

Mountain View 11 — The New Temple

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Passages	John 2:18-22
Sermon Series	Mountain View
Topics	Temple; Presence of God
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Introduction (Connection):

[Invite to John 2]

Today we are wrapping up a little story that we've been in for three weeks now; it's ok to take our time—slow and steady wins the race.

Tension:

So Friday night this week, I woke up at 2:30 AM to the fire alarm blaring in our house.

I'm the really heavy sleeper, Kaitlin is the light sleeper, and yet, she only woke up enough to be annoyed that the fire alarm was going off.

Well, of course, that woke up a few of us in a pretty scary way.

Don't worry, there wasn't a fire or smoke, just dust.

But sure enough, one of our daughters came into our room crying.

Our kids know, if they are scared by something during the night, they can come to us and sleep in our bed for a few minutes, or hours depending on if we're awake enough to put them back.

Well, our kids take advantage of that invitation.

And I don't know what it is about my kids, but they will sleep as close to me as possible; they have to be touching me in some way, even if they are dead asleep.

I'll move away to get more space to sleep freely, and even in their sleep they will move over with me.

Sometimes they'll even reach their foot out just to touch me and know I'm still there, or they'll reach with their hand.

You see, there's something about being close to your daddy; that desire runs deeper than just a fearful thought... it's instinct.

You and I were made to crave the presence of our daddy; we instinctually long for it more than we realize, and too often it gets numbed by cheap knockoffs or painful experiences.

What we're going to find out today is just how far our Heavenly Daddy has gone to make his presence available to us in Christ Jesus, and my prayer is that we see the lengths to which he was willing to go and that causes us to respond in humble adoration of just how much God loves us.

Exposition:

We're starting back in v. 18 and working through v. 22 today.

Remember that Jesus just flipped the tables to confront consumeristic compromise in corporate worship and consumeristic faith in those who would believe.

But today is the main point of this whole story.

John 2:18-22 — So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?”¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”²⁰ The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?”²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body.²² When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.¹

Like we talked about last week, the Jews wanted Jesus to do a sign to show them his level of authority, and Jesus doesn't give them a sign, because consumeristic faith is totally dependent upon receiving signs.

Instead, Jesus says what? ***“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”***

I want to show you how heavy this is, and to do that best, we've got to start at the beginning of the story of the Bible.

From the time of creation, before sin had entered...

We were made to be in God's presence

You know how refrigerated items have those labels on them, “Keep refrigerated”?

On the soul of every human being comes a similar label: “Keep in God's presence.”

Because of everything the presence of God brings.

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 2:18–22.

Psalm 16:11 — “In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Psalm 21:6 — “For you make him most blessed forever; you make him glad with the joy of your presence.”

Psalm 65:4 — “Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!”

I don't know about you, but it sounds like being in God's presence is the best place for us to be!

I mean, we try so hard to find the satisfaction our hearts crave in bankrupt earthly treasures when the bible is shouting to us, “Find what your heart craves here!!! It is in God's presence!”

[So in the garden](#) Adam and Eve had unhindered access to the presence of God, and it was amazing... it was what we were made for... but then everything was lost.

We exalted ourselves above God; we disbelieved God, and we bought the lie we could be sufficiently satisfied in ourselves and cheap knockoffs—we ate the fruit.

And in that moment, a massive fracture ripped through the fabric of creation.

Creatures that were made for one purpose were now subjected to another...

Humanity lost the presence of God; in other words, we lost our purpose, what we were made for.

Sin has a way of separating us from God's presence, because He is so good and we are so bad.

Isa. 59:2 — "...your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."²

So, if you're wondering why the peace and joy that come from experiencing the presence of God in your life are illusive, it is most likely because you have habitual or even unknown sin in your life.

And yet, to be separated from God's presence isn't what we were made for, and God is always about restoring His creation back to His intended purposes.

And so, fast forward into the story, we finally see God redeem His people out of slavery, lead them out into the wilderness and establishes a way for God's people to dwell safely in his presence, despite their sinfulness.

It's called the Tabernacle, or Tent of Meeting, a portable place where two things were made available for God's people...

- 1) **Atonement for Sin**
- 2) **Access to God**

In Exodus 25:8, God commands Israel to make this "sanctuary," so that he "can dwell in" our midst, so that he can be among His people, and yet, access to God was limited.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Is 59:2.

In the tent of meeting, God's presence was veiled behind a curtain; man could only go so far.

But the tent of meeting wasn't God's final dwelling place; the people were still wandering, and God's presence is to be a secure dwelling.

Fast forward a little bit more, God leads Israel into the Promised Land, secures the borders and a few hundred years later, a secure, centrally located temple is erected in Jerusalem for the same two purposes: atonement and access; this time, its a fixed dwelling place.

After the temple is built, King Solomon dedicates the temple to the Lord in prayer, and then this happens:

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 — "As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. ² And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. ³ When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, 'For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.'"³

And again, this temple has a massive curtain that veiled God's full presence; it was only limited access again.

But do you see Israel's reaction to this? Just how in awe of the fact God dwells with them they are?

Can you see just how valuable the temple would be for the half-committed Jew?

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 2 Ch 7:1-3.

Fast forward to Jesus' day, even though God's presence had left the temple, and the temple itself was destroyed and then rebuilt by Herod, it was still central to all of the Jewish understanding of who God is and how they can be with Him.

And Jesus, in response to the leaders asking for a sign, invites them to destroy the temple, and he'll put it back up in three days.

"Come again? You said what?" "Destroy this temple, and I'll raise it back in three days."

I wish the Jews had been like, "Challenge accepted!" and just bulldozed the whole temple to the ground.

But, of course, they valued the physical temple so much that they wouldn't dare do that.

Instead, they say how impossible it would be for Jesus to do that, if he were just a man.

v. 20 — "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"

Of course all they could think of was the material, the physical; they didn't have eyes to see or ears to hear that Jesus was saying something else entirely.

John adds this commentary...

v. 21 — But [Jesus] was speaking about the temple of his body.

Jesus, is totally doing away with the Old Temple and establishing a New Temple.

In other words, in Jesus' body, meaning his life, death, and resurrection, would now be God's established covenant for finding both atonement for sin and access to God.

Here's the main point of this story:

Jesus is the New Temple

Out with the old wine, in with the better wine.
Out with the old temple, in with the new temple.

In Jesus, God's full presence dwells, which is what we saw in John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," or "He set up tent and lived among us."

Col. 2:9 says that in Jesus the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

Which is what makes Ephesians 2:18 so true:

Ephesians 2:18 — "For through [Jesus] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."⁴

So, when Jesus says this, he is not only stating that God's presence dwells fully in Him and can be accessed through Him, but also that he would provide atonement for sin with His body...

Meaning, already, Jesus is hinting that his own destruction would bring about a new order.

Jesus is inviting them to destroy him by death for sin.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eph 2:18.

And then he says, "I'll raise it back up in three days." Which refers to what?

His resurrection.

v. 22 — "When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken."

Jesus is saying, "I am the new temple. When I raise my body from the dead, everywhere in all the world, people may come to God through me. There will be no pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There will be no hajj to Mecca." There will be no Path to Enlightenment, no cycle of Karma to reach Nirvana. "There will only be the movement of the heart to Christ through faith in Him as the New Temple of God."⁵

Jesus is flipping more than just tables here!

Jesus is turning the whole established order of things upside down, breaking up the system, tearing down the walls of the Old Mosaic Covenant.

Out with the old, in with the new.

Application/Challenge:

But the story doesn't stop here, does it.

⁵ Paraphrased from John Piper, "Destroy This Temple, and in Three Days I will Raise It Up" (sermon, Desiring God, December 21, 2008, preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church), available online at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/destroy-this-temple-and-in-three-days-i-will-raise-it-up> [accessed online August 9, 2019]

- Jesus dies on the cross to provide atonement for our sin and guilt that hindered our access to God's presence...
- the temple veil is torn in two from top to bottom, showing that Jesus' death was enough to remove the hinderance...⁶
- Three days later, Jesus rises from the dead because no one takes his life from him, He chose to lay it down and pick it up as he wishes, and because he is risen, the new temple, the new way of relating to God, rises too...⁷
- And then he ascends into heaven...⁸

Wait... he's gone from earth? If he's the New Temple, wouldn't him leaving then mean our access to God on earth is gone?

Nope... because he's got something even better planned.

Instead of requiring the people of God to come to Jesus to get access to God, God sends his presence out to all of his people through who? The Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:2-3 — " And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit..."⁹

Just as God's presence entered the tent of meeting, just as he entered the temple, God's presence rushes in and literally takes up permanent residence in all who believe that Jesus is the New Temple!

⁶ Matthew 27:51

⁷ John 10:18

⁸ Acts 1:9

⁹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ac 2:2-4.

1 Corinthians 3:16 — “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”¹⁰

Now, this was the passage of scripture that was always quoted as to why I shouldn’t get a tattoo: “Your body is a temple, don’t defile it!”

Then how about you quit smoking and downing three tubs of ice cream every week?

This verse means much more than that!

Jesus is the New Temple, We are the Now Temple.

You and I are how God currently dwells with humanity on earth; he sets up his dwelling in us through faith in Him.¹¹

So do you see what this means? Jesus made a way for all of us to have full access to the presence of God, wherever we are!!!

I mean, can you see just how far God has gone to provide a way for us to access his presence?!

Jesus has taken away all our guilt in his atoning death, and then we get full, unlimited access to God’s presence at all times in all places.

All of God’s works ends with the Lord dwelling with man!

God must really want us to enjoy Him in His presence!

¹⁰ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 3:16.

¹¹ Ephesians 3:17

So why are we so good at ignoring his presence? Why do we so easily become coldly ignorant to this amazing provision, and as a result live powerless Christian lives?

For too many of you, this time, right here, is the only time you take time to be aware of and experience God's presence.

You want to know how you can tell someone's not spending time in God's presence? They start to stink.

What happens when you take refrigerated food out of the fridge and let it sit for a few hours? It turns lukewarm.

What happens after a few days? It turns sour and smells bad and tastes bad.

What about a few weeks? It starts growing nasty stuff that makes you want to throw up.

That's what happens to us when we don't routinely stay and rest in God's presence.

Other's of you want soo badly to be more in tune with God's presence and experiencing Him, but you aren't willing to die to yourself and be raised anew, just as Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and I'll rebuild it."

Instead you're holding onto secret sin and loving idols more than him.

Gal. 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ... I no longer live, it is Christ who lives in me."

That means we must die to ourselves.

I beg that we would have the earnestness of Moses when he said to God in Exodus 33: "I don't want to go if your presence doesn't go with us!"¹²

I beg that our church would be filled with "Joshuas" who was so aware of and in awe of God's presence that he wouldn't even leave the tent of meeting.¹³

I beg that we would be a church like those in the book of Acts who lived in the power of God because they were aware of the presence of God among them.

Conclusion (Cast Vision):

You know how they got to that level of love for and enjoyment of God's presence?

It isn't because they qualified for some seal-team six of elite Christians that God only sends on super missions.

It was because of this simple truth, that I'm going to challenge you with today:

Be aware of God's presence.

Acknowledge that God dwells in you; let that be the way you start of your devotional time, "God, you're here with me..."

Let that thought start your drive on your way to work or when your in the conversation with that friend who doesn't know Jesus.

¹² Exodus 33:15

¹³ Exodus 33:11

Brother Lawrence — “We need only to recognize God intimately present with us, and to address ourselves to Him every moment, that we may beg His assistance for getting to know His will in doubtful things, and for rightly performing those which we plainly see He requires of us; offering them to Him before we do them, and giving to Him thanks when we have done.”¹⁴

Because this is the first step in living a transformed life; [be aware of God's presence](#).

That is all I'm challenging you with this week.

Communion:

As part of being aware of God's presence available to us in Christ, we're going to be taking communion together today.

[Communion is an](#) ordinance established by Jesus Christ as a way to perpetually affirm the new covenant that He purchased for us with His body and blood symbolized by the bread and drink.

There is nothing mysterious about the bread and drink that we are about to partake; they do not transform into the literal body and blood of Christ.

Taking communion is the affirmation that you have placed all your trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, in his sinless life, in his atoning death and physical resurrection, that He is the New Temple.

1 Corinthians 11 offers a caution to those of you who do not agree with this... he cautions you not come to this table; for in doing so, you drink judgment upon yourself.

And yet Jesus is knocking at the door, ready to raise you up through faith.

¹⁴ Elliot Ritzema, [300 Quotations for Preachers from the Reformation](#), Pastorum Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013).

We would love for you to join us in the Son and at this table if you'd receive Jesus today.

[Finish instructions]