

The Realization of the Tabernacle in the New Testament 2

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Brothers and sisters let us read a few scriptures.

Gospel of John 2: 16 *and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business".*

2: 19 *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up".*

2: 21 *But He was speaking of the temple of His body.*

In these few verses, the Lord Jesus made a declaration; 'destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up'. What He really meant was that He was referring to verse 21 where He said His body is the temple. 'Destroy this temple and in three days My body will replace it'.

Gospel of John 4: 21 -22 *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews'.*

This was what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, 'believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father'. So in these few verses, the Lord Jesus was telling this Samaritan woman that to worship God would not be in the mountain or the temple in Jerusalem. True worshippers worship in spirit and in truth.

1 Corinthians 3: 16 *'Do you know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you'?*

Here Paul was saying you are the temple of God and the spirit of God dwells in you.

2 Corinthians 6: 16 *'Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'.* Here Paul said something similar to verse 16. Again he mentioned that you are the temple of the living God. Paul also went on to say 'I will dwell in them, I will walk among them, I

will be their God and you shall be My people'. Here again we see that the temple of God is you. And then Paul said that God said I will dwell among you, I will walk among you, I will be their God and you shall be my people'.

Ephesians 2: 20 – 22. These verses talk about similar things. *'having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit'*.

All the three different passages in the different books talk about two things that are related. Essentially first thing is that you are the temple of God. The second thing is that you are the dwelling place of God. Ephesians 1: 22 – 23 *'And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.'* Here apostle Paul told us what is in the church; what the content in the church is. It is the fullness of Him who fills all and in all. Now the same thing is also said in Colossians 3:11b *'but Christ is all, and in all'*. Basically it said the content of the church is Jesus Christ Himself; the fullness of Him who fills all and in all. Colossians actually said the one that is in everyone, in all and in everyone. The important thing, brothers and sisters is that when we look at ourselves, Christ is supposed to be in each one of us.

And lastly I will read a few verses about something else.

1 Corinthians 15: 47 – 48 *'The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.'* Here apostle Paul tells us that there is one that is heavenly and he said those that are heavenly are like the one that is heavenly.

Chapter 5 in 2 Corinthians talks about creation. This series of scriptures talk about the heavenly man, the new creation and the new man. Those are very important things that have to do with Christ dwelling in us. About this new creation, 2 Corinthians chapter 5: 14 – 15 says *'For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf'*. Then verse 17

says *'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come'*. We will read two more verses that talk about the new man. Ephesians 2: 15 *'by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace'*, and then 4: 23, *'and that you be renewed in the spirit of the mind'*. I will like to underline in verse 23 the phrase *'renewed in the spirit of the mind.'*

Let us bow down and have a word of prayer. Lord, we come to You to give us grace in this hour. Lord, we really thank you that You so esteemed us that You want us to be the dwelling place of our heavenly Father. And Lord we say that these many years when we are Christians we really love You. We actually want to be your dwelling place and yet oftentimes we cannot. Lord may You appear to us, tell us what You want and also help us to understand how to be Your dwelling place so that You can find us to be a place for Yourself. Lord may Your Holy Spirit help us. In the name of the Lord Jesus we pray. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, as our brother said this morning, over the generation there were people whose hearts were towards the Lord. They knew that God has a heart to dwell among His people and He never gave up. Over the years, His own people failed to follow Him. They found it difficult and went astray. But the Lord God, Jehovah never gave up. He wants this among His people. He loves them so much that He wants to dwell among His people. And we thank the Lord that over the years, there were people who loved Him. Our brother mentioned this morning about David. And there are many more. We thank the Lord His Son came to earth. When He came and we became His people, this tabernacle which is God's tabernacle dwelling among men became possible. It is all because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise today, we again have no place to go. We do not even know how to be the Lord's dwelling place. We have this tabernacle and then this temple. The Lord has the same idea for the temple as for the tabernacle. Now His thoughts about the tabernacle were explained in detail in Exodus and Leviticus. When you look at the examples in Numbers, there were no such details given about the temple. But the Lord Jehovah

wants exactly the same thing. He wants to be able to dwell among His people. He wants to be able to talk to them. He wants to walk among them. He wants to be their God and He wants them to be His people. And He wants spiritual reality. He does not have interest in the outward things. When we come to the time of Jesus, outwardly the Jewish religion was in Jerusalem. But the temple in Jerusalem was totally far away from the heart of God. Jesus came and publicly started His ministry. When He came to Jerusalem and went to the temple, He saw these sellers of ox, sheep and doves and the money changers, and He cast them out. He said 'you have made my Father's house a thief's den'. And actually here it said a den of merchandise. Dear brothers and sisters, the sellers of these animals and the money changers were just a sign of the deterioration of the Jewish religion.

We see how the Jewish religion considered our Lord Jesus as the number one enemy when He came to Jerusalem. So the Lord Jesus said 'tear down this temple and in three days I will raise it up'. And His disciples later remembered after the Lord was resurrected that He meant His body. So what does this mean? It means the Lord saw the deterioration of the relationship of Israel, His own people, with God. The temple in Jerusalem could no longer represent God's tabernacle. And the Lord Jesus did not give it any hope. He said, 'three days I will raise it up. My Father's house will be raised up in its place in three days'. We all know that after He was crucified He was raised up after three days. And His disciples then said, 'He was referring to His body'. So the temple in Jerusalem no longer represented the temple of God. It no longer represented God's dwelling place, and it no longer represented what Jesus said 'My Father's house'. And then Jesus said My body would replace it.

Brothers and sisters what is His body? It was made very plain a few years later that the body is His church. That incidence was not an accident. A few days later, He saw this Samaritan woman. He told this Samaritan woman that worshipping God would no longer be on this mountain and no longer be in Jerusalem but it would be in the spirit and the truth of the worshippers. Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus directed the dwelling place to our hearts. No longer would it be in the physical temple in Jerusalem but it will be in the spirit and in the truth in the people who are true worshippers. Now twenty some years later, apostle Paul who has served the Lord for so many years, and who wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians and

later Ephesians, again said the temple was not the temple in Jerusalem. This is in some of the verses we read at the beginning of the sharing. He said God's temple is you; God's temple is us and then he said God's dwelling place is us too.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the true aspect of one thing; the temple of God and His dwelling place. The temple of God, if we read 1 and 2 Corinthians and Ephesians, emphasizes the spiritual building up. And this is what you will find if you read the context of these verses. God's dwelling place talks about whether God can find rest among people and whether the Spirit can find rest among people; and that His people will not grieve the Holy Spirit. And dear brothers and sisters, this is what Paul is telling us in these books. God wants to dwell among us. And God's church is God's temple. This was essentially a big change that our Lord Jesus brought about when He came.

We will take a look at how He came to prepare the building up of this body. About one year before He was crucified, it recorded in Matthew 16 that He said, 'on this rock I will build My church'. That was the first time He mentioned church. The important thing is that He will build the church and the church is His and no one else. The church does not belong to a group of people. It does not belong to any single person. It belongs to Him. The night before He was crucified, in John chapters 13 – 16, He told His disciples something about preparing His body. Now all these things we are familiar with. He washed their feet so that they could love each other as He loved them. He set up bread and cup so that they would always remember Him. He also promised them the Holy Spirit and told them the Holy Spirit would never leave them; that the Holy Spirit would not leave any single one of them. And the Holy Spirit would lead them on in everything. He also told them He was the vine and they were the branches. It was always connected. He would always be their sources. Brothers and sisters these four things are the things that the Lord considered as the most important things that He would leave for His disciples. Brothers and sisters, think about this; today even for us these are so important to us. How can we not love each other and how can we forget our Lord? How can we neglect the Holy Spirit and how can we get ourselves to detach from the vine?

That night in chapter 16 of John, He also said 'you will grieve now and the world is happy. But you will be joyful because a man is to be born'. Actually it was not a child but a man and then the Lord did not elaborate on that. But dear brothers and sisters, the Gospel of John talks about the man in a very specific way. When Pilate brought out Lord Jesus, He said 'behold the man'. When the Samaritan told the people in her village, she said 'there is a man who has told everything that I did'. So in the Gospel of John, the man is very specific. It is our Lord Jesus. So Jesus said a man was going to be born then. And then very quickly we come to the Book of Acts, and we see that this man started to walk. Or the body of Christ started to walk. He was born on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came down, and baptized one hundred and twenty into a body and then the Holy Spirit led them from that day on. Now these brothers and sisters gathered together. They grew in number. They continued in the teaching of the apostles and the breaking of bread and prayers. And they said they were witnesses of these things and the Holy Spirit also witnessed these things. So they brought the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria and to the end of the world. This was the first thirty years after the Lord was crucified and raised up.

Brothers and sisters when we look at the nature of this body, what does it contain? The two verses in the book of Ephesians that we read in the beginning, in fact we have actually read those verses many times, say the Lord Jesus is the head and the church is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all and in all. This said two things. First of all, the body has a head. What does that mean? It means that the body has to identify with the will of the Christ, His purpose, His thinking, His feeling. The body actually has to rejoice in it. You cannot be unhappy about what the head is thinking. You cannot disagree with the head. We cannot disagree with Christ. We cannot be unhappy with His purpose. So there is this order, head and the body. The second thing is Christ has to fill all and in all. Brothers and sisters, to obey the head is something we cannot do. The body has to absolutely obey the head. There can be no conditions, no arguments, no complaints and no murmur.

But brothers and sisters, we have proved to ourselves that we are not able to obey absolutely. We are oftentimes not happy with what our Lord Jesus is thinking. Now we oftentimes feel this thing called the eternal purpose of God is far away and is not really related to me. But brothers and sisters, being His

body, we cannot feel this way. The body has to be obedient to the head. Now there is only one in the world in history who absolutely obeyed God. He absolutely rejoiced in the purpose of God. He absolutely identified with the purpose of God and that was the Lord Jesus. And that is why Christ has to fill us. If He does not fill us, we will not be able to be obedient to God. We will not be able to be pleased with God's purpose. So brothers and sisters, this is why in both Ephesians and Colossians so much emphasis is put in this matter - that Christ has to fill everyone.

Now brothers and sisters, this is not a total impossibility. Let us look at the seven churches in Asia in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. We are all quite familiar with those chapters. There is one church that the Lord Jesus is very happy and very pleased with and it is the church of Philadelphia. The Lord has been observing His church for thirty years, from A.D. 60 to 90 years. Now besides Smyrna which is a church in a different class, the Lord Jesus found Himself in the church of Philadelphia. If the Lord wants us to be Smyrna, the Lord really esteems us. I cannot elaborate on that. But brothers and sisters, this is an example that the Lord Jesus can find Himself. There is no hindrance between Him and them. That is why He said 'I give you an open door. The fellowship between you and me is totally open'. He also told them 'I am going to make the synagogue of satan to come and bow down to you'. Brothers and sisters, this is because they had the testimony. They had the testimony of Jesus. Now when other people see them, even when satan sees them, they see the Lord Jesus there. So dear brothers and sisters, here was a church, a small group of people and the Lord Jesus found that He could dwell there. He found that these people could represent Him. He could use them to tell satan, 'see these are the people who can represent me'. So brothers and sisters, when the bible tells us that we have to let the Lord Jesus fill us, it is possible because they did it. They have allowed the Lord to work on them. They have allowed the Holy Spirit to work in them. They identified themselves with the purpose of God. They kept God's word. They kept His name. They actually went through tribulations because of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. These are the people who are good encouragement to us.

Now the Lord gives me something in my heart to share with brothers and sisters. How can anyone of us be filled with Christ, yes, filled by Christ? He wants to fill us and oftentimes we are not willing. But how

can we let Him fill us? Paul, in his letters, mentioned being a heavenly man. Put it another way, what kind of man can be filled by Christ? Now according to Paul, this man has to be a heavenly man, this man has to be a new creation and this man has to be a new man. Brothers and sisters, with regards to this heavenly man, 1 Corinthians chapter 15 said there is one who is heavenly. The first man is of the dust, the second man is from heaven. Now as the one who is from heaven, so also are those who are heavenly. So brothers and sisters, it tells us we can be and we should be heavenly man just like that heavenly man. And then Paul just ended on this heavenly man in 1 Corinthians. But when he comes to Ephesians, he pours out his heart. God in Christ has given us every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places has been given to us by God. And he also said 'now we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places'. So brothers and sisters we really have to take this by faith. We should consider ourselves heavenly man. God's idea and God's word in the bible is meant for you and me to be heavenly.

Chapter 53 in the book of Isaiah shows us a heavenly man. First of all, He has a heavenly life. He was not born naturally. He was born of a virgin. And then His is not a regular light. He is a heavenly light. Now He comes in. He is a Son. God's government is on His shoulder. His name is wonderful, counselor, God almighty, father eternal and prince of peace. This is His light. And also He brings in the heavenly love. And who is this person, brothers and sisters? This is our Lord Jesus. Now the wonder is this. In the Gospel of John, it tells us that this heavenly life is given to you and to me. The life of Christ is now given to you and to me. Now the light of Christ is also given to you and to me. And also the love of Christ is given to you and to me. The Gospel of John tells us that the heavenly light is given to you and to me. Actually this is a big part of the Gospel of John. In chapter 1, it talks about the life of Christ given to you and to me. This life is heavenly life. And the heavenly light is also given to you and to me. John made a great point on this heavenly light. This light is not a physical light like the sun or moon. This light gets into our hearts. In chapter 9 of the Gospel of John, there is this blind man and the Lord Jesus opened his eyes. The whole chapter has forty some verses. But only the first six or seven verses are about his physical eye. The rest of the chapter is about His spiritual eye. The physical eye being opened

is a big deal. But the spiritual eye being opened is a bigger deal. The Pharisees were asking him, 'who opened your eyes?' 'This man called Jesus'. 'He must be a sinner because this is Sabbath'. If you did anything on Sabbath you are a sinner. He said. 'whether He is a sinner, I do not know. But I know one thing; I was blind, now I see'. He went on to tell them 'from the beginning of the earth, there was no such case that a man born blind could receive sight. This man, if God is not with Him, He can do nothing'. Brothers and sisters, the important thing is our spiritual eyes. The eyes in our heart have to be opened. In the Book of Ephesians, Paul had a prayer. Paul prayed that 'the eyes of our heart be enlightened so that we can see something, see the inheritance, see the calling, see the power'. And then He went on and saw that Christ is the head and we, the church are His body. This is the eternal purpose of God which is mentioned in chapter 1.

God opens our eyes, and the Lord Jesus came to open our eyes so that we can see the eternal purpose of God. Now at WCCC we have been talking about the eternal purpose of God for twenty-eight years. And if God's eternal purpose cannot be seen and understood by the people here, it will be too hard for anybody else. But the Lord has opened our eyes. We can have a heavenly sight; we can understand it. Brothers and sisters let us be honest. Oftentimes the reason we feel we do not grasp the eternal purpose of God is not because we cannot, but we will not. We feel this is something not important. I have more important things to do and I need tons of grace in order for me to see it. Brothers and sisters, the honest thing for us to do to be willing is that we are willing. We cannot blame the Lord and said Lord you have not opened my eyes. The Lord has opened our eyes; the Lord has already given us our heavenly sight. We have no reason to say we cannot see this.

Now when we see this eternal purpose of God, it starts to affect our lives. The fifth and sixth chapters of Ephesians talk about very practical things. It talks about the relationship between husband and wife, father and son, and worker and employer. Brothers and sisters, if we are willing to take this heavenly sight, if we are willing to let it be our sight, we will start to see the Lord in every relationship. We start to see the Lord in the relationship between me and my wife. Oftentimes husband and wife argue, but if we see that our marriage has to do with Christ and the church, I can promise you our marriage will be

different. This is exactly what Paul said. The wife submits to the husband and church submits to Christ. And the husband loves the wife as Christ loves the church and even gave His life for her. Brothers and sisters, oftentimes we will think that the next time when the big earthquake hits California, then I will die for my wife. I will protect her. But this is not what Paul is saying here. Paul is saying every day we have to lay down our life for our wives. It is just like Christ loves the church and gave His life for the church. And the wife should also be the same; I am much smarter than my husband, yet I will submit for Christ and the church. What a wonderful testimony it will be to our neighbor, to our children, to God and to ourselves. And for that testimony, I have to submit to my husband. Brothers and sisters, this is so true. You go to work. Even though the boss is a difficult man, yet the Lord is there. Paul said you serve your boss as serving God and not as serving man. So you do not cheat anymore; you do not complain about him anymore. You do not curse at him anymore. And you spend more time than you are required and you do a wonderful job as serving God and not serving man. Brothers and sisters, this is heavenly life. This is our testimony. This is heavenly.

The next thing I want to share is about this new creation. Now Sunday school children will know what a new creation is. Whoever is in Christ is a new creation. But brothers and sisters, it is more than that. If you read the few verses in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 leading into this, something causes a fundamental change in us. After this change then we are really a new creation. Now not only are we in Christ in name but we are also in Christ in reality. What is this change? This change starts from the love of Christ. The love of Christ constrains us. One died for all and we all died. So today we live, we no longer live to ourselves but we live to the one who has died and has risen for us. Brothers and sisters consider this, one died for all and all died. I became a Christian when I was young. I think it is wonderful the Lord died for the whole world, for the tens and thousands. However that did not touch me enough. One day I went to the conference, the Lord showed me, the Holy Spirit showed me that He died for me. And then it changed and the bible started to be an open book to me. I started not to argue with Him anymore. I started to appreciate Him a lot more. So brothers and sisters, one died for all and all died. Everybody died and I died also.

Die to what? The bible gives us very clear help on that. I died to sin. Sin no longer has power over me. Prior to that when sins come I have to capitulate; I have no resistance. But now I die. I died to sin. That is Romans chapter 6. I also died to the world. The world is very attractive. The world is also very smart. But one died for all and all died. So the world to me is nailed to the cross and I to the world am nailed to the cross. The world is not important to me anymore. And then I died to tradition; die to the work of the law. I must say in the past there are many traditions. We have been Christians for many years and we are very proud of that. And as a result we are a hard person. But one died for all and all died. I am not bound by tradition anymore. And most importantly I die to self. Self is very important to me. It is the last thing I give up. It is the first thing I try to protect. But I have been crucified with Christ. *'It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me'*. Today I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loves me and gave His life for me. So dear brothers and sisters, the bible helps us. We die to sin; die to the world; die to tradition and most importantly die to self. This is all because the love of Christ constrains us. When I see Him crucified for me and for you, these things that we are not able put down, now we can put down. Even though to die is a negative thing yet there is something positive here. The positive thing is that now I live to Him. Many bible translations said live for Him. In some translations it is live to Him. And I like the translation live to Him better.

What is live to Him means? I used to live to myself before. My direction was my direction. My position was my position. And that was what I lived to. But now it changed. It is His position that I live to. It is His direction that I am living to. It is His purpose that I am living to. It is His feeling that I care. So brothers and sisters, His purpose becomes my purpose; His feeling becomes my feeling. So thank the Lord. There is a hymn by Wesley. I kind of remember it a little bit. *'My chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth and followed Him'*. Brothers and sisters, this is a process. New creation is a process. Old things are dead and everything is new. We can follow Him. The heavenly sight allows us to know God. The sight of Christ allows us to know the eternal purpose of God. This new creation started with the love of Christ. It now allows us to follow Him; allows us to identify our direction with His direction; allows us to have His purpose as our purpose.

And the last thing I am going to talk about is this new man. There are two things about this new man. First, the spirit of the mind of the new man has to change. The Chinese translation said in our mind there is a will. It is something that drives our thought. It is a very good translation. The original language says the spirit of the mind. The mind is our thinking. The spirit of the mind is the gut of that thinking. It is the inner most thinking. It is our motive. When something comes to us, what is first the reaction in our thoughts? What is the last thing we give up? For my grandson, the first thing is mine. The last thing to give up is mine. The Lord is going to change us. Over time by His grace our first thinking is not me anymore. We start to think His thinking. Our motive has changed. It is no longer me; it is He; what He wants. And when we gather together, we always ask the question what is best for us. We need to start to ask what He wants. When we come to prayer meeting, we ask the Lord to solve our problems one, two, three, four and five. But we ought to start to ask the Lord, 'Lord what do you want' when we become the new man, and when our mind has been renewed. What do you want among us? Brothers and sisters, if you look at the church in Philadelphia, this is what they are. The spirit of the mind has to be renewed. Renewed according to what? It said according to Christ. Now this is explicit in Ephesians and also in Colossians. It says the new man is to have a new knowledge according to the image of Him who created us. The image of the invisible God is Christ. So dear brothers and sisters, our mind is changed according to God. Romans chapter 12, verse 1 said we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice. The second verse said that our mind has to be renewed and transformed. And then we can prove what the perfect and acceptable good will of God is. The Chinese translation said it is 'pleasing' which is very good. Many years I thought this 'pleasing' is 'pleasing' to God. But when you really read it; when our mind is changed, we find the will of God pleasing to us because the will of God of course is pleasing to Him. So if you read it carefully, you will find that the will of God is pleasing to us. The reason for that is because the spirit of the mind is changed. So brothers and sisters, in our new man, our mind is changed. Now we start to love the eternal purpose of God. We start to identify with the eternal purpose of God.

The second thing about the new man is that there is no division anymore. No division between circumcision and uncircumcision. The body of Christ is broken and now we become one. And in

Colossians 3 it said 'no distinction between Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free man'. Paul discovered at that time there were some divisions because of race, culture, and because some are poor and some are rich. And Paul said no more of that. Christ is all and in all. Brothers and sisters, sometimes we have a problem. We said we do not speak the same language. We said we have different education level. And then we start to go different ways. It is very subtle. Brothers and sisters, this kills the body of Christ. This is not what God wants. If we see some brothers and sisters who do not speak our language and we feel something different, then we are the old man and not the new man. And if you went the university of California and you see someone who has not gone to college, you say you cannot talk to him, and then you are killing the body of Christ. The Lord has given us a change of mind to please Him; to help brothers and sisters and to make His body grow. We cannot have divisions. Language is not important. Education level is not important. Those things should not be a factor. So brothers and sisters, the Lord wants a place He can dwell. The Lord wants a group of brothers and sisters that He can live with. When He comes among us, look to the right, look to the left, He finds Himself; He finds love; He finds grace and He finds truth. There is no division anymore.

Let us pray. Lord, we admit that our mind is not Your mind, our sight is not Your sight and our direction is not Your direction for such a long, long time. For a long time You have been looking for a group of people where You can find peace and rest. Lord, have mercy on us. Make us the people that when You come in the midst of us You can find peace and people can be blessed, so Your body can grow and Your testimony can shine. All glory to You. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.