

## September 1, 2020

Words of challenge and encouragement for you today.

It seems many Christians do not understand God, by the Holy Spirit, dwells in their hearts. Further, it appears many Christians do not understand that collectively they are the temple of God. I think this ignorance is a result of a continuing secularization of the Christian community. Once people's faith informed and influenced every aspect of their lives. This is no longer true. Today, Christian people try to separate their faith from every other aspect of their lives. I believe that this is a grave mistake. Any faith worth having must necessarily inform all aspects of the individuals' life. This includes an understanding that when we believe by faith in Jesus that we then are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Let us read together 1 Corinthians 3:16-17.

*16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.*

Do you ever wonder where God lives? I used to think about it all the time. I used to look at the night sky and wonder where the house was that was big enough to contain the Creator of the Universe. Then Jesus found me. Now I know where God lives. God lives in the hearts of each one of His people. Moreover, God lives in His sanctuary here on earth. And that sanctuary, His sanctuary, is the Body of Christ.

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth which was a prominent city in Greece within the Roman Empire. There were also numerous pagan temples in Corinth. Paul wrote this letter to address a variety of different issues that were prevalent in the Corinthian church, among them were issues of immorality and division.

The Church, not just the church in Corinth, but the entire church, also known as the Body of Christ is the temple of God. The Church, that is the people who make up the Church, they are the temple of God. God is not confined to a building. Rather, God inhabits the hearts of His people and He is most clearly manifest to this world today through the work of the Church.

The Church is more than a mere symbol of community; it is an expression of togetherness, unity, and positive relationship. In the ancient Middle East, the temple was the center of community. This is where people gathered together for many of the daily activities of life. The Church should function in a similar manner.

The author of Ephesians explains, "You [the members of the Church] are no longer strangers and aliens [to God and to each other], but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, 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" (Ephesians 2:20-22). Peter also indicates members of the Church are, "Living stones, being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

The Church and its members are home of the Holy Spirit. God declares to us through Ezekiel the prophet, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Each of us received a new heart as well. We received our new heart when Jesus came into our lives.

Jesus promises His disciples He, “Will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, so that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

The care of God’s temple is the responsibility of all Christians. We are commanded by God to care for all that He entrusts to us. This includes the temple. We must keep it clean, undefiled, and holy. We must be careful what things we bring into the temple of God so that we do not desecrate it. We have the spiritual and moral responsibility to keep it clean. The writer of Hebrews admonishes, “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:15).

Failure to care for God’s house leads to the destruction of the individual. Those who defile and desecrate the temple of God will be punished. We know there is no one who desires to experience the wrath of God. Therefore let us commit our way unto the Lord and live for Him. Let us live as He taught us, loving God with our whole heart, mind, body, and spirit; and our neighbor as ourselves.

While we do all the aforementioned we must remember that we are holy. Each member of the Church, the Body of Christ, is holy. Paul instructs, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the reverence of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). Peter also teaches, “As obedient children, do not conform to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘you shall be holy, for I Am holy’” (1 Peter 1:14-16).

You are one of the living stones that make the holy temple of God. His Holy Spirit lives in us. The life and work of the Church, the Body of Christ, reveal and manifest to this dark age the truth of Jesus; that He is God in the flesh, Immanuel. Live your life so that you do not defile the holy temple of the Lord. Pray with me.

*Gracious Lord God, thank You for calling us out of the world to be Your children and disciples. Help us to glorify You in all we say and all we do through Jesus Christ, amen.*

Our God and Savior is holy. Let us live in a manner worthy of our calling.  
Until the nets are full