

SERMON NOTES: THE RESTORATION OF NEARNESS (29/05/16)

SCRIPTURE

2 Chronicles 7:16-22

1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19

2 Corinthians 6:16

Ephesians 2:17-22

Revelation 21:1-3,22

KEY POINTS

- + Separation from God is our default but nearness with God is our original design, and God is committed to the restoration of that nearness.
- + The temple (and the tabernacle before it) had the role of God's dwelling place on earth and the place where people could know heaven's reality.
- + God removed His presence from the temple when people failed to keep it sacred; Jesus took the role of the temple onto himself by making the way for all to draw near to God.
- + The role of the temple now continues in the Church being empowered by the Holy Spirit and keeping Christ as the cornerstone.
- + Our design (nearness with God) is far greater than our default (separation from God); our identity is found in pressing into our design.

QUOTES

With Jesus joining heaven and earth together in his own person, the Holy Spirit, which anointed and equipped Jesus himself for his kingdom-work, comes pouring out onto his followers, so that they become as it were an extension of that new temple. Where they are, heaven and earth are joined together. Jesus is with them, his life is at work in and through them, and, whether in Jerusalem or out in the wider world, they are the place where the living God, the God who is

reclaiming the world for his own, is alive and active and establishing his sovereign rule. *Tom Wright*

FURTHER READING

Simply Jesus by Tom Wright (thorough exploration of the topic and inspiration for the circle diagrams!)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- + Take some time to meditate on God's desire to be near to you personally and to all people. Enjoy His presence and share any scriptures or words that come to mind to encourage each other in this.
- + How do you experience the daily wrestle between your default and design?
- + Consider the two key functions of the temple: the dwelling place of God, and the place where people could know the reality of heaven on earth. How do you see Jesus being the ultimate fulfilment of these purposes? How do you see the Church carrying them on today, and how can Red Church step fully into that title of temple?
- + God warned Israel that neglecting the sacredness of His sanctuary would lead to it becoming an object of ridicule (2 Chron 7:16-22). Do you see echoes of this warning in the world today? What kind of things has God ordained as holy, and how might the Spirit be calling the Church to remember and protect their sacredness today?
- + **What stuck out to you from the teaching?** Did God remind you of something, or reveal something new? Did the Spirit minister to you?
- + **Were any questions raised for you?** Did you get stuck on any scriptures or points? Anything you need clarity on?

- + **Where do we see Jesus Christ in this teaching?** Jesus is at the centre of everything in the Scriptures. It follows that he is at the centre of everything we understand about church, faith and the Kingdom. What in the teaching has helped you see more of Jesus and the cross, or moved you to love him more?
- + **How can you personally apply this teaching?** Identify and commit to something you sense the Spirit is leading you to do in obedient response. Make it actionable and personal. What is in place to help you stay accountable to this?
- + **What/with whom can you share from here?** Who in your life needs to know the truth you've discovered? How can you share it with them?