

Theme: The Church is God's Temple, where He dwells by His Spirit as His people gather to worship and live in holiness and unity.

## I. Intro - Beautiful Cathedrals in Italy

- A. We spent 2 weeks in Italy & saw many beautiful things
- B. Many incredible cathedrals - old and beautiful!
- C. The Temple of Solomon was big and beautiful like that
- D. Question 70: What is the Church?  
The Church is the Body, Bride, and **Temple** of Christ, the community of all true believers for all time.
- E. What is God's Temple in the earth today? Where is it?

## II. The Church - The Temple of God

- A. Paul says the Church is the Temple of God  
Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple** and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for **God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.** 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
  - 1. Paul says the Church is the Temple of God
  - 2. Many have taught this is speaking of individual Christians, but it is not; it is speaking of the corporate Church.
  - 3. It is true that individual believers are also the Temple of God - this is taught in 1 Corinthians 6:19  
Do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit**, who is in you, whom you have received from God? 1 Corinthians 6:19
    - a. Here individual bodies are the Temple of the Spirit

- b. It is true that the Spirit dwells in each of us individually and we, therefore, are part of the one Temple of God
    - 4. Here the focus is on the corporate Church as the Temple of God
      - a. Note the plural - you yourselves; you together
      - b. The whole focus in this passage is on the corporate Church as God's True Temple in the earth today
- B. The Church is the Temple of God because God's Spirit dwells in the Church  
Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that **God's Spirit dwells in your midst?** 1 Corinthians 3:16
  - 1. The Presence of the Spirit is what makes the Temple of God!
  - 2. The Spirit dwells among us as God's people and thus we are the Temple of God
  - 3. Some translations have 'in you' but 'you' is the whole Church, not an individual
  - 4. Paul teaches this elsewhere, quoting the OT  
What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? **For 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." 2 Corinthians 6:16 (quoting Leviticus 26:12)
    - a. We are the Temple of God because God lives among us and walks among us
    - b. God's Presence is what makes the Church His Temple.

In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:21–22

- c. The whole Church is God's building, His Temple
- d. We are built together to be the Temple, the place God dwells by His Spirit

### III. Implications of The Church As the Temple

#### A. The Church is the ONLY Temple of God in the New Covenant

Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple** and that **God's Spirit dwells in your midst?** <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for **God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.** 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

1. The Temple is the place where God's Spirit dwells
2. God is everywhere, but His manifest Presence is found in His Temple
3. This was true in the Old Testament tabernacle and Temple - His Spirit dwelt there in a special way.
4. 2 Corinthians 6:16 quotes Leviticus 26:12, which was about the Tabernacle, and applies it to the Church because the Church is God's Temple now.
5. Once the New Covenant was established, His manifest Presence will never again be found in a building; His Temple is the Church.
6. I will speak more about this in After Hours

#### B. The Church is the house of worship

As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him — <sup>5</sup> you also, like living stones, are **being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** 1 Peter 2:4–5

1. We are being built together as the spiritual house (Temple) where God is worshipped
2. We no longer offer blood sacrifices because Jesus has offered Himself once and for all, but we offer worship and praise to God as His people  
But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, **that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.** 1 Peter 2:9
  - a. We are all priests in this Temple
  - b. Our sacrifices are words of praise  
Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name. Hebrews 13:15
    1. In the New Covenant, we are all priests in the Temple of the Church
    2. In the New Covenant our sacrifices are not animals or grains, but words of praise and prayer to God
3. This also includes corporate prayer, for the Temple of the Church is a house of prayer for all nations
4. We will look more at worship in a future teaching in this series.

### C. The Church is to be one, unified Temple

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? <sup>17</sup> **If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.** 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

1. God's Temple is sacred because God dwells in it
2. To destroy the Temple of God is to incur God's judgment for destroying His house.
3. The particular destruction in 1 Corinthians is first and foremost disunity. This concern dominates much of the letter.
4. To be the Temple of God we must let the Spirit build us together with other believers.
  - a. Note "you together are that Temple"
  - b. Paul teaches this even more clearly elsewhere  
In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are **being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.** Ephesians 2:21-22
    1. BEING BUILT TOGETHER - an ongoing work
    2. To really be part of the Temple our lives must be practically joined with other believers so that we serve, worship, and pray together.
5. To walk in isolation from other believers and the Church prevents the Church from being built together as He commands and reduces the worship He is due.
6. To actively undermine the unity of the Church is to desecrate and destroy God's sacred Temple and invites judgment from God Himself.

### D. The Church is to be a holy Temple

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for **God's temple is sacred**, and you together are that temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

1. The word 'sacred' is literally 'holy'
2. Paul is also correcting the Corinthians for unholiness throughout the letter - this is unacceptable for God's holy Temple.
3. He makes the same point in 2 Corinthians  
What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For 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." <sup>17</sup> **"Therefore come out from them and be separate**, says the Lord. **Touch no unclean thing**, and I will receive you." <sup>18</sup> "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." <sup>7:1</sup> **Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.** 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1
  - a. You are God's Temple - so come out and be separate; touch no unclean things; purify yourselves; perfecting holiness
  - b. You are the Temple, so you must live in holiness
4. To be the place where the manifest Presence of God dwells by the Spirit, a church must be holy - fully embracing God and His ways no matter the shifting opinions of the surrounding culture.
5. For the Church to be holy, each of us must personally walk in holiness, allowing God's Spirit to reveal and root out sinful desires and actions.

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. Do I see that the Church is God's Temple?

1. A key point throughout the series - the Church is not a building but the people of God!
2. God does NOT dwell in buildings - no matter how beautiful!
3. God dwells in the midst of His people the Church!
4. 2020 is a year where this is being driven home - we, not the building, are the Church!
5. We, not the building, are the Temple, the place of God's dwelling!
6. When we gather God fills the midst of our meeting - even if we are outside!
7. This means we should be compelled to gather - not if it is convenient, but if at all possible!

### B. Do I expect the powerful Presence of God's Spirit when we gather?

1. We are not a social club having a meeting - we are the very Temple of God
2. When we gather as God's Temple for worship, we should expect to experience the powerful Presence and Work of the Spirit in our lives.
3. Do I come prepared to worship? (Sabbath, early, right mental and emotional frame, etc.)
4. Do I come with expectation and faith that God's Spirit will fill our midst as we gather as the Temple of God?

### C. The Table of Christ's Presence

1. We celebrate the sacrament of Communion - not just a ritual, but the actual experience of God by the Holy Spirit
2. But we must exercise faith to receive the blessings of God's Presence as we come to the Table
3. Jesus' sacrifice, our reception, the Spirit's indwelling manifest Presence

### The Church - The Temple of God

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

September 20, 2020

Communion

Romans 15:5-6

Teaching keywords: Church; catechism; tabernacle and temple; Holy Spirit; holiness; unity; worship; typology

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:5-6

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NIV2011