuries, and of his upper chambers, and of his inner chambers, and of the house of the mercy seat. Verse twelve.

And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of Jehovah, and of all the chambers round about, for the treasuries of the house of God, and for the treasuries of the dedicated things. Verse nineteen. All this, said David, in writing by Jehovah's hand upon thee, instructing as to all the works of the pattern.

All this, said David, in writing by Jehovah's hand upon thee, instructing as to all the works of the pattern. The Gospel according to John. John, chapter one, verse fourteen.

John, chapter one, verse fourteen. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have contemplated His glory. A glory as of an only begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth.

The letter to the Colossians. Colossians, chapter two. From verse six through verse eight.

Six to eight. And vain deceit according to the teaching of man, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. Let's have a further word of prayer.

Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for gathering us together again this morning. We believe that Thou hast something to say to us. But we acknowledge that in ourselves there is no ability.

When we touch spiritual things, we are lost. So we are totally at Your mercy. Lord, we look to Thee to grant to us the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

We look to Thee to open the eyes of our heart. We pray that Thou will create within us a thirst and hunger for Thyself. Take away from us anything that may be as veil upon our heart.

Pray that Thy light, the word of Thy light, will shine into our heart. Give us vision. Draw us unto Thyself.

Pray that by Thy grace we may touch reality this morning. Deliver us from anything that is superficial. Lord, we want Thee and Thee alone.

Fill our heart with Thyself. Draw us closer to Thee. Prepare us for Thy return.

We ask in the name of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Yesterday morning we mentioned that it is God's desire to have a house.

He who created the heaven and the earth does not satisfy his heart. He is looking for a house for himself. And he wants to dwell among men.

But in order that man may be his house, there's lots of work that has to be done. Not only he has to bring us back to himself, he has to work within us to recreate us so that we may be fitting to be his house. That he may dwell at rest among us.

And we also mentioned yesterday morning that we need to ask the Lord to create within us a same desire. That we may desire what God desires. If it is His desire for such a house, and we are that house, then the same desire should grasp our heart.

In other words, we need to respond to God. We need to offer ourselves totally to Him. Ask Him to transform us and conform us to the image of His beloved Son.

Transforming us from Jacob to Israel so that our God may rest among His people. And we too may rest in Him. Now this morning we would like to go a step further.

We would like to consider together on this matter of the path of salvation. The pattern of the house of God. Does the house of God have a pattern? You know, whenever you want to build a house, the first thing you do is you have to draw a blueprint.

You do not just randomly put in things together. Without any plan, without any blueprint. If it is a house of importance, then you find it is extremely important to have the layout beforehand.

So first of all, when you think of a house, of building a house, the first thing that will come to you is this matter of the pattern. Our God is the greatest architect in the whole universe. I think it is so evident when you look at the heavens and the earth and all the things that He has created.

You can see His wisdom and His power. You can see His divine nature. He builds everything that He may glorify Himself.

In this matter of new creation, you find He does even a greater work. So in the building of the house of God, we believe that He must have a pattern. He must have laid down His plan beforehand.

And then all the time He will be working for His completion. And this is illustrated again and again in the Old Testament. We remember the children of Israel.

They were God's chosen people. And at that time they were slaves in Egypt. But God sent Moses to deliver them out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai.

Now in Exodus chapter 19, God said, I brought you to Myself as an eagle's wing. Now if you will keep My commandments, if you will keep My covenant, I will make you a people of My possession. Out of all the nations, I will separate you unto Myself.

You will be My people and I will be your God. And on the basis of that, God gave them the Ten Commandments. Now brothers and sisters, why did God give the children of Israel the Ten Commandments? God gave them the Ten Commandments in order to make them His own people.

What separated them from all the nations? They had the Law of God. They had the written Commandments. And by keeping the Law, by keeping the Ten Commandments, they will be separated from all the nations and they will become God's own possession.

That's the reason why you find they were commanded to keep the Law. Now after God revealed the Law to the children of Israel, then He began to reveal something else. You know when we read the book of Exodus, when we think of Moses going up to the mount, we think only that he went up to the mount to receive the Law.

But the Bible tells us that Moses went up to the mount. Indeed, he received the Law from God. But more important than the Law, God revealed to Moses His heart's desire.

God said, make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among you. The Law is only a preparation to prepare the people so that they may be ready for what is coming. The purpose is not the Law.

The purpose is the sanctuary. The Law is given to prepare them, to make them ready so that God can dwell among them. So the real purpose of the deliverance of the children of Israel is that God wants to dwell among them.

If you read the book of Exodus, you'll find only five chapters are devoted to the Law. And seven chapters are devoted to the tabernacle. God's purpose is to dwell among His people.

Now, even with the Law, even though they were being separated from all the nations, and yet they were not holy enough for God to dwell directly among them. So God has to ask them to prepare Him a house, a tabernacle. So that God may dwell among them.

It is not as direct as it should be. It is still indirect. But anyhow, that God will be able to dwell among them through the tabernacle.

And God not only revealed to Moses that they should build Him a tabernacle. God revealed to Moses every detail of that tabernacle. God showed Moses a pattern on the mountain.

Because everything is patterned after the heavenly reality. The tabernacle that Moses was going to build is but a physical replica of the spiritual reality in heaven. So God gave to Moses all the details.

Not only the materials, but also the measurement. Even the weight and the form, everything. And after God revealed to Moses the pattern of the tabernacle and all His utensils.

And God warned Moses again and again that you build everything according to the pattern on the mountain. Brothers and sisters, if we understand Moses, we would think that God was insulting Moses. Because the Bible tells us while Moses was raised up in the Egyptian palace, he learned every learning in Egypt.

In other words, Moses was mighty in words and in deeds. And Moses actually was a great architect. We know at the time of Moses Egypt was already famous for its architectural feat.

You look at these pyramids, they are not only majestic, but they are also astronomical wonders. Brothers and sisters, Moses was well learned in building. All God could do, Moses built me a tabernacle.

And Moses would say, that's easy. And surely he would build a beautiful tabernacle. But instead of that, God gave Moses every detail.

He will not allow Moses to use his own wisdom to change anything. He even warned Moses, do everything according to the pattern on the mount. And we know Moses was faithful in all God's house.

Where is his faithfulness? He is faithful in following every order of God. He did not deviate anything. He did not change anything.

He did everything according to the pattern on the mount. There was his faithfulness. In one sense, it must be very difficult for Moses.

Because Moses certainly had brilliant ideas. And probably he would wonder why it should be built this way. God needs something more majestic.

And he was well able to give it to God. But this is the humility, the meekness of Moses. He built everything according to the pattern revealed to him.

And then when you come to the last chapter of Exodus, when the tabernacle was set up, then it was set up according to God's command. And every utensil was placed in order. Then you find the glory of the Lord descended upon that tabernacle.

God took possession of that house. God proclaimed this house as his own. God came into rest.

Brothers and sisters, you find this is repeated again in the building of the temple. David had a heart for God. He wanted to build God a more permanent house.

Because when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they had to travel all the time. And so they cannot have a permanent building. The tabernacle moved with the children of Israel through the time in the wilderness.

In other words, God moved with them. But after the children of Israel entered into the promised land, we know that it was God's will that they should be a settled place. And that there should be something more permanent.

And yet for hundreds of years, you find the place was unknown. And God's ark was still in the tabernacle. And not only that, but you find that it was completely ignored.

It was not until David how he afflicted himself. He wanted very much to find God a settled place. That there may be a habitation for God himself.

Even though he was not allowed to build the temple. Because he was a man of war. He shed too much blood.

He did not represent God. So God told him that his son would build the temple. But thank God, because of his heart towards God, in his heart for God's house, you find that a pattern of the temple was not revealed to Solomon, but to David.

David, he said, God, by His Spirit, show him all the details of the coming temple. God's hand was upon him, as if guiding his hand to draw the blueprint. And you find David commanded his son Solomon that he would build the temple according to the pattern revealed to him by the Spirit of God.

Solomon is the wisest of all men. Where is his wisdom? His wisdom is followed faithfully by the pattern revealed to his father. And that is the reason why after the temple was built, you find when Solomon was praying, he said, God, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.

How much less will you dwell in the house that I built, only that you may set your name there. May your eyes be upon this house. May your ears be upon this house.

Whenever people pray in the temple, or they pray towards the temple, may you please hear and answer. And after he prayed, you'll find heaven, fire came down from heaven, and burned the sacrifice. And the glorious crowd of God filled the temple.

Why? Because everything was done according to the pattern. But brothers and sisters, we know the history. Gradually you'll find the children of Israel rebel against God.

Even Solomon, in his later years, seemed to deviate. The children of Israel began to worship idols. They rebelled against God.

God sent His prophets to them to warn them, to try to bring them back to their senses. But they persisted in their rebellion. So finally you'll find God allowed His temple to be destroyed.

Because the physical things are not the thing. If you begin to misrepresent God, if you begin to rebel against the reality, God would rather to see the temple destroyed. Allow the children of Israel to be taken

into Babylonian captivity.

But God, in His mercy, promised the children of Israel that after 70 years of captivity, God will allow them to return. So finally you remember in the first year of King Cyrus, during the dynasty of the Persian dynasty, the children of Israel were allowed to come back from Babylonian captivity. But only a remnant returned.

Though most of the children of Israel would rather remain in captivity. Because during those 70 years, they had already built up their business. And they have already built up their own home.

And they were given quite a degree of freedom. Even though there was no temple. But you know that it was during that period that this ingenious system of synagogue was invented.

They developed a system of synagogue. If you have ten men of leisure, ten men of leisure, they have time. It doesn't mean that these ten men are full-time servants.

In other words, if you have ten men who are willing to give up some time for God, you can organize a synagogue. You do not need to travel far. And you can find ten men that agree and have the same opinion.

And then you can have a synagogue. You can worship God. And there they read Torah, the five books of Moses.

And they read the prophets. They sing the songs. And they pray to God.

And there was much liberty among them. People could get up and give a message. So they have everything that they need.

Not only physically, they were well-being. Religiously, they satisfy their conscience. The only thing lacking was they could not offer sacrifice.

And without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. So you'll find most people remain in Babylon. Only a remnant of the children of Israel whose heart was stirred up by God, they were concerned with the name of God.

So they went back to Jerusalem. And in difficult days, they rebuilt the temple. And we know this temple that they rebuilt later on, during the time of Christ.

You'll find that it was already greatly enlarged. By King Herod. So outwardly, you'll find this temple was glorious.

It was adorned with beautiful stones and the gifts from all the world. And there, there was the priesthood. And there were the sacrifices.

And there were a group of people called the scribes. And they made the study of the Bible their life. So outwardly, you'll find you have a pious, godly people.

But in actuality, it wasn't so. In this second temple, you'll find something most essential were lacking. First of all, you'll find in the second temple, there was no ark.

In the holiest of all, there was nothing there. You know, the ark is the center of the tabernacle. There, the glory of God rested.

From the mercy seat, He spoke to His people. And yet, in the second temple, there was no ark. And not only that, you'll find in the second temple, there was no glory.

The glory of God did not descend upon this temple. And thirdly, in the second temple, there was no fire from heaven. And fourthly, the high priest did not have the Urim and Thuming.

In other words, they cannot find the will of God. So all the most fundamental things were lacking. In a sense, it was an empty temple.

Everything went on as usual. But there was no reality there. But thank God, in the fullness of time, the Word became flesh and dwelt among men.

In the original, it said heaven echoed among men. Full of grace and truth. And we have contemplated His glory.

That is the glory of the only begotten with the Father. So brothers and sisters, when our Lord Jesus came upon this earth, even though outwardly there was the temple, supposed to be the Father's house. But they already made it a house of merchandise.

You remember our Lord twice cleansed the temple. At the beginning of His ministry and towards the end of His ministry. The temple was unclean.

Brothers and sisters, but where is the reality of the house of God? The reality is in our Lord Jesus. He is the real temple of God, the house of God at that time. The glory of God was with Him.

He is the Emmanuel, God with man. Brothers and sisters, you find that throughout His days on earth, outwardly there was the temple and people looked to the temple. But actually the reality is in this man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the God man. Three times during His earthly days, the heaven opened and the Heavenly Father said, this is My beloved Son. In whom I am well pleased.

Brothers and sisters, but unfortunately, you find the children of Israel, their eyes were on the physical. Their eyes on the material. Their eyes were on the external.

The glory in their temple. They did not see the reality in Christ Jesus. They even rejected Him.

And brothers and sisters, in John chapter 2, when our Lord cleansed the temple, they challenged Him. And the Lord said, you destroy the temple. And in three days, I will raise it up.

Now our Lord spoke of His body. Because His body is the real temple of God. God dwells there.

And God finds His rest there. I am well pleased. Brothers and sisters, and in three days, He said, I will raise it up.

They destroyed His body. They crucified Him. He was buried for three days.

And on the third day, He was risen from the dead. And for forty days, He appeared to His people. And then He ascended up to high.

Seated at the right hand of God. Waiting all His enemies to be His footstool. But on the day of Pentecost, you find a hundred and twenty disciples of Jesus.

They gathered in that upper room in Jerusalem. They prayed for ten days. Prepared themselves for the power from on high.

Then on the day of Pentecost, you find the Holy Spirit came into this world. And in one spirit, they were baptized into one body. From that day onward, there on earth, you find the house of God.

Because all these who are the Lord, they are being burned or born into one body. So the Bible tells us, Christ is the head. His head to the church, to Jesus' body.

The fullness of Him who fills all and in all. Brothers and sisters, gradually you find God began to add many to this body. And this body is still growing.

Thank God, by the grace of God, we are in that body. And the church on earth is the house of God. There is neither Jews nor Gentiles.

Neither Scythians nor barbarians. Neither circumcised or uncircumcised. Neither bondman nor free man.

All these earthly distinctions were gone. It is Christ all and in all. So brothers and sisters, what is the church? The church is the body of Christ.

The head is in heaven. But through the body, the head continues to speak and to work. Now, brothers and sisters, we would like to ask one question.

If in the tides and shadows, God reveals a pattern for the tabernacle and for the temple, where is the pattern for the church, for the house of God in reality? Isn't the reality more important than the shadow? Can you believe that God reveals His pattern to the shadow, but none to the reality? You know there are different ideas about this matter. Many people think that the church, the real house of God on earth today, has no pattern. During the early church, you'll find it was very simple.

Almost no organization. But they said that is primitive. As time went on, then gradually you'll find it began to develop.

Because the church is the product of history. Look! When you read the book of Acts, there was no organization. How could you maintain without organization? Look at the book of Acts.

How primitive it was. How simple it was. But then you read church history.

You can gradually begin to develop. It began to be organized. It began to have influence.

It began to have position in this world. You have the Roman Catholic Church. You'll find it is a country above country.

The church has developed into a tremendous tree. The church has eleven into bigness. That's the glory of the church.

That's the success of the church. So the church has no pattern. It is developed through history.

And one day you will find there will be only one religion upon earth. It will include all religions. That will be its final development.

Now, brothers and sisters, is the church the product of history? Is the church representing the ingenuity of man? If it is of man, surely man should be the one to organize it. But if it is of God, if it is God's house, can you believe that God does not give us His pattern? Some people think yes. The church of God does have a pattern.

Where can you find a pattern? In the Old Testament. As God gave the pattern to the tabernacle and to the temple. So we can go back to the Old Testament and find a pattern there.

Brothers and sisters, you will find in a very real sense the Christianity today is more and more going back to the Old Testament. You know, in the Old Testament time in Judaism Judaism is the development of a living faith. In the beginning it was a living faith.

But gradually you find the Jewish people develop it into a schism. Into Judaism. No, in the time of Paul as our brother already mentioned these Judaizers are a big problem to Paul because they try to twist the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But finally you find they succeeded. They succeeded not only in Judaism. They succeeded in Christianity.

Look at Christianity today. What are the distinctive parts in Judaism? They have a system of law. So today we develop creeds.

You cannot have a church if you don't have a creed. The Bible itself is not enough. You have to develop a creed.

That will represent who you are. Now isn't there something similar to Judaism? And then you find in Judaism there is a definite place of worship. You cannot worship anywhere.

The Jews will go to Jerusalem to worship. The Samaritans will go to Mount Gerizim. But our Lord said those who worship worship in spirit and truth.

And yet today Christianity has a place of worship. Today Christianity has a place of worship. They call it the place of worship.

As if this is a sacred place. A temple. A tabernacle.

And if you want to worship you have to go there. In other words if you are not there you don't need to worship. Brothers and sisters isn't it that Christianity goes back to the Old Testament? And then you find in Judaism you have a holy priesthood.

A family separated to serve God exclusively. The others are laymen. They cannot come directly to God.

Brothers and sisters what do you find in Christianity today? Do you have the same thing? A group of people specially trained ordained to be that sacred class. And we are just laymen. All we do is try to support them.

You go back to the Old Testament times. Brothers and sisters when I was a boy I was raised up in Methodist church. And in Methodist church at that time the pastors do not wear robes and with all these extras.

But today they do. Where do they get the clue? From the Old Testament. If you don't have a choir you don't have a church.

Where do they get the idea? Old Testament. Brothers and sisters in everything you find gradually we are going back to the Old Testament. If we have lost the reality, we grasp the shadow.

Isn't that sad? Well, there are some people better. We do not find the pattern in the Old Testament. Because that's the shadow.

We find the pattern in the New Testament. You know, in the 60s there was quite a movement building New Testament churches. Now, how do you build New Testament churches? Where do you find the pattern for it? The Book of Acts.

Of course. And you read the Book of Acts. And you find that in the Book of Acts when the church is really being organized you find elders were appointed.

And you find deacons are chosen. So how can we have a New Testament church? Well, if we can have elders we can have deacons and then we can have the laity then we can organize a church. Suppose there are ten people.

Well, we need two to be elders. Because in the Bible the elders are always plural. And then we should have deacons.

Maybe three deacons. And five laity. Now, we have a New Testament.

Now, you may laugh at it. But it happened. It does happen.

And it was a disaster. Everything is according to New Testament. But it does not come out as a New Testament church.

And people began to wonder why. You find here a spiritual house. It is a spiritual house.

In other words it is not something material, physical, outward. Basically, it is spiritual in nature. It is heavily in nature.

It is of life. That's the reality of the church. So, when you try to follow everything physical.

Everything physical and material. It is true the Bible does have organization. Some people say the church has no organization.

That's wrong. People say church is all organization. That's wrong.

Because the church is a body of Christ. An organism. So, basically it is an organism, not an organization.

But does an organism do not have any organization? An organization An organism, its organization is even more. Look at your body. There is such well organized.

But this organization comes out of life. It comes out of the growth of life. It is not something added on.

It is living, it is not dead. So, brothers and sisters, where can we find a pattern of the church today? When you open the New Testament, what do you find there? You find the full Gospels there. And then it is followed by the Book of Acts.

We know the Book of Acts tells us of the church. The house of God on earth today. And the full Gospels tell us what? The full Gospels tell us our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even here you find a clue. Where is the pattern of the church? The pattern of the church is in a person. It is not in any rules or regulations.

It is not in any outward organization. All these are temporary. The pattern of the church is a living person.

It is the living Christ. He is the pattern of the church. The body is patterned after the head.

The body is the fullness of the head. That is the reason why you find in 1 Corinthians 12. The body is one but there are many members.

Many members but one body. So also is the Christ. You know, when we read 1 Corinthians 12, we think there is a mistake here.

Because the body is one and has many members. Many members but one body. So also is the church.

That is evident. Did the Holy Spirit make a mistake? Not at all. So also is the Christ.

In other words, this body is Christ in its corporate expression. Every member of that body belongs to Christ. Every member of the body is Christ formed in them.

Only Christ. Christ in you, Christ in me. Christ in every one of us.

Being joined together in the Spirit. You have the church. There is the church.

There is the pattern. Now if this is the case, then the church is the living church of God. Many years ago I visited Westminster Abbey.

And the impression it left me it is a church of the dead. Because everywhere you find burial there. But the church is the church of the living God.

So brothers and sisters, we have a pattern. It is that heavenly pattern. It is that spiritual pattern.

It is a pattern of the living Christ. As Christ is, so is the church. Nothing more, nothing less.

Everything that is not of Christ is not in the church. Everything only of Christ. There you find the church.

In other words, every item, every detail have to follow Christ. According to Christ. Not according to the world.

Not according to man. But according to Christ. And only that the glory of the Lord will fill the house.

Fire will come down from heaven. And there will be the presence of God. And there He will reveal His mind.

Brothers and sisters, so when we are thinking of the building of the church, do not look to the world. Try to imitate the world. Do not look to man, ourselves.

As if everything can be solved by our wisdom. Do not look to philosophy or theories. Do not look to outward form.

As if these are the reality. You find only in Christ. And that is the reason the more you know Him, the more you are built into the house of God.

You know Him not mentally. You know Him in life, in the spirit. And in the measure of your living knowledge of Christ.

Will be the measure of the building of the house of God today. It is extremely spiritual. It is extremely heavenly.

And it is totally of life. And it is of Christ. So, brothers and sisters, what a responsibility we have today.

The building of the house of God depends upon our living knowledge of Christ. How much do we know Him? How much do we know Him experientially? How much do we know Him in life? How much do we allow the Spirit of God to transform us? How much do we conform to His image? The image of the church is Christ. Brothers and sisters, if that is the case, it is very living.

It is not rigid. Not formal. As the life grows, the church grows.

Brothers and sisters, thank God that He has given us that pattern. And may we do all things according to the pattern revealed to us. Let's have a word of prayer.

Dear Lord, as we wait upon Thee, do reveal the pattern to us. It pleases the Father to reveal the Son in me. Will you not please do it this morning? We give Thee all the glory in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen.

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