

Spiritual House: The Meaning of the House

by Stephen Kaung

The House of God is a spiritual house, a dwelling place for God, where He can be united with man in Christ Jesus.

Duration: 1:25:27

Scripture: Genesis 2:8, Genesis 28:10

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Union With God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of the house of God as the union and communion of God and man in Christ Jesus. He refers to the story of Jacob's dream in Genesis, where Jacob sees a ladder reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it. The preacher connects this dream to the revelation of the house of God, which is further explained in the book of John. He emphasizes that the purpose of God delivering us is not just for our salvation, but also for His desire to dwell among us. Therefore, we are called to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, as a cheap offering, so that God can use what we offer to build a sanctuary for Himself and for us.

Transcript

We will please turn to 1 Peter, 1 Peter 2, verse 5. 1 Peter 2, verse 5. Yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Genesis, chapter 28. Genesis, chapter 28.

We will read from verse 10. And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went to a town. And he landed on a certain place, and was there, because the sun had set.

And he took one of the stones of that place, and laid it his pillow, and lay down in that place. And he dreamed. And behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to the heavens.

And behold, angels of God ascended and descended upon it. And behold, Jehovah stood above it. And he said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac.

The land on which thou liest, to thee I will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places to which thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. For I will not leave thee until I have done what I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not.

And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had made his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place, Bethel.

For the name of that city was Luz, at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and keep me on this road that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and a garment to put on, and I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall Jehovah be my God. And this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house, and of all that thou wilt give me, I will without fail give the tenth to thee.

And then the book of Revelation, chapter 21. Revelation, chapter 21. We begin with verse 1, through verse 7. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea exists no more.

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice out of the heaven, saying, Behold, the terminator of God is with men, and he shall terminate her with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God. And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall not exist any more, nor grief, nor cry, nor discourage shall exist any more, for the former things have passed away.

And he that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he says to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. And he said to me, It is done.

I am the author and the maker, the beginning and the end. I will give to him the first of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be to him God, and he shall be to me Son.

Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we do praise and thank Thee that through Thy beloved Son, Thou has drawn us unto Thyself. We are now in Thy presence. We do open our hearts to Thee, and ask Thee to speak to us from Thy throne between the cherubim.

We pray that Thou will give us ears that can hear. We ask Thee to deliver us from familiarity. We pray Thou will give us fresh, living revelation that we may see what Thou art after, that we may long for Thou dost desire, that we may give ourselves for what Thou art after.

We do commit this time into Thy hands. We do acknowledge that unless Thou dost speak, human words obey. Lord, speak, Thy servant hearing.

We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen. I believe we all know that the theme that God seems to give us for this time is spiritual health.

Because we are actually touching upon the purpose, the eternal purpose of God. God has a purpose, which He purposed in His beloved Son. And He purposed that even before the foundation of the world.

And what He has purposed for Himself in His Son is a house, a dwelling place, a home. God created the heavens and the earth, but these are not His home. His house, His dwelling place.

His desire is to dwell among men. And that's the reason why you and I are created. He created us men to fulfill that longing of His heart.

He wants to dwell among men. He wants to make men His eternal home. That men may also find their eternal home in Him.

And this is God's purpose. Now brothers and sisters, I feel as we touch upon this matter of spiritual health, we have a problem here. And the problem is we are so familiar with all these terms.

We are familiar with house, God's house. We are familiar with church, the church of God. Now all these things are so familiar to us.

And because of that, somehow I'm afraid. We have lost that cutting edge. That conviction.

That commitment. That is necessary when we touch upon the eternal purpose of God. So we are just looking to the Lord that He will enable us to forget all that we have known in the past.

About the house, the dwelling place, the church. Now let's forget everything that we have known. And just come to Him as a little child.

That we may receive living revelation from Him. And really be drawn into the purpose of God. And be part of it.

So this is really our prayer. Now I have mentioned last night that the house that God is after is not a physical one. Unfortunately that's always what we think He desires.

He wants a spiritual house. He can only dwell in a spiritual house. Because the heaven and the heavens cannot contain Him.

He is too big for the physical universe. And He is spirit. So what He desires is a spiritual house.

And He wants to find that house in man. And you can see right away that man has to be spiritual in order to be His house. And that's the reason why you find in Isaiah it is said, To those whom God would look are those who are of afflicted and contrite spirit.

And who tremble at the word of God. Because it is not just any kind of man. It is spiritual man that God wants to build His spiritual house.

Now for this morning we would like to focus on the meaning of God's house. The first mentioning of the house of God is found in Genesis chapter 28. I believe we are again familiar with the story.

Jacob the twister. He stole not only the birthright but the blessing of the firstborn from his brother. And because of this he had to flee for his life.

He was in the wilderness. And the sun was set. So he took a stone and made that stone a pillar.

To lay his head upon. Now brothers and sisters that very picture will show you. How miserable, how pitiful, how sad.

Is the situation. And yet in the most unlikely place. The desert.

To the most unlikely person. Jacob the supplanter. Under the most unlikely environment.

Because he was fleeing from his brother. Away from his home. A homeless person.

And yet you find the first mention of the house of God was revealed. So brothers and sisters I do feel. That it is not because of what we are.

It is because of the mercy of God. You know it is the mercy of God that he should reveal his house to his people. Not because we deserve it.

It is all of God's mercy. Jacob dreamed a dream. And in that dream he saw a ladder.

Set up in reach to heaven. And God was stationed there. At the top of the ladder.

And Jacob of course was sleeping at the foot of the ladder. And the angels of God ascending and descending. Very busy.

Upon that ladder. And God spoke to him. Brothers and sisters.

This is the first revelation of the house of God. What is the house of God? The house of God is the union and communion of God and man in Christ Jesus. That is the house of God.

We know today what that ladder is. Because you remember in John chapter 1 verse 51. There was Nathanael.

That honest Jew. And he was led to the Lord. He couldn't believe that anything good can come out of Nazareth.

And yet when the Lord saw him. The Lord said I saw you under that fig tree. Now strangely you find when the Lord said I saw you under that fig tree.

Immediately he said my Lord, my God. Why? Because he was a true Israelite. Evidently under that fig tree.

He was dreaming about that kingdom. Because the fig tree is a type of Israel. He was dreaming of the kingdom, the Messiah.

Messianic kingdom. He was longing for that kingdom to come. So when the Lord said I saw you under that fig tree.

The Lord really spoke to his heart. And immediately he realized that this is the Messiah. But the Lord said you are going to see something bigger.

You know he was only thinking of the Messianic kingdom. That's big, yes. But there is something bigger than that.

And the Lord said you shall see the angels. Ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. Now brothers and sisters.

Here you find that ladder. That ladder is the Son of Man. He who is the Son of God.

He who is equal with God. He who is in the form of God. He emptied himself.

And took upon himself the form of a slave. Even the fashion of a man. He came into this world.

To become the Son of Man. Why? Because he was to be that ladder. He is the one who is to connect earth with heaven.

Heaven and earth. He is the one who is to bring God and man. Man and God together.

He is the only way that we can come to God. He is the only way that God can come to us. And not only he brings God and man together.

But you find there is a communion between man and God. The angels who are ascending and descending on that ladder. We know angels are ministry servants.

They are minister. God to man. And they minister man to God.

In other words you find that through the work of the angels. They are trying to bring what Christ has done for us. Into our life.

So brothers and sisters. The first meaning of the house of God. Is the coming together of God and man in Christ Jesus.

The union of life with God. The communion that God and man will have. Now God stanching himself at the top of the ladder.

And he spoke to Jacob. He said I am the God of your father Abraham. The God of Isaac.

The place that you sleep now will be yours. I will bless you. And your seed shall be as the sand on the seashore.

And the land. East, West, North, South. Shall all be given to you.

And in thee and in thy seed. All the families of the nation shall be blessed. I will be with you.

Until all that I have said shall be done. Now here you find God is the giver. He is there giving everything.

And Jacob is the receiver. He is there receiving. But unfortunately you find that.

After God has spoken to him. He woke up. He woke up and said.

He doesn't know that God is here. How dreadful is this place. In a sense you know Jacob knew.

That he wasn't fit for God. God is holy. And yet.

Look at Jacob. What a person he is. He understood that.

So when that revelation was given to him. He said it was a surprise. He didn't know that God was present there with him.

Who would think that God would be with such a person. And yet God was there. He felt it was a dreadful place.

You know brothers and sisters. Today when we talk about the house of God. We feel so dear.

So good. So comfortable. So peaceful.

I think that's our problem. Because if we can really see. How dreadful is this place.

I think there is hope. We make it too common. As if the presence of God.

Is nothing. The presence of God demands a lot. And Jacob knew it.

He knew he was totally unfit for God. God came to him. And he was afraid.

And yet. He knew. That's the house of God.

God wanted to be with man. God wanted to be joined together. Even with Jacob.

He knew that. He said this is the house of God. The gate.

But how did he react. To this great revelation of the house of God. You know the house of God is a greater thing.

Than the messianic kingdom. Because it is universal. And yet.

Jacob was so limited by his petty self. In a sense you can see that Jacob just couldn't rise above himself. How did Jacob responded.

On the one hand he understood. This is the house of God. God was after a house.

God wanted to be united with man. Through Christ Jesus. He knew that God was desiring for communion.

With man. He knew all these things. He knew that's what it was all about.

And yet on the other hand. He just couldn't take it in. He couldn't understand.

He just couldn't. Rise above himself. He was Jacob.

So he began to bargain with God. If you say he did not believe in God. That God would say.

I think he did. But the problem is. He was so confined.

By his own self. So God gave him great promises. And yet.

He bargained with God for little things. Because that's all. He understood.

He said if. He couldn't trust anybody. He couldn't even trust God.

So he said if. Now you gave me all these great promises. Alright.

If. If you gave me food to eat. If you gave me a garment to put on.

If you will lead me peacefully back home. Then I will make you my God. And I will use this pillow.

And he set it up as a pillar. And this pillar shall be thy house. And I will give you one tenth of all that I have.

Wonderful. You know. He was thinking all of himself.

He didn't understand that the revelation of God's house. Is for God. He was self-centered. Not God-centered. He was interested only in himself. His own right there. He wasn't interested in God's interest. He was so limited. By himself. And even with. God gave him food to eat. Garment to put on. And eventually led him safely home. He said alright. This pillar shall be thy house. In other words. You find he is only thinking of the physical. As if God wants a physical house. He did not understand. That God wants to make Jacob his house. And in order to make Jacob his house. God had to transform Jacob into Israel. It is not so much of what Jacob will do. To build God a house. And as a matter of fact a pillar is not a house. It is not his service. It is God who is working for that house. In Jacob. By transforming him into Israel. So that God can be united with him in life. And also there can be that communion. Now he did not understand. But thank God. Twenty some years later. After God had dealt with that man. You remember. In Genesis 35. Eventually he went back to Bethel. He called this place Bethel. The house of God. And eventually he went back to Bethel. And when he went back to Bethel. He built an altar. And he called that place. El Bethel. The God of the house of God. Now brothers and sisters. An altar is an expression of communion. So finally we find Jacob beginning to understand. What God is really after. In his life. God wants a house. That there will be union and communion. Now dear brothers and sisters. We laugh at Jacob. But how about ourselves. Do we have a revelation. Of the house of God. Or are we so wrapped up with ourselves. That even if that revelation is given. We do not understand. Maybe mentally we do. Have some idea. This is the house of God. The gate of heaven. And yet actually in our life. You find we are all wrapped up with ourselves. We are still interested. In our own interest. And if we bargain with God. And say now if throughout my life. You give me food to eat. Garment to wear. And give me peace. Security. Then I will make you my God. And I will also serve you. I will build you a house. A physical one. Brothers and sisters. Is this not what we are doing today.

Do we really understand what is the house of God. Do we know that. That what he is really after is we.

Us. Not what we can do for him. But we.

We are what God is really after. Do we understand that in order that this house. May be a reality.

He has to do much work in our lives. He has to transform us. From Jacob.

We are all Jacob. Into Israel. Prince with God.

Do we understand. That he is longing for communion with us. Union with us.

In Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters. I wonder.

We need to be delivered. Out of ourselves. We need to be delivered from our self-centeredness.

We need to deliver from self-interest. In order to really enter into. The house of God.

That he is after. So brothers and sisters. I do feel.

That it is a time for us to reconsider. Before the Lord. Before we really understand.

What the house of God is. We as Jacob. Are we fit.

To be one. With God. In Christ Jesus.

Do we realize that there are so much in us. Almost all in us. That needs to be drastically dealt with.

Before we can be fit. To be his house. Do we understand that what we long for is communion.

It is not what we can do for him. How many of us are busily. Serving him.

Doing what we call Christian work. Involving many activities. Building the church.

Painting the church. And so on and so forth. Brothers and sisters.

Are these what really God is after. It is not after. A time with us.

Mary. Has chosen. The better part.

Now this is the house of God. So first of all. The house of God is union.

And communion. Of God and man. In Christ Jesus.

That is the house of God. Secondly. When you come to this metal of the house of God.

You will find the cabinet. Let's read Exodus. Chapter 25.

Exodus. Chapter 25. Verse 1. And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying.

Speak unto the children of Israel. That they bring me a heave offering of everyone. Whose heart prompted him.

You shall take my heave offering. Verse 8. And they shall make me a sanctuary. That I may dwell among them.

According to all that I shall show thee. The pattern of the tabernacle. And the pattern of all the utensils thereof.

Even so shall ye make it. Verse 21. And thou shalt put a mercy seat upon the ark.

And shalt put in the ark the testimony that I shall give thee. And there will I meet with thee. And will speak with thee from above the mercy seat.

From between the two cherubim. Which are upon the ark of the testimony. Everything that I will give thee in commandment.

Unto the children of Israel. After God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt. He brought them to Mount Sinai.

Now when he delivered them out of Egypt. He didn't tell them why he delivered them. What was his purpose in delivering them.

But after he brought them to Mount Sinai. There you will find he revealed to them. Not only the ten commandments.

But also the tabernacle. Now unfortunately today we are more concerned or we know more of the ten commandments. As if on Mount Sinai God revealed nothing but the ten commandments.

But actually you find that on Mount Sinai. God did reveal the ten commandments to the children of Israel. As his testimony.

As the law given to his people. But even more. You find God after he has given the ten commandments.

The testimony. The law. He revealed to Moses the pattern of the tabernacle.

He said let the people give a key offering. Now key offering is love offering. In other words it is not something forced.

But it is something that you give out of love. With a redeemed people. God asked for a love offering.

You know as a matter of fact. We who are redeemed. We are bought with a price.

Even with the blood of our Lord Jesus. We are no longer ours. We are God's.

We belong to him. And he has every right to demand that we give offerings to him. But that is not the way God works.

Because if he did in that way he will never have his house. So with a house in you. You find that even with a redeemed people.

God never deal with us in a legalistic way. God always deal with us in love. So God said now you are redeemed.

I have brought you out. Out of slavery. You are a free people.

Now out of your free will you give. For what purpose? That you may make me a sanctuary. A house.

A tabernacle. That I may dwell among you. So brothers and sisters.

The purpose of redemption. Is God's dwelling with his people. That is the purpose.

Do not think that God deliver. Well let us think. The children of Israel you know they were slaves for so long.

And suddenly they got their freedom. Now they are free. What do you think? Well they think now we can do what we could not do in the past.

Now we can have our house desire. Now we can live our own life. Formerly we were slaves.

We have no life. We could not do what we want to do. We could not have what we want to have.

Now we are free. And not only we are free when we got out. We actually took everything out of Egypt.

We deprived Egypt of all its wealth. And now we have all this gold and silver and everything. Oh what a life we can live now for ourselves.

Now suppose the children of Israel were thinking in that way. Now God says wait a minute. That is not the purpose of my delivering you.

The reason why I deliver you out of slavery is that I want to dwell among you. I want to be with you. That is my purpose.

Brothers and sisters isn't that true with us today? We who are bought with a price. The Lord never demanded that we should give ourselves to him as a living sacrifice. The Lord said it has to be a heave offering.

It has to be a love offering. Therefore brethren by the mercies of God I beseech you. To present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Holy. Acceptable to God. It is your reasonable service.

Or your spiritual. So God said give me a heave offering. Why? Why do we need to present our bodies a living sacrifice? It is because God wants to dwell among us.

He wants to use what we have offered to build a sanctuary. A holy place. For himself.

And also for us. That is the purpose. You know when God gave that pattern to Moses.

On the one hand you find it is as if God said you cannot approach me. I am holy. You are unclean.

You are unholy. You are sinful. Even though you are redeemed you are still defiled.

You cannot approach me. Therefore you find the approach to God is quite elaborate. It is not simple.

You have to go through the brazen altar. You have to go through the laver for washing. You have to go through the holy place.

The candlestick. The shewbread. The altar of incense.

And there is a veil there. No one can enter. Only the high priest.

Once a year with blood and smoke can just go in to make atonement and quickly withdraw. In other words the way to the holiest was not open. So brothers and sisters when you read the tabernacle you get the impression that God is so holy.

And we, who are we? That we can draw near to him. We cannot. It is difficult.

Very difficult. And yet on the other hand you find that God gives the tabernacle to man. Why? Because it shows God's longing for communication.

God's longing for fellowship. You get a very mixed feeling in your heart. And brothers and sisters, isn't that true? God longs to communicate with people.

You know, in the tabernacle, in the holiest of all is that ark. And in the ark is the testimony. And on the cover of the ark is the mercy seat.

And God said, I will speak to you between the cherubim. On the mercy seat. All that I will command to you.

I will speak to you. And not only that, this is our meeting place. You will meet with me.

And you will speak. Dear brothers and sisters, what is the house of God? The house of God is a place of communication. You know, if you have a house, and I'm thinking more, less of the physical building, the more of the people in the house.

A home. Now, what is a home? A home is more than just you have a building of brick, or of wood, or even of mud and scrub. So you have a house.

No. You have a home. No.

A home is those who are in that house are communicating one with another. That makes it a home. If there is no communication.

Suppose you have a family of four people, or maybe eight people, and yet you find there is no communication. There is no communication between the father and the mother, no communication between the parents and the children, no communication between the brothers and the sisters. There is no communication.

They are all living there in that house. But, no speaking. Everybody is quiet, silent, glad at each other.

And, do you call this a house? Do you call this a home? No communication. What is the tabernacle? The tabernacle is a meeting place. Where God and man meet.

That God may speak to man, and man may speak. That is the house. Of course, in the Old Testament time you will find it is very difficult.

Very difficult. You have the altar court, the holy place, the veil, and then the holiest of all. Now we know, of course, that the ark is a type of Christ.

And the law of God, God's testimony, can only be kept in Christ. You remember when the law was given? And the children of Israel said, Oh, that God has said we will do it. We do not even need to hear directly from God.

It is good enough for us to hear just indirectly, and we will keep everything that God has said. But before the two tables of stone reached them, they broke the law already. In other words, nobody can keep the law.

But the law is kept only in Christ Jesus. He is the end of all laws. But then God, He not only kept the laws of God, but you find it is covered with the mercy seat.

In other words, on the basis of righteousness. He has fulfilled all righteousness. And on the basis of that, God in Christ can show mercy to us.

Now brothers and sisters, today we are in such a better position. Why? Because Christ has already come. He is our mercy seat.

The wall is broken, is rent. There is nothing standing between. So here you find our communication, our communion, our fellowship with God can be uninterrupted.

This is our position today. In Christ Jesus, we can have uninterrupted communion with God. And God is able to speak to us.

And we are able to speak to God. There is communication between God and us. And that makes the house of God.

In the book of Hebrews chapter 3. In Hebrews chapter 3, verse 5. And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house, as a ministering servant, for a testimony of the things to be spoken after. But Christ, as son over his house, whose house are we, if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end. So here you find that we are his house.

If indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end. Now verse 7. Immediately you find, wherefore even as says the Holy Spirit, today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Are we the house of God? We are.

If we hear him. Our God is a God who speaks. Not only he has spoken in the past to our fathers, through the prophets, in many ways and in many forms.

But in the last days he has spoken to us in his son. So dear brothers and sisters, we find that there is a voice coming out from the mercy seat incessantly. God is speaking in his son, continuously to us.

But do we hear? We say we are the house of God. But do we hear his voice? Individually? Are we hearing him? We are a day past without hearing a word from him? Is it possible? Is it normal? Or if we have heard, do we harden our hearts? We do not obey. Brothers and sisters, I am thinking today, we are almost like the time of Eli, the judge.

Because you remember in 1 Samuel you said during the time of Eli, the judge, the priesthood, the word of God was rare. And the vision was infrequent. Is that the normal condition? Of God's relationship with his people? His redeemed people? God cannot speak to the rare today.

Because the women listen. Even if God speaks, they say offenders. They do not understand.

They cannot hear the voice. But the church today, as the Israelites of old, we are the redeemed of the Lord. And here you will find God's words are rare, were rare.

God rarely spoke. And he rarely appeared to his people. Very infrequent.

Can that represent the house of God? Do we hear the voice of our Lord every day? He that has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. For the churches are not listening. Our condition has forced God into silence.

Even worse, you will find that after Malachi, the last prophet, for 400 years, God was silent. He couldn't speak. How saddened his heart.

Think if you are parents, and for one day you are forced to be kept quiet. You cannot say anything to your children. Because if you say something, probably there will be an uproar.

Another rebellion. Think of that. Can you call that a home? But this is what is happening today.

We are not listening. We harden our hearts. Dear brothers and sisters, how we need to repent.

And really be before the Lord. Pray that the Lord will give us a hearing heart. That we may hear him every day.

You know, he will speak to us. I'm not thinking of audible voices. Sometimes God does.

But more so, he will speak through his Spirit. Who dwells in our spirit. The reason why we do not hear him is because we are so far away from him.

We are occupied with so many things. We hear so many voices. That we cannot hear him.

Or we need to have a tender heart. A heart that is turned towards him. And I do believe that if our hearts are turned towards him, you cannot fail to hear him speak.

He loves to talk with you. He loves to communicate what is in his heart to you. You know, he is shut up to himself.

He loves to share his burden with you. He loves to share what is in his heart with you. But where are the people who are ready to receive his burden? We are not interested.

And brothers and sisters, more than that, he wants us to communicate with him. He wants us to draw near to him. Not because we are worthy of our own righteousness.

No, never. It is because Christ is our righteousness. And through our Lord Jesus, we have ready access to him.

And he wants us to go to him. To talk to him. To converse with him.

Communicate. Tell him everything that is in your heart. Pour yourself out to him.

You know, brothers and sisters, today we find people are very lonely because they have no one to talk to. But here is your Heavenly Father always waiting with patience, love, sympathy to hear what you want to

say to him. And why don't you do it? This makes it the house of God.

Individually, this is so. Corporately, it is so. The church should hear the voice of the Spirit.

When the church does not hear what the Spirit of God is saying, something is very wrong. And the church ought to be a place where you can bring everything. So this is the second meaning of the house of God.

Now, of course, together with that, I should mention also that the tabernacle is a place of service and worship. Out of communication comes service and worship. You know, you cannot worship if you do not know.

The more we know God, the more we know his heart, the more we know his purpose, the more we know what he has done, the more he gives you worship. Otherwise, worship is empty. See, oftentimes I feel that when we are praising God or worshiping God, oftentimes I feel these are words, beautiful words, many words, but where is the substance? We do not know him.

We do not know his work. And that is the reason why our worship is so weak. Worship is based on communion, on communication.

And the more we know of him, the more he draws from you that worship. You find that he is worthy. You can place him in the place where he ought to be.

And also you realize what your place is. That's worship. And of course, service actually comes out of worship.

Service leads back to worship. But service comes out of worship. You know, if you try to serve and yet there is not, it doesn't come out of worship, it is not spiritual ministry.

Spiritual ministry begins with God. And it has to come out of worship. And if there is worship, there cannot but be spiritual service.

You cannot be just a worshiper and not a server. You know, we cannot divide these two things. These two things go together.

So, the meaning of the house is communication and worship with service. Now let's go on to the third. And of course, the third thing on the house of God is David.

Our time is almost up, so I have to rush on. I believe our brother will speak on these things more. Anyway, you find a David.

After God gave David the kingdom, and he dwelt in his palace. In 1 Chronicles chapter 17, you find David say to Nathan, he said, I live in this house of Seder, and yet the ark of God still lives in a tent. That is not right.

So Nathan said, you can do whatever is in your heart. But immediately the word of God came to Nathan, and said, you go back and tell David. And brothers and sisters, you go back and read 1 Chronicles 17.

As you read it, you will weep. Because when David had the desire to build a house for God, you know the whole idea is the idea of rest. What is the house of God? The house of God is a place that God rests.

Now David rested in his palace. It was God who gave him rest. You know David, he lived a very restless life.

He was a wanderer. He was a fugitive. He was hunted.

He had to flee hidden caves. He had many enemies. He had to fight many battles.

He had a very restless life. But God in his grace gave David rest. Finally you find God build David his house.

He had his kingdom, his throne, his palace. He was rested. And when David was given rest, he became restless for God.

Finally he was restless because of himself. And now you find he has got his rest. So he began to become restless for God.

He was thinking of God's rest. And that very thought touched God's heart very deeply. God said to David through Nathan, He said, Since I have delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, I have wandered with them from tent to tent, from tabernacle to tabernacle.

And even after I have planted them in the land I promised, have I ever asked anyone to give me, to build me a house to live? I haven't asked for it. And yet you are the only one who wants to do it for me. It touched God's heart.

You see, God, can we say that in the whole history of mankind, from Adam and Eve, after they sinned, burned out of Eden, not only man became wanderers, but God lost his rest. Can a father rest if his son or daughter are away as particles? No rest. So God has no rest.

And his role, he is looking for a place of rest. He is looking to rest among man. But man did not give him rest.

Man gave him lots of trouble. Only when Christ came into this world, in Christ, doth find his rest. This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

For what God desires is not just one man. He wants a new mankind. He wants a new mankind that will give him rest.

That he can rest among his people, among his own people. Now brothers and sisters, this is the meaning of the house of God. But in a very real sense, we will never give our God rest until he first gives us rest.

That's very true. But when we are given his rest, you know in Hebrews chapter 4 you'll find there is a sabbatism, there is a rest prepared for us. Enter into his rest.

We need to enter into his rest. Why? Because everything is done. Christ has done everything for us.

On the cross he said, it is finished. Everything is done. Brothers and sisters, we can rest in Christ Jesus.

And if we do rest in Christ Jesus, then it is time for us to get restless for God. Let us give God rest. He can rest when we really trust him.

When we really obey him. Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus, he learned obedience through the things which he has suffered. And God finds rest in that man.

The same thing is true. God can only rest in us if we obey him. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

Just remember this. How I foreplay. You find Solomon.

Eventually, Solomon built a house. Now when Solomon dedicated that temple, in 2 Chronicles chapter 6, you find Solomon. He said, will God indeed dwell in this house that I built? God is too great for that.

But it is a place where God will put his name there. And it is a place where people can come and pray. Because his eyes is upon that house.

And his ears is upon that house. And he will hear. And he will forgive.

So what is the meaning of the house of God? The meaning of the house of God is where God puts his name. He puts his name in his house. Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.

That is the house of God. The brothers and sisters, unfortunately, when God put his name upon that temple, the children of Israel misrepresented that name completely. They disgraced that name.

So eventually the temple has to be destroyed. What about the church? The Lord said, I commit my name to the church. He commits himself a name.

To put a name there is a commitment. You will find that he commits himself to the church. And when he commits himself to the church, how do we react? Do we really honor that name? Uphold that name? Exalt that name? In other words, put ourselves under that name, under his authority? Let Christ be the head of the church.

Let Christ be the Lord of each of our lives. Do we honor his name? Or do we bring disgrace to his name? The name is given to the church. But whether it is under reproach or whether it is in praise, it depends on us.

And it is a place that we can pray. You know, prayer. You remember our Lord in John chapter 16 said, Hereafter I give you my name.

You can pray to the Father and whatever you pray, it shall be done unto you. Brothers and sisters, when we use that name and pray, what does it mean? Does it mean that we pray in his name for our own interest? No. We pray in his name for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So this is the meaning of the house of God. Name and prayer. And finally, you remember when the children of Israel came back from Babylonian captivity in Ezra.

Book of Ezra. They lived in Babylon for 70 years. They have built their houses.

They have built up their businesses. They live a very comfortable life. And they were given much freedom even though they were slaves.

They could worship God. They developed that ingenious religious system of synagogue that enabled them to worship God even much more convenient than a temple. But the temple was destroyed.

You know. But suddenly you find they were free to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the house of God. In other words, you find the only reason given to return to Jerusalem is to build God's house.

To restore God's name upon this earth. That he may have a dwelling place. That is the only reason.

Most of the Israelites remain in the land of captivity. They did not bother to go back. Why? Because if they return they will come to a ruined city surrounded by enemies.

And they return for only one reason. To build God's house. Now is God's house so important to their lives? So most people think it's not that important.

Our house is all the more important. Our welfare is all the more important. So they stay in the land of captivity.

Not ideal, but they stay. But only a remnant whose spirit was stirred. In other words, you'll find they return to build a house totally out of love.

There's no other reason. Because they love God. They love his name.

That's the only reason. They are willing to forsake everything. Their comfort, their businesses, their houses, their enterprises, their comforts.

They are willing to give up everything to go back to Jerusalem for God's sake. To build a house for God. That God's name may be upon this earth.

Brothers and sisters, that's love. What is the house of God? The house of God is a house of love. God is love.

And if there is love, there is God's house. In the second letter to the seven churches you'll find the letter to the church in Ephesus. You have all of the good things there.

But you have your first love. God said, repent. If you do not repent, I will remove your lampstand.

Lampstand stands for the church. In the sight of God. When that is removed, it means the testimony is removed.

So brothers and sisters, what is the house of God? The house of God is a house of love. Only when we continue in our first love with him is the house of God a reality. Whenever our love towards him we gets cold.

Repent. So remember, the house of God is not just a concept. Something for us to speculate and talk about.

The house of God is very real. Very real. And it ought to bring lots of convictions to us.

It ought to bring us to our knees. To repentance. It ought to bring us into renewed consecration and commitment to him.

And finally, remember, it is God's house. In other words, it has to satisfy. You are satisfied, but is he satisfied? Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we do praise and thank thee that thou shalt so honor us as to even show us thy heart, thy desire, thy longing.

We do praise and thank thee that thou hast been so gracious to us in delivering us out of the world. To bring us to thyself that thou mayst be able to build us into thy house. That thou wantest to rest in us, to be loved, to be worshipped, to be honored, to be fellowshipped, to be in union.

Oh Lord, it's too much. We just cannot comprehend. We do ask thee Lord that thou will continue to open our understanding and draw us into that reality and reveal to us how unfit we are.

Lord, give us a holy discontent that we may really repent and return to thee. We want thee to have that house. Oh Lord, how we praise and thank thee that one day thou will have it.

We know it. It's already there. We ask in thy precious name.

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