

☛ **What is the Church?**

The Temple of God

☛ Church = ekklesia... **people called forth with a purpose**

☛ Here's our creed regarding the Church: ***"I am part of the Church, which is God's primary means of accomplishing His purposes on Earth."***

--Arthur H. DeKruyter... *"Where is the church at 11:25 on Monday morning?" The church then is in the dentist's office, in the automobile sales room and repair shop, and out in the truck. It is in the hospital, in the classroom, and in the home. It is in the offices, insurance, law, real estate, whatever it is. That is where the church is, wherever God's people are. They are doing what they ought to be doing. They are honoring God, not just while they worship in a building but out there.*

☛ **Ephesians 2:19-22** (v. 21-22) The Church as a Temple

☛ **Solomon's temple** was 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet tall. It took tens of thousands of workers seven years to build it. David, Solomon's father, accumulated all the resources needed to build the temple. A good portion of the interior of this structure was overlaid with gold. In addition to that most of the articles used within the temple were made of gold or silver. Today, a coin the size of a quarter, made of pure gold is worth over six hundred dollars. So, to build the temple in today's dollars, there was around \$124 billion in gold used, plus about \$2 billion in silver, not to mention so much iron and bronze that it couldn't be weighed; and then there was stone and wood to boot. The total cost in today's dollars is estimated to be nearly **\$140 billion dollars**. And that's just the materials! So, when Paul compares the church to the temple, it's very big deal. **You are I as the church, are extremely valuable to God.**

☛ v. 20 **Jesus is cornerstone**

Matthew 16:18

...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

1 Corinthians 3:9-11

you are... God's building... each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

☛ v. 21-22 becoming his temple; **God lives in us by his Spirit**

Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:17

God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

Cf. 2 Corinthians 6:16

We are the temple of the living God

1. 🇺🇸 We are the People of God

No longer foreigners; no longer aliens
Fellow citizens; members of God's household

🇺🇸 **If you are a believer, a follower of Christ, you belong; you are one of God's people.**

🇺🇸 **John 1:12**

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

That makes you somebody important...

--James S. Hewett... Christian Herter was running hard for reelection as governor of Massachusetts, 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." Herter 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. Do we as Christians recognize the significant position in which we stand because of Christ? We are God's people.

2 Corinthians 6:16

we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

🇺🇸 You're not just an American; you're not just an Iowan or a Boonie; **you're a child of God. He is our God; we are his people!**

2. 🇺🇸 We need to be Prepared

In the OT, God's people had a temple in which God would appear to the priests...

1 Chronicles 22 tells about David making extensive preparations for the temple. He had accumulated building materials to the tune of \$140 billion so that Solomon could build it. That was a lot of preparation.

Built on the foundation

☞ We don't prepare by just trying harder; **we prepare by making sure we are on the right foundation, which is Jesus Christ.**

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...

Joined together (unity)

☞ Unity is important in God's kingdom; it prepares us to stand against the enemy. **Unity also prepares us for more of God's presence.** It was when the disciples were all together (unity), praying and seeking God that a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit came.

Mark 3:25

If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

--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 may be seen as a parable of our search for oneness in Christ: to put our inadequate, handicapped lives alongside the lives of others and to pray, "Let's make the church together."

Rises; built together; to become a Holy temple

This speaks of continual spiritual growth as a follower of Christ. Don't be satisfied with ☞ just getting into heaven. **We prepare by continually growing.** Spiritual growth happens best in community. We are built together! We are supposed to grow up in our faith and be holy.

--Erwin W. Lutzer... *Although we become Christians instantaneously by faith in Christ, knowing God and developing faith is a gradual process. There are no shortcuts to maturity. It takes time to be holy.*

1 Corinthians 3:17

God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

☞ **We prepare by being Holy** or sacred = **pure**, morally blameless, **set apart**

--Oswald Chambers... *The destined end of man is not happiness, nor health, but holiness. God's one aim is the production of saints. He is not an eternal blessing machine for men; he did not come to save men out of pity; he came to save men because he had created them to be holy.*

Holiness means something more than the sweeping away of the old leaves of sin; it means the life of Jesus developed in us.

2 Corinthians 6:17

"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

☞ ***If you want to smell like a rose, stay out of the barnyard.***

The more we're attracted by Christ, the less we'll be attracted by the world.

We're the people of God; we need to be prepared; and...

3. ☞ **We welcome his Presence**

2 Chronicles 5 describes the situation when Solomon completed the building project of the temple and the priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant. The priests had prepared by consecrating themselves and were wearing fine linen (this represents righteousness). There were musicians all around with cymbals, harps, and lyres, and they were accompanied by 120 trumpets. Then the scripture says, *"The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God."*

The priests and Levites... that's the People of God.

Consecrated themselves... they Prepared.

☞ And they welcomed his Presence **with praise and music.**

Notice how important music was in this... we don't sing and play music just because Pastor Phil likes music... we do because it's the biblical pattern... and God inhabits the praises of his people... we want God's presence!

☞ **When God's People are Prepared, his Presence is Powerful!**

To become a dwelling in which God lives (this is the whole idea and purpose of a temple)

2 Corinthians 6:16

we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

When you're home alone, you're not really alone.

When we gather together it's not just a bunch of people in a room; God is here with us!

☞ **Matthew 18:20**

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.

☞ Next Sunday, **come prepared to meet with God.** You don't have to wait for a song or two to get you ready. You can be ready before you even arrive. The people in Solomon's day had done extensive preparation, and as a result they experienced God in a very powerful way. His presence was overwhelming. So, let's get prepared each week in advance so that we are ready to welcome his presence!

☞ **The Church is... we are... the Temple of God.**

We are his People; We are Prepared; We welcome his Presence

The power of your presence.

Holy Spirit.