

☞ **Be the Church.** What exactly is the Church?

☞ **Ekklesia = the called out ones; a meeting or assembly.** As followers of Christ, we are the church, the called-out ones who assemble together at least every week.

☞ **"I am part of the Church, which is God's primary means of accomplishing His purposes on Earth."**

☞ **Images of the Church: Body, Temple, Family, Bride, Army**

Last week Pastor Jacob talked about the Body of Christ under his headship. We are his visible representatives in this world. We submit freely to his leadership. When we stay connected to him we live life to the fullest. We are the Body of Christ and he is the head.

☞ **God's Temple**

**Ephesians 2:19-22**

In the Old Testament, the temple was the place where the priests gave offerings and sacrifices. It's where they met with God and God displayed his glory. In 2 Chronicles 5 through 7, we see the completion of Solomon's temple. It was quite the celebration when it was finished and then dedicated to the Lord. There was a lot of pomp and circumstance and music and sacrifices. God filled the temple with a cloud and then fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices. The glory of the Lord was on display. We can make some immediate correlations here...

☞ **You are the temple of God**

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you...

When you came to Christ and dedicated your life to him, there was quite the celebration in heaven. God himself took up residence in your heart and his glory now shines through you. He wants the fire of the Holy Spirit in you as well. In Acts 2, the disciples were all together in one place praying and the Holy Spirit came upon them with what looked like flames and they were all filled with the Spirit. Just as God filled his temple in the Old

☞ Testament, **he wants to fill you today.**

Just as the physical temple was very costly to build, God paid a tremendous price to get you. He sacrificed his very own son so that he could have you. As his temple, you do not have final authority in your own life. You have given that to the Lord and he is the owner

now. Since we are not brick and mortar, but have free will, **we must constantly choose to surrender to his leadership** in our lives.

This includes honoring God with our bodies. The way we live; the things we do and say all reflect on him. Do your words and actions bring glory to God or do they take away? He lives in you. Are you making yourself a welcoming place for the Lord or is he being limited or even hurt in his own home? As individuals we each are temples of the Lord.

This makes you someone very special. Do you realize who you really are in Christ?

*--James S. Hewett... The governor had been very busy and one day he arrived late at a barbecue. He'd had no breakfast or lunch, and he was famished. As he moved down the serving line, he held out his plate and received one piece of chicken. The governor said to the serving lady, "Excuse me, do you mind if I get another piece of chicken. I'm very hungry." The woman replied, "Sorry, I'm supposed to give one piece to each person." He repeated, "But I'm starved," and again she said, "Only one to a customer." The governor was normally a modest man, but he decided this was the time to use the weight of his office and said, "Madam, do you know who I am? I am the governor of this state." She answered, "Do you know who I am? I'm the lady in charge of chicken. Move along, mister." This is a woman who knew her position and wasn't about to be intimidated.*

☞ You're not just an American; you're not just an Iowan or a Boonie; **you're a child of God**. You are God's temple.

☞ **We are citizens of heaven**

Philippians 3:20-21

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Peter 2:10-12

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God... as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul...

☞ Here again, we see that **we belong to God**. We are not our own. He has ownership rights over us. But the main thing I want to convey here is our heavenly citizenship. We are only temporary residents here in this world. And that mindset helps us in our daily living.

☞ **Colossians 3:1-2**

... **Set your minds on things above**, not on earthly things.

2 Corinthians 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

When the pressures of life become overwhelming we can remind ourselves that it is only ☞ temporary. But **we belong to a kingdom that lasts forever.**

*This world is not my home I'm just a passing through  
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue  
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door  
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore*

We are citizens of heaven.

☞ **We are God's house**

1 Corinthians 3:16

Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

1 Peter 2:5

you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple.

Hebrews 3:6

Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Here again, we see that as his temple or house, God lives in us. Further, God is building ☞ us into his "dream home." **He is joining us together** like a bricklayer. Loose bricks are no good for a strong house; they need to be cemented together. **This speaks of unity for us.** God is working to bind us together. Let's not work against him by allowing division. Don't forget that it was when the disciples were all together (unity), praying and seeking God that a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit came.

☞ **He is building on the foundation of Jesus Christ.** This spiritual house is not built on TV personalities; it's not built on Pastor Phil; it's not built on great music or special productions; it's built on Jesus Christ.

--A. W. Tozer... *A church that is soundly rooted cannot be destroyed, but nothing can save a church whose root is dried up. No stimulation, no advertising campaigns, no gifts of money and no beautiful edifice can bring back life to the rootless tree.*

*My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name; On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand*

*The rains came down and the floods came up...*

Here's another implication... since we belong to God and he is building us into a spiritual ☞ temple or house... that makes us **sacred**. We treat sacred things with great care.

Francis Chan said something like this... *Can you imagine at the dedication of Solomon's temple someone coming along and taking a sledge hammer to the building? That would be sacrilege! God is working hard to build us together into his holy temple. He is trying to raise up a beautiful home for his presence. Let's not tear down what God is building.*

--James S. Hewett... *During Vacation Bible School last week my wife had an experience with her primary class that she says she will never forget. Her class was interrupted on Wednesday about an hour before dismissal when a new student was brought in. The little boy had one arm missing, and since the class was almost over, she had no opportunity to learn any of the details about the cause or his state of adjustment. She was very nervous and afraid that one of the other children would comment on his handicap and embarrass him. There was no opportunity to caution them, so she proceeded as carefully as possible. As the class time came to a close, she began to relax. She asked the class to join her in their usual closing ceremony. "Let's make our churches," she said. "Here's the church and here's the steeple, open the doors and there's..." The awful truth of her own actions struck her. The very thing she had feared that the children would do, she had done. As she stood there speechless, the little girl sitting next to the boy reached over with her left hand and placed it up to his right hand and said, "Davey, let's make the church together." This story reminds us to put our inadequate, handicapped lives alongside the lives of others and to pray, "Let's make the church together."*

The scripture talks about the spiritual house of believers rising up and being built together to become a home for God. This speaks of continual spiritual growth as a follower of ☞ Christ. Don't be satisfied with just getting into heaven. **Keep on growing**. Spiritual growth happens best in community. We are built together! We are supposed to grow up in our faith and be holy.

When Peter wrote about this spiritual house, he said that we have been chosen by God; we're precious to him; we are holy priests unto God, making spiritual sacrifices.

*Think of this: we, sinners, not only individually, but corporately, are the temple of the living God. God lives among us—us of all people. In the Old Testament, the priesthood came from just the tribe of Levi. Now all believers are so honored by God. We are not only the temple in which sacrifices are offered but we are the ones offering them. What kind of sacrifices? Our sacrifices are our bodies (Rom. 12), our broken and contrite spirits (Ps. 51), and our praise (Heb. 13).*

☞ We are God's temple. We are God's house. **We always welcome him home!** When we gather together it's not just a bunch of people in a room; God is here with us!

The temple has always been a place of worship and a place to meet with God. We are now that temple. The temple can be considered as a structure...

☞ **Built by God.** *Jesus is the cornerstone; we are living stones*

**Bonded together.** *There is only one temple; the stones are cemented together in unity.*

**Beautiful to God.** *It's made of precious stone; "there's no place like home."*

**Belonging to God.** *We were bought at a price; he is the owner of his home.*

**Beloved by God.** *He lives within us. He looks forward to meeting with us.*

The temple can also be considered by its functions...

☞ **Welcoming God.** *We watch and wait for God. Motel 6 advertised with Tom Bodett's tagline, "We'll leave the light on for you."*

**Worshipping God.** *We declare his praises. We sacrifice our lives for him.*

**Working for God.** *It's about his will, not ours. We live godly lives.*

**Walking with God.** *The tabernacle and the Israelites were led by God in the pillar of fire and cloud; so also, we are led by God's presence with us.*

Remember who you are!

☞ **You are the temple of God; We are citizens of heaven; We are God's house**

*Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary  
Pure and holy, tried and true  
And with thanksgiving I'll be a living  
Sanctuary for you*