

The Temple of the Holy Spirit

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- [0:00] Okay, we are continuing the study that Pastor Jason started, and I started with some information on the screen as just a little bit of a quiz for you.
- And the question was, what do the pictures and the names have in common? No other guesses. What is that? Oh, you're getting closer.
- You are right. Anything more specific than that? Okay, they're all temples. They're all temples.
- What? All right, the pictures of the buildings were pictures of temples to false gods that existed and that were in place in the city of Corinth.
- And the names of the people, if you read through the letters that Paul wrote to the city of Corinth, were believers living in the city of Corinth who are temples.
- [1:03] Temples of the living God. And that's what we want to take a look at this morning as we proceed to look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people.
- We're going to focus on the fact that God's people, as God's people, we are sacred temples in which the Holy Spirit dwells.
- Now, the believers in Corinth were very familiar already with the temples, as we showed you some pictures that were some of them in better shape at that time. But they were familiar with the temples in the city of Corinth.
- Even prior to Paul's ministry there, some of these temples had been in existence for many, many years. And even some of them had come into ruins, even as Paul was there ministering to the people, to the believers there in Corinth, and then writing letters to them.
- So with this knowledge that they had, this connection that they had with these temples, Paul uses the temples as illustrations to help the people understand really the emptiness of idolatrous temple worship.
- [2:20] And in great contrast, the exalted privilege that is theirs in being temples of the living God, and not these dead gods that were associated with the temples in the city of Corinth.
- But he also teaches them the corresponding responsibility to live honorable, holy lives that reflect the reality that their bodies are temples.
- Of the indwelling Holy Spirit. For prior to this letter, and even during the time that he was writing this letter, they were living lives that could possibly reflect more of their association with these other temples that were there, that were empty and vain and dead, and everything associated with them was.
- And he had to write to them and help them understand, no, you're not a part of this. This is part of your past. You're part of something brand new here. Something that is not dead, but something that is living, and something that is living not outside of you, but something that is living within you.
- And you've taken on a brand new identity that sets you apart from the people that you were in the past, and the people also that were still there in the city of Corinth.

[3 : 44] And have the great privilege of living out of this brand new identity that is theirs. Not in their own strength, but by the power of, again, the living God who's dwelling within them by his Holy Spirit.

And so in chapter 3 of 1 Corinthians, he begins confronting them about the jealousy and the quarreling and the factions. We're familiar with some of that writing of the Apostle Paul to them.

That had developed in their midst and among them, and reminds them of who they are, but then also who indwells them. Verse 16 of chapter 3, he says, Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple, and that God's Spirit lives in you?

If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. That's interesting.

John, in his first letter, in 1 John 3, does something and says something similar when he reminds the people he's writing to about the love of God.

[4 : 59] And he says, How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God, and that is what we are. Again, in verse 16, Paul ends with something similar.

You are that temple. That is what you are. So again, the necessity to draw back to the people, their thinking of who they really are.

You are that temple of God. Now, there were people connected with them at the time that they were exposed to, that were trying to bring ruin, destruction upon them as the people of God.

And to show them, again, the importance of who they are and were as the temple of God. Now, Paul is writing to them and letting them know that when people are going about that and seeking to do that, they're really in danger of God's judgment.

For anybody who sought to destroy the temple of God through corruption of teaching, other doctrines, or even in the way that they were living in, what they were encouraging the Corinthian people to do that would distort who they really were as God's holy people, choosing the dwelling place of God.

[6 : 28] Paul is helping them understand that such people are in great danger of God's judgment coming upon them. So, God will destroy them, but you as God's people understand that you are the temple of God in reality.

And so, he draws on that same truth in chapter 6 when he confronts them about sexual immorality. Now, understand too, when we think of temples and the practices that went along with worship at that time, one of the temples that was in the city of Corinth was the temple of two Aphrodite.

And all the priestesses that were there that were encouraging prostitution and sexual immorality. I mean, that was just a regular part of their lives prior to coming to Christ and all part of temple worship back then.

But Paul is helping them understand, no, that's part of the past. That temple worship is no longer to be associated with you. You're a new temple now.

And being a new temple calls you to a brand new way of living. And so, in 1 Corinthians 6, 18 through 20, he says, Flee sexual immorality.

[7 : 53] All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God?

You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body. Interesting in both passages that Paul uses the phrase, Don't you know?

Or do you not know? And he's used this already in previous chapters, in this chapter, in verses 2, 3, 9, 15, and 16, using that same phrase, Do you not know?

And so, as he uses it here, it's not a question to find out if they've ever been taught anything about the Holy Spirit and his indwelling ministry in them. It's more a rhetorical question to remind them of what he had most likely taught them in the past about their real connection, their union with God, that already has taken place at their salvation.

And, of course, the implications that go along with that union, and, again, the Spirit of God dwelling within them. So, God's people, they, and, of course, us, individually, but also corporately, as a body of Christ, are the temple of God in which God's Holy Spirit dwells.

[9:27] They weren't living in the reality of what they had been taught. And so, they were living like they were ignorant of those truths.

And so, Paul is telling them, and coming back to them, and saying, Don't you know? You know, we've probably said something similar to our children. What are you doing?

Don't you know? And we're not saying, Have you ever been taught or been acquainted with what I've told you about hitting your brother or sister or whatever it is? No, we're saying, like, You know this.

I've taught you this. But you're not acting like someone who's been acquainted with this truth. And so, he's helping them understand, drawing back to their remembrance, bringing it to the forefront of their thinking, so that it really affects what they're doing in their daily life now.

It really does have implications for their lives now. And even as I was working on this lesson this past week, it was interesting, as it was brought back to the forefront of my thinking, as I was moving through my day.

[10:40] And the phrase that came back, Don't you know? When temptations were set before me, God, by his indwelling Holy Spirit, bringing this truth to the forefront of my mind and my thinking, so that I understood, well, the reality of this that's taking place in my life has implications for what's going on in my mind right now and the conclusions that I draw that might lead me to actions that are not characteristic of one who is indwelt by the Spirit of God.

So we can give thanks. This does have implications for daily life. So sometimes when we think, Oh, doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, another one of these doctrines that seems just so cold and inapplicable or unapplicable to my daily life.

Well, it's not. And Paul understood that for the people that he was writing to, that it was going to be a doctrine, a teaching, an understanding that would really deliver them out of practices that were part of their life in the past and that were really ruinous to them and what they could now enjoy as people who were temples of the living God.

And so I'm hoping, even from our class, I'm not going to stop now, but if I did stop now, that that single truth would be something that you would carry with you that would really have implications for you at your work, at your home, in your neighborhood, wherever you are as a person who is indwelt by the living God and whose God lives in you and goes with you everywhere you go.

So it's not like you had to go to the temple of Apollo or Aphrodite or whoever else back then in order to be connected with your God. No, God has made His dwelling place within us.

[12:49] And that is a great honor, a great privilege. I'm sure many of them were just awestruck with and even the unbelievers in the city of Corinth confused about, what are you saying?

The God that you serve now is a God who dwells within you? Where's your temple in which your God dwells? Well, it's me. Ah, come on.

What are you talking about? But it was a truth that they had to fully understand and that we still today need to fully understand and comprehend in order to really live as new creatures in Christ.

Well, if that wasn't enough of an awesome truth for us to contemplate and think upon, I think another truth that even makes that possible that we can bring into this whole picture is the truth of how this even became possible for us.

As I said, if I can move through the day without that having a strong impression on me, if we bring in this additional truth of how this was acquired, how it was made possible for me to be a temple of God, while that will be even a greater, have greater influence on me in my daily life.

[14:21] And how we were made temples of the living God, of course, we were made temples by the work of God Himself, in particular, in the person of Jesus Christ.

The temples in Corinth were constructed by the hands of men, but the temple of God, the church in which the Holy Spirit dwells and exists, exists because of the love of God, His desire, and His plan to rescue, His plan to restore and to redeem people who were destroyed by the ravages of sin.

Now, at the time that Paul was writing this, I think as I read, the temple of Apollo that existed about 700 years before, Paul's writing, had been destroyed.

And it was still there, but it was in ruins. Well, so now they had that illustration right there as well. That here's a temple made by the hands of men that's in ruins.

Well, you are not temples like that. There's been a work that has been accomplished and carried out by the living God in your life that makes you a brand new, a living temple, a living temple in which God is continuing to work in and through you in building His corporate temple, the Church of Jesus Christ.

[15:46] So in and of ourselves, they and we today, in our unsafe condition, we're unable, incapable, of making such a temple.

such a temple as we are had to be had to be constructed or restored by the living God Himself and that's what God does in Jesus Christ.

We were incapable in the book that we've been using, the work of the Holy Spirit. The writer has this quote in describing the condition of man after sin entered our nature.

He writes, as for His moral likeness to God in knowledge, purity, justice, truth, and benignity, these glorious liniments are blotted from His soul and darkness and purity, desolation, and death reign there.

The soul has lost all love to God. More than this, there's not only the absence of love, but there's positive enmity. So it's not that we couldn't build a temple in ourselves to God.

[16:53] It's that we didn't even want to. We had no desire whatsoever for the living God to dwell within us. In fact, in and of ourselves, we desired something totally different.

And so we had no interest whatsoever to have that kind of close union with God. Romans 8, 7, the sinful mind is hostile to God.

It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. And of course, we're familiar with Romans 3, 23, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

So someone, apart from man, had to do something to make it possible for a man to be a fit temple for the living, holy God.

We were in desperate need and could not do anything to rectify our situation and our condition. but God could and God did in the work of Jesus Christ.

[17:56] Well, what were the different steps that he did to do that in rebuilding his temple? Well, the first one was his incarnation. John 1, 14, the word became flesh and made his dwelling or tabernacled among us.

Philippians 2, 7, he, Jesus, he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

So the incarnation of Jesus Christ was essential and it was necessary. He would be, among other things, the model of what a true temple of God would be and should be.

His physical body, his human body, being the temple and his Godhead, his deity, being the indwelling of God within that human body, that temple.

Jesus had to be incarnated. He would be that true temple of God on earth. But not just that, his righteous life was also necessary.

[19:08] 2 Corinthians 5, 21, God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

So it was necessary for Jesus to fulfill the law, to keep it perfectly, to do what we were incapable of doing through the weakness of our flesh and the sinful nature that we had.

He did what we were incapable of doing and as such fulfilled all righteousness. His righteous life was necessary.

And by faith in Christ, his righteous life is credited to our account. This is the righteousness from God which we're never able to achieve on our own.

So his incarnation, his righteous life, but also his death was necessary. John 2, 19, Jesus answered him, destroy this, what does he say?

[20:09] Temple. Destroy this temple. Of course, not referring to the physical structure made of stones that men had built, but referring to his body, his temple.

Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days. 1 John 4, 10, this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Again, from the book, his death on the cross was as necessary to the satisfaction of justice as his life of obedience had been to the fulfilling of the law.

So yes, he came in the form of a man taking on the likeness of a man. Yes, he lived that perfectly righteous life, but he had to die as the Lamb of God as well to be that atoning sacrifice, that propitiation for our sins, that peace offering, that satisfaction that would be to the justice of God.

It was essential. So the temple of his body had to experience death so that the Holy Spirit could come and dwell within a new temple composed of living stones.

[21:22] Those who have repented and turned in true faith to Christ for forgiveness of sins and the acquisition of a righteousness necessary again to be a fit temple of God.

We were without hope, without God in the world, for we were still yet a temple unfit to be the dwelling place of God. And so Jesus had to come.

Jesus was at work in doing all that was necessary for us to be temples of the living God. But then also what was necessary was his resurrection.

All the other work that Jesus did would have been for nothing apart from the resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15, 14 through 18. It's not all of the verses.

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless. And so is your faith. Paul was preaching about Christ, his coming, his incarnation, his perfect life, his death on the cross.

[22:22] And he says, all that would be in vain. All that would be useless apart from the resurrection. He had to be raised again in order for us to have this great honor, this great privilege of having God dwell within us.

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile. You're still in your sins, still unfit, still in that condition that would be incapable of housing the living God.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. Indeed, he has been raised from the dead. So the spirits rise to the reality of what has happened.

The destroyed temple was raised again just as he said it would happen. Another quote from the book, through the incarnation, obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ, a way has been opened.

The way has been opened by which God could again dwell with man, could resume his abode in the very temple that sin had destroyed. And show forth the riches and glory of his grace far more illustriously than when this temple stood in its original perfection and grandeur.

[23 : 40] So as we move through the day, we have even just these two basic truths that will help us in our thinking and in our battle and our conflict and warfare against sin and temptation.

the one truth is the reality that I'm a temple of the living God. But then the other reality of at what cost was this privilege given to me?

It was the cost of Jesus Christ and all that he did in his incarnation, his righteous life, and the struggle against sinful man in living that righteous life and his death on the cross and his resurrection.

Glory! What glorious things that Jesus Christ has accomplished so that we could be called the temple of God and that is what you are. The temple of the living God.

Well, we need to continue on here because the Holy Spirit was also active and is still active in restoring his temple again, which is what we are.

[24 : 44] There's still a great work that is being accomplished. All done, of course, starting in ages past, in eternity past, and then carried out in real time and space in the person of Jesus Christ and still taking place through the work of his Holy Spirit that he sent when he had ascended into heaven.

So the first evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in us is evidenced in our regeneration. Titus 3.5 He saved us not because of righteous things we had done.

Again, we were incapable of doing anything righteous. but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

That renewal, that life-giving, regenerative work of the Holy Spirit within the heart of man that was dead that couldn't bring life to himself.

This Spirit whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior. The working of God all together in symphony and concert in order to achieve that which we were incapable of achieving.

[25 : 59] Achieving that which brings us great hope and life in a world that still is full of the struggle and the warfare against sin.

Without the Holy Spirit's intervention and the quickening, we would still be dead to God and under the condemnation of our sins. But, as a result of the Holy Spirit's work, the one who was formerly at enmity with God, resisting God, pushing God away, now longs for God, calls upon God, not just at the moment of salvation, but in an ongoing way throughout all our life, day by day, calling upon God for forgiveness of sins and help to live his new life unto God with Jesus as his Master and Lord.

The Holy Spirit has entered and made the individual a new creation in Christ Jesus, a temple of the living God. Well, not only that, he's at work producing great manifestations of God's glory in and through us.

In 2 Corinthians 3, 7 through 11, again, you're seeing this common thread here in this letter to the Corinthian people.

Now, if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness?

- [27 : 36] So the law of God that was delivered to Moses really shows man's inability to be perfectly holy and thus condemned men to death.

When that law was given to Moses, it came with great glory. You remember the writings and how Moses went up to the mountain and came down and the glory of God was showing on his face?

It shone as a result of his meeting with God. Well, if the law that condemns came with glory, you see what Paul writes here, how much more?

He builds these words up. How much more to really help us understand. You know, it's just not a little insignificant amount, something insignificant that's happening here.

This is, you can't hardly imagine this. This is so much more glorious than what happened in the past when death was pronounced through the law.

- [28 : 34] No, there's something grander and glorious being accomplished in the person of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit that is hard to understand and imagine. It's much more glorious is the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit that produces not death but righteousness in the believer's life.

That is what the indwelling Holy Spirit is working in the believer. 2 Corinthians 3.18 Paul continues to write, and we, these believers, we're being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

So the Holy Spirit is there within us certainly securing, we'll get to this a little bit but so will Pastor Jason in weeks to come, securing us for our future inheritance, but it's much more than that.

He's at work right now. He's not waiting for, okay, well you're saved now, so just hang in there until you get to the end and when you get to the end you'll be so perfect and righteous.

No, why put it off? And His plan is that through the indwelling Holy Spirit He would begin working this far more glorious fruit of righteousness that we so desperately need not just in the future in order to dwell with God and see Jesus face to face but what we desperately need right now.

- [30 : 07] He's at work producing that within us a far glorious thing and so we bring our thinking into that same thing, that same line of reasoning and understanding that what God is seeking to accomplish in me has much more to do than my comfort and say happiness whatever that I might think is the ultimate in life here.

What it is is this likeness of Jesus Christ that is so glorious that He wants us to start possessing and experiencing it right now while we're still in the sinful world.

And it was essential for His Holy Spirit to come and dwell within us in order for such a work to be able to be accomplished in us. well, that Spirit is also at work producing an ongoing satisfaction for our thirst for Christ and righteousness.

John 4, 13-14 Jesus answered and He was speaking to the woman at the well. He said, everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again.

But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. And in later chapter 7, He reveals that water to be the Holy Spirit.

[31 : 31] It's the indwelling Holy Spirit that gives us desires for Christ and righteousness. Without His indwelling presence, we would be yielding to the ongoing sinful desires of the flesh which are at war within our souls.

We all know that. We understand that. Even though I'm a temple of God living within me still that resides within me from my unsaved days, these desires, these thoughts that were all associated with the gods of the past.

But now with the indwelling Holy Spirit, now I have that within me which I need to desire that which is of God.

To desire righteousness which could never happen if the Spirit of God was not within me. Without His indwelling presence, we would again be yielding to the ongoing sinful desires of the flesh that war against our soul.

But we can also rejoice and give hope that this indwelling Holy Spirit doesn't kind of come and go. And as it looked like the temples that were there, the destroyed temples that they saw, the gods weren't even able to keep their own temple in looking good.

[32 : 53] And as they laid in ruins there, look, the spirit of Apollo is gone. or of course, why would the temple be in ruins?

No, the spirit of the living God within His temple is there. He comes in and He remains there. Prior to Jesus ascending into heaven, He reassured His disciples with this promise in John 14.

And I will ask the Father and He will give you another counselor to be with you forever. forever. The idea is there's another one like me. So it's not something less than the person of Jesus Christ.

And I'm thinking, and here, He's been with us, how could we ever continue on in life without the presence of Jesus Christ? And Jesus is reassuring you, listen, after I leave, I'm going to send you another one like me who will be with you forever.

And He identifies who this is, the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him for He lives with you and will be in you.

[34 : 12] So that Spirit of God coming and taking up His presence, His dwelling place within that believer, He's the seal that guarantees what is to come.

Therefore, He is with us forever. If He's the seal, guaranteeing that which is to come, then the seal has to be a good seal.

It can't be, if He is not something that is eternal, then that which He's guaranteeing isn't eternal either. So you've got to work backwards.

If this is eternal, then He is eternal. The seal, that guarantees what is to come, also has to be guaranteed to be there for us and in us. And God is helping us to understand that.

You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal.

[35 : 12] And that seal is the promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of His glory.

Glory, we can say. Glory to God in the highest for the work that He has done through His Spirit coming and dwelling within us. What I hope for in the future, I can hope with confidence.

It will be mine. Not because I can hang on, but because the Spirit of God dwells within me, working within me to pursue, to run after, to hold on to, that which I confessed originally by faith in Jesus Christ.

Well, the work of the Holy Spirit, His indwelling within us, our response to this, when Paul addresses and presents a great truth to the people that he's writing to, there usually is, and I could probably say, there always is a corresponding response that could take place within those who are, in this case, the recipients of this truth, and the actual indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Of course, we recognize our bodies are the dwelling place of God, dedicated to manifest that which is magnificent about God. I mean, these temples that were built, I mean, we just saw the ruins in the pictures, but originally built, these were magnificent structures.

[36:50] Well, God is building a greater and grander and more glorious spectacle, structure, one made up of living stones, and again, that is what we are, one that will continue throughout all eternity.

So, in all of our thoughts, our words, and our deeds, now we honor this God who has done such a great work in us and is continuing to do in us.

So, Paul calls to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6, 19, and 20. Here we go again. Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you've received from God?

You're not your own. And the price, the worker, the cost, you were bought at a price. And the conclusion of the matter for them and for us, therefore, honor God with your body.

Every instrument that is ours, our hands, our minds, our eyes, our mouths, our feet, all about us, is not our own, but purchased through the work of Jesus Christ, brought to life by the work of the Holy Spirit, indwelt by the presence of the living God to go with us day after day after day and to preserve us and to make us and accomplish in us what will ultimately bring the greatest glory and honor to God, Christ perfected in us.

[38:25] So what are we today? We are at the temples of God. Well, let me finish with some pictures. If we can get these pictures up. And as these pictures go up, you have to ask the question, what do you see?

What's the answer? Temples. Temples of the living God. And that is what we are. Let's pray. Father, what a great work.

What a great work that you've done that certainly we are undeserving of, but in your grace and mercy and love. You have done it and continue to work it out.

Father, we pray that your indwelling Holy Spirit would do what we're incapable of doing on our own, and that is to bring the reality of this truth back to our minds regularly.

Father, that we would just worship, we would just praise you for what you would do, but then also that we would honor you, the one who is certainly worthy, Jesus Christ, the one who is worthy for us to give ourselves as now living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto you.

[39:48] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.