

The Glory of Dwelling in the Most Holy Place

by Zac Poonen

The sermon teaches that the Christian life has three stages: repentance and water baptism, receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and living a godly life, and that dwelling in the Most Holy Place is essential for spiritual authority and effectiveness.

Scripture: Matthew 18:18, Matthew 27:50, Acts 1:8, Acts 22:16, Romans 8:26, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 5:24, 1 Timothy 3:16, Titus 3:5, Hebrews 10:19, Hebrews 10:22

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the significance of the Old Testament tabernacle, illustrating how its three parts - the outer court, the holy place, and the most holy place - represent different stages of the full gospel. He explains that progressing from the outer court to the most holy place symbolizes a believer's journey from repentance and water baptism to receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and ultimately dwelling in the presence of God. Poonen emphasizes the importance of crucifying self-will, seeking God's honor above all else, and living a life of victory over sin to enter the Most Holy Place and experience spiritual discernment, unity in the Body of Christ, and authority in prayer and spiritual warfare.

Transcript

The Old Testament tabernacle had three parts to it - the outer court, the holy place and the most holy place - representing three parts of the full gospel.

In the outer court, there were the altar of sacrifice and the laver of water (for washing). The altar represents the message of 'Christ crucified for our sins'. The laver represents the external cleansing of our lives (Heb. 10:22) and the washing of regeneration (Tit. 3:5) that we testify to in the baptism in water (Acts 22:16). This is the first stage of the Christian life, where a person repents and trusts in Jesus as his Saviour - who bore the penalty for his sins - and is then baptized in water.

Whereas the outer court was open to all the Israelites (but not to the heathen), the Holy Place was open only to the priests - to those who were engaged in the service of the Lord. In the Old Testament, the most important requirement to serve the Lord - whether as a prophet, priest or king - was the 'anointing of the Holy Spirit'. No human qualification could be a substitute for this anointing. Even Jesus did not step out into His public ministry without first being anointed with the Holy Spirit. The Lord desires to lead His children from 'the outer court' into this realm - to the anointing of the Spirit and the exercise of spiritual gifts for His service. The Holy Place had three items of furniture in it: (1) The lampstand - which symbolised the

anointing giving us power to be witnesses for Christ - (Acts 1:8). (2) The table of showbread - which symbolised the anointing giving us revelation on the Word - (2 Cor. 3:18). (3) The altar of incense - which symbolised the anointing giving us power in prayer (Rom. 8:26, 27). To reach thus far is to reach the second stage of Christian life - receiving not only the forgiveness of sins and water-baptism, but the baptism in the Holy Spirit as well.

The Most Holy Place was where the glory of God dwelt in the tabernacle. Like the New Jerusalem (which symbolises the church), this too was an exact cube: "Its length, width and height are equal" (Rev. 21:16). No person - not even a priest - was permitted to go into the Most Holy Place. Even the High Priest could go in only once a year to atone for the sins of the people. This highlighted the fact that the way into the immediate presence of God was still not open for any man (Heb. 9:8). We learn thereby that even the finest of Old Testament saints could go only as far as the Holy Place, in terms of their spiritual experience.

Under the New Covenant, however, the way has been opened for us to enter right through the veil into the Most Holy Place. We are told in Hebrews 10:19, 20 that we now have "confidence to enter the (most) holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh". The temple in Jerusalem (built according to the pattern of the tabernacle) also had a veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. This was torn from top to bottom, when Jesus died on Calvary (Matt. 27:50, 51). This signified a finished work that Jesus had done in His flesh. The secret of living a godly life (we are told in 1 Tim. 3:16) lies in knowing that Christ came in the flesh and kept His spirit pure and undefiled. It is thus that the way into the Most Holy Place has been opened for us to enter in. Man's self-will is the thick "veil" that blocks off the presence of God from him. Jesus denied His own will at all times during His earthly life. It was thus that He kept His spirit pure. We too can walk the same way, if we "crucify the flesh (self-will) with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24). We can then dwell in the Most Holy Place always as Jesus did.

When a person enters into the Most Holy Place, he enters the third stage of the Christian life - the highest stage. In the Most Holy Place, only God dwells. Those who dwell here dwell with God and have been freed from people - freed from seeking the honour of men and even of Christian leaders. They have also been freed from being offended, from complaining and grumbling, and from bitterness and envy. They are now free to love others even as Jesus loved them, irrespective of whether they are loved in return or not.

They now seek the honour of God alone in all that they do - being more conscious of God than of people when they pray and speak in the meetings for example. They fear God and therefore their inner (hidden) life is as pure as their external life.

Those who dwell here have seen that all that is big and great in the eyes of men is an abomination in God's sight. They now consider everything as rubbish compared to the possibility of partaking of the nature of God in Christ. Having entered into a life of victory over sin, they are kept from falling, by the power of God, and partake of the glory of God more and more. They always give thanks for everything, and they live before the face of God in all that they do.

Those who dwell in the Most Holy Place receive increasing discernment, in God's light, on what is only soulish (human) and what is really spiritual (divine).

It is in the Most Holy Place also that people are formed together into a functioning Body (as opposed to a mere congregation). There is no individualism in the Most Holy Place. No one here lives unto himself. Everyone who lives here is a perpetual sacrifice, and therefore, God is able to make all such brothers and

sisters into the functioning Body of Christ with spiritual authority in a locality. It is about those who live here that Jesus spoke as 'agreeing' and having authority to receiving anything they ask for from the Father and who can bind Satan's power at will (Matt. 18:18-20).

In every assembly of Christians, the vast majority dwell in the Outer Court - having responded to one-third of the gospel message. Some progress into the Holy Place - being anointed by the Holy Spirit. These have responded to two-thirds of the gospel message. But the spiritual authority and effectiveness of that assembly (as far as God is concerned) is measured in terms of the number who have entered into the Most Holy Place (those who have responded to the full gospel). Satan fears only those who have gone through the veil into the Most Holy Place. This is why he has blinded believers to the full gospel. It is only when there is a central core in an assembly of those who dwell permanently in the Most Holy Place that the assembly can be kept pure from the forces of spiritual death and preserved in the way of life.

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