

The Spiritual House of God
Message #4 in the Series: Ready – A Study through 1 Peter

I'm so grateful to be able to open God's Word with you this morning. Before we get into the text, let me first say how thankful I am that we get to partner together through the West Metro Baptist Association. You are a blessing to me and to all of the churches in our association, as we work together to reach this region with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let me also say to Pastor Jody how grateful I am that you've invited me to proclaim the Word of God to this church family. Your pastor is a blessing to me and so many others, and I'm grateful to get to call him my friend and brother in the Lord, and in ministry.

What is the History of the Temple of God?

1. It began as the Tabernacle.

And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

Exodus 25:8-9, ESV

2. Solomon built the first Temple in Jerusalem.

"But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built?"

2 Chronicles 6:18, ESV

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 Chronicles 7:1, ESV

3. It was destroyed in 586 BC when Babylon captured the people of Judah.

4. It was rebuilt as a smaller building under Cyrus, king of Persia in 516 BC.

"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah."

Ezra 1:2, ESV

5. Ezekiel prophesied that God would send His Spirit into the hearts of man.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:26, NIV

6. Malachi prophesied that Jesus Himself would visit the Temple.

And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple...

Malachi 3:1, ESV

7. King Herod expanded the Temple just before the birth of Jesus.

8. The Romans destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

Matthew 24:1-2, ESV

9. The New Testament says we are the Temple of God.

...you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:5, ESV

Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

Revelation 3:12, NIV

In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:22, ESV

1 Peter 2:4-10, ESV

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”^[a]

⁸ and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy

We as the Church are:

1. The Dwelling Place of God

Peter begins this section by telling us in verses 4-5 that when “you come to [Jesus]...you are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” The word “house” is literally a place of dwelling, and when combined with “spiritual,” the clear indication is that we are being built together as The Temple of God, the place where God puts His Spirit in the midst of His people, the place where He is worshiped. Peter is not talking about the physical church buildings, but instead the people who are being built together as God’s Temple.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,^[a] but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by^[a] the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22, ESV

What I find interesting is that we find in the temple building instruction for the way in which we are to be the Temple. You see, there is a correlation between the physical structure of the Temple of God in Jerusalem and us as Christians becoming God’s temple.

What is Always True of God’s Temple?

1. It is the place where God’s Spirit dwells on earth.
2. It is the where God’s work is done.
3. Sinful people must repent and receive atonement to enter.

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 9:22, ESV

4. We must have a High Priest to represent us before God.

Hebrews 8-10 reveals that Jesus is our High Priest, our perfect Priest, who is our mediator before God.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...

Hebrews 10:19-22, ESV

5. It has a special place where God dwells. – the Holy of Holies – We are now that holy place:

And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”

Ezekiel 37:14, ESV

2. Built upon the foundation of faith in Jesus.

a. Faith in Jesus will be honored by God.

b. Rejection of Jesus – displayed in disobedience – leads to stumbling.

Stumble – to fall because you trip over something.

Rock of offense – ledge off of which one falls into a trap – sin.

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Matthew 7:24-27, ESV

3. Called to be like Jesus.

Jesus is our example as a living stone, and we are called to be “like living stones” – we are called to be like Jesus.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2, ESV

Listen to what Peter says it means for us to be like Jesus. These are the things that Scripture says are true of us who follow Jesus, as we are called to be like him.

a. Chosen family

Literally means “Family picked out by God.”

In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:4-6, ESV

b. Royal Priests

The kingly people who are tasked with serving in the temple, offering sacrifices pleasing to God.

c. Set Apart from the world

Set apart multitude

d. Belonging to God

e. Light-dwellers

4. Recipients of God's Mercy

Peter finishes this portion of chapter 2 with this contrasting statement: Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. What sets us apart is the fact that regardless of what we have done or who we are, God chose to shower His mercy upon us. There was a time when we were not the people of God, but now, set apart by His mercy, we are the people of God. No matter where we came from in human descriptions, the Bible tells us here that we are now recipients of God's mercy, not because of who we are or where we are from, but because of Jesus.

Throughout the descriptions of God's people in verses 9-10, we find words like nation, people, generation, race. These are words that are common biblically, as they refer to particular ethnic groups, like Jews and Gentiles. Remembering that we are called to make disciples of all nations, Peter is here stating what is now true about God's people. We may come from different backgrounds, from different tribes and nations, from different races. But now as God's people, we are united under the heading "God's people" and what unites us is the mercy of God.

I recently heard Tony Evans say that too often we put the title Christian in the wrong slot in our lives. He said that we often use Christian as a noun, and we characterize our Christianity with other adjectives. So we say things like, I'm a White Christian, or I'm a Black Christian, or I'm an American Christian. He said this is not biblical, however. We've got Christian in the wrong place. If I'm a white Christian, then my physical race is helping define my relationship with God. We will never have unity if we each define our Christian faith by human standards and conditions. However, if we move the word Christian to the adjective place, then we get it right. I'm not a white Christian, I'm a Christian white man. My experience as a white man is categorically changed when that is characterized by being a follower of Jesus. I'm not an American Christian. I'm a Christian American. Following Christ impacts my existence as an American, not the other way around. I'm merely passing through here; my home is with Jesus.

We need to recognize that what unites the followers of Christ is not the things of this world, but rather the fact that we've been brought out of darkness and into His marvelous light, receiving mercy when previously we had not received mercy.

And then we need to recognize that if human things cannot unite us, that only Jesus can unite us, then we need to stop letting those same human things divide us, and instead trust in Jesus to draw us closer together as He is drawing us to Himself.

5. Proclaimers of God's Greatness

Why did we receive mercy? Was it just for us? Are we so precious that God just had to redeem us? NO!! We are worthless sinners who had rejected God. And yet God still showed us mercy, that we may "proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light." We are saved that we might tell others. We are

saves to show off the excellency of the one who did not have to save us but did anyway. We declare His glory. Are you declaring His glory?

So how does Scripture tell us to share our faith?

How Do We Share Our Faith in Jesus?

1. In the Power of the Holy Spirit.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:8, ESV

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14, ESV

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

John 15:26-27, ESV

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

John 20:21-22, ESV

The Next 3 points come from this passage in 1 Peter 3:

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

1 Peter 3:15-16, ESV

2. Always ready to share Jesus.

We see in this passage that preparation is important. We need to know how to share our faith. Maybe that looks like taking an evangelism class, where we learn different methodologies, or watching videos on different ways to share. It may also include intentional Scripture memory of verses related to the gospel and how to tell others what the Bible says about salvation. Whatever preparation looks like in your life, be prepared, but don't stop there. Preparation means nothing if it doesn't lead to you sharing your faith.

3. Telling my personal story.

We have seen first-hand how God has been at work in our lives, and we have been given that testimony to witness to others what God has done for us.

4. With my lifestyle and actions.

Did you see how Peter tied our witness to our lifestyle and actions here? You may face ridicule or even persecution for your faith, but let your manner of living (NOT YOUR WORDS OR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS) put to shame those who would revile the name of Jesus.

The final two points come from this passage at the end of Matthew:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20, ESV

5. Making disciples, not converts

We are not in the business of adding converts so that we can just dunk them and have their name on a role. We are about the work of making disciples, fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. And that work is given to every believer.

a. Go and tell

I think what Jesus was really saying is, you are going to be going and doing in your life. As you go and do, share the gospel. Sometimes that will be in your hometown, at your job, in your normal life activities. Sometimes the call to go will be a special call to go and take the gospel to another state or country, but either way, in your going, multiply your life by making disciples of me. He says we are to go to "all nations." Think about how Jesus made disciples:

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Mathew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

Matthew 9:9-10, ESV

In His going, Jesus called people to follow Him and believe.

b. Bringing new converts into the church (Baptism)

c. Teaching them what Jesus said.

6. To every nation

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8, ESV

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Revelation 7:9-10, ESV

Going to every nation does not mean that every person is called to be a missionary to the nations, but it may mean that God is calling you to that task. It does mean that we are called to pray for the lost, including unreached people groups as we do weekly here.



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It may also mean using the resources that God has give to send others to go to the nations. Or it may mean sharing the gospel with the immigrant who now lives in your neighborhood. But the end goal is that people from every ethnic background here and believe in Jesus for the salvation from their sins.