“The City of God: A Holy Temple in the Lord”

**Eph. 2:19-22**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Sean Hoisington, Hayden Bible Church, 8/29/21)

The church is the temple of God’s glory on earth. (Q1) The construction of this new temple has already been started, the Cornerstone has been set, and the first row of building blocks has been laid (Rev. 21:14). This end-time temple will far exceed the tabernacle, Solomon’s temple, and the 2nd temple from old Jerusalem. These former temples were only a foreshadowing of this glorious, future temple. We thank our God for making us part of this temple, a city on a hill, shining His glory to all the earth. Father, with Your Holy Spirit, enliven Your Word to us today.

Part of that shining glory is sharing the Good News that our just God forgives our sin because He put His Son on the cross to endure the wrath that was meant for us. That’s great news! And that great news is for all people (see Gen. 12:3; Rom. 9:25-26; Eph. 2:12-13). Even we Gentiles have been grafted in when we believe. We are adopted into God’s family. The church now displays God’s glory to all people everywhere. Read some more about this end-time building project in 1 Peter 2:5. Believers in Christ, His living stones, are now integral to this building project.

Read Eph. 2:22 again. You are in Christ, and He is in you. You have your hope, purpose, and meaning in Christ. The purpose of the church is to be the temple of His glory. God’s church is a **unified** temple, displaying His glory. Rom. 12:4-5 tells us that we are all different parts, but we make up one body. We are members of one another. This unity is visible to the world as we gather together, partake the sacraments together, encourage one another, serve one another, and share Jesus’ love to a needy world. Preserving this “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3) takes DILIGENCE. Are you up to the task? (Q2) (Q3) (Q4)

God’s church is a **holy** temple displaying His glory. Is holiness old-fashioned? NO! Read

1 Peter 1:14-16. We are called by God to live this way. You are holy, sanctified, set apart, NOT common. You have immense value to God. Holiness should be part of your identity. That is how you should live. (Q5) (Q6)

God’s church is a **truth-bearing** temple, displaying His glory. Read 1 Tim. 3:15. Our primary concern shouldn’t be the liberal agenda or the conservative agenda. It should be the proclaiming of the TRUTH. Your life should be a pillar supporting the truth. (Q7) Rivers of living water should be flowing out of us. Do our words and actions bear fruit of this truth? Do our words and actions bring healing to our neighbors and the nations? You are God’s holy temple on earth. Glorify Him today as you go out into the world, displaying His glory for all to see. Amen. (Q8)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the purpose of the church? What’s the difference between the church and a group that meets down at the community center?
2. Have you ever experienced “invisible unity”- a sense of oneness with another Christian even though you had never met them before? Tell us your experience. Why does this happen?
3. Why is membership (not just attendance) in a local body important?
4. What positive steps have you taken to build unity in the church? What should we be doing? What shouldn’t we be doing?
5. What if you have a hard time being holy? What then?
6. Gold medalist Sydney McLaughlin said this in World magazine (8/28/21): “What I have in Christ is far greater than what I have or don’t have in life. I pray my journey may be a clear depiction of submission and obedience to God.” What do submission and obedience have to do with holiness?
7. What truths are you upholding?
8. With whom are you sharing the truth? Together, pray for those names.

“Wonderful Grace of Jesus” (Lillenas)

1 Wonderful grace of Jesus,

greater than all my sin;

how shall my tongue describe it,

where shall its praise begin?

Taking away my burden,

setting my spirit free,

for the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.

Refrain:

Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus,

deeper than the mighty rolling sea,

higher than the mountain, sparkling like a fountain,

all sufficient grace for even me;

broader than the scope of my transgressions, sing it!

greater far than all my sin and shame.

O magnify the precious name of Jesus, praise his name!

2 Wonderful grace of Jesus,

reaching to all the lost,

by it I have been pardoned,

saved to the uttermost.

Chains have been torn asunder,

giving me liberty,

for the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me. [Refrain]