

Session 8 - The House of Prayer: Where Is It?

1. Introduction

- a. Last session we set out two questions to answer concerning the House of Prayer:
 - i. Where is it in the Bible?
 - ii. Why is God doing this in the earth?
- b. We saw last week God's original design and intent for humanity was to be both individual priests and a corporate priesthood that would stand before Him in loving worship and adoration.
 - i. In order to properly understand any creation you must return to the original design and intent of the creator. Therefore, if we are going to understand who we are as God's creation and why we were created in the first place we must look at Adam and Eve who represent God's original intent for humanity.
- c. Adam and Eve were not farmers or groundskeepers but priests who ministered to the Lord and released His government upon the earth. Together they were the picture of who God intended us to be and how we were suppose to function in the earth.
- d. Later biblical writers would refer to believers as "*kings and priests*", that is we both minister to God and release His government upon the earth through partnership and obedience.
- e. Our identity/role as kings and priests before God is critical to our life in God because we not only see it in the life of Adam and Eve but it is present throughout all of Israel's history in the Old Testament, in the life of the Church in the New Testament, and it is the primary description given to saints in heaven who have entered into eternity.
 - i. From the beginning of time to the age to come we see men and women operating in their priestly function before the Lord.
 - ii. When Christ returns and establishes His throne in Jerusalem all the other gifts and roles in the Church will cease, pastors, teachers, preachers, prophets, evangelists, encouragers; they will also cease.
 - iii. Our primary role in the age to come will be that of a global priesthood that ministers to the Lord.
- f. All over the earth God is inviting individuals, families, and entire cities into their eternal role of being kings and priests before Him so that, just like Adam, they could glorify the Lord and see the release of His power in their lives.

2. Examples of Night and Day Prayer - Heaven

- a. With our new understanding of the role of humanity as seen in Adam and Eve we will finish answering the question, "Where is the House of Prayer located in the Bible?"
- b. When we see the Bible through the lense of God desiring to raise up a corporate

- priesthood we quickly see the reality of night and day prayer all over the Bible.
- c. Every example and expression of night and day prayer (the ministry of the House of Prayer) that we see in the Bible is rooted in the same simple truth.

Incessant worship is what God has chosen to surround Himself with in the throne room of heaven.

- d. This truth is the basis for every expression of the House of Prayer in the Scriptures. Anytime someone is taken to heaven in the Old Testament they see the worship of angels and/or saints.
- e. Moses and David saw it, Isaiah and Ezekiel encountered it, and Paul and John experienced it as well. This truth is the foundational truth for the current global prayer movement largely because this is how Jesus taught us to pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth *as it is in heaven.*” - Matthew 6:9-10

- f. When reading this prayer and praying this prayer many seem to forget the fact that the kingdom of God is expressed in heaven through unending incessant praise and worship.
 - i. There are definitely multiple layers to this verse and can be understood in multiple ways but the truth is clearly laid out in Scripture that heaven is full of saints incessantly worshipping Jesus.
- g. The key Scripture displaying the nature and scope of worship in heaven is found in Revelation 4 and 5. Here we see John taken up into the very throne room of God. He describes everything he sees and hears including the God, the throne, the angels, creatures, and elders around the throne, etc.
- h. As John is describing what He is experiencing he begins to detail the nature of heavenly worship.

*“Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back...The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. **And they do not rest day or night, say: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. Who was and is and is to come!’**” - Revelation 4:6, 8*

- i. When we compare this portion of Scripture with Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1, which are the two preeminent heavenly encounters in the Old Testament, it is abundantly clear that all three men are in the same place (heavenly temple) experiencing the same thing.
 - i. Isaiah’s description is almost identical to that of John’s in Revelation 4 and 5 while Ezekiel focuses more on the appearance of the things he saw rather than the worship that was taking place.
 - ii. But it is universally accepted that all three men were indeed encountering the same reality.

- j. When you add the visions and encounters of men like Moses and David the reality of incessant worship is firmly grounded in the testimony of the Scriptures.
- k. The existence of incessant worship is also recorded in numerous extra-biblical books, most notably the Book of Enoch. Although the Book of Enoch is not held to the same standard of authority as the canon of Scripture it is a reputable source of ancient Jewish writing. In fact Jude, the brother of Jesus, references the Book of Enoch in his letter to the church (Jude 14-15).

“And before Him there is no ceasing. He knows before the world was created what is forever and what will be from generation unto generation. Those who sleep not bless Thee: they stand before Thy glory and bless, praise, and extol, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Spirits: He filleth the earth with spirits.’ And here my eyes saw all those who sleep not: they stand before Him and bless and say: ‘Blessed by Thou, and blessed be the name of the Lord forever and ever.’” – 1 Enoch 39:11-13

- l. And so we come to one of the core realities that drives the House of Prayer! This reality is two-fold:
 - i. God deemed it **right** and **enjoyable** to surround Himself with incessant worship.
 - ii. Heaven deems God **worthy** of incessant worship.
- m. The relationship goes both ways. God is the initiator of all worship and also the recipient of all worship. He wants all worship and deserves all worship. He chooses to surround Himself with worship and we choose to come around Him and give Him our worship.
 - i. Remember, God could have created heaven anyway He wanted and surrounded Himself with anything He desired.
 - ii. Out of this desire He chose, in His own sovereign will and by and His own sovereign power, to surround Himself with the incessant worship of saints and angels. God chose night and day worship!

3. Examples of Night and Day Prayer - Moses

- a. So far we have seen that night and day prayer and worship exists in heaven right now and that Jesus commanded us to pray for His kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.
- b. When we put these two truths together we should not be surprised to see the building and establishing of night and day prayer according to the pattern of heaven laced all throughout the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament.
- c. We will not have time to look at every example of night and day prayer nor will we be able to go in-depth with any of the examples.
- d. Our first example is the Tabernacle of Moses described in the Book of Exodus and beyond. Upon leaving Egypt Moses brings the nation to the foot of Mount Sinai to stand before the Lord. It was here, as we discussed in our previous session, that the Lord called the entire nation to be priests.

- e. Moses, along with seventy elders, are summoned up the mountain to meet with God. There we are told they ate and drank with God as they looked upon God's glory. Going up a little higher Moses meets with God alone for forty days and forty nights. During this time the Lord commands Moses to take up an offering from the nation of priests awaiting belong. This offering was to build a Tabernacle where God could dwell among His people.

*"And let them make Me a sanctuary, **that I may dwell among them**. According to **all that I show you**, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it." – Exodus 25:8-9*

- f. When you break this verse apart into specific commands it becomes easier to see what exactly God is asking Moses to do.
 - i. Build a sanctuary – The "what"
 - ii. So He can dwell with His people – "The "why"
 - iii. According to the pattern that is shown – "The how"
- g. The key word here is "shown". It implies that Moses experience something rather than just being told something. Similar to John the Apostle in Revelation when he was "shown" things that had to take place.
 - i. This was more than the Lord simply telling Moses how to build the tabernacle. Rather he was given a 40-day tour of the throne room and New Jerusalem so that he could replicate it perfect in order that God's presence might dwell there.
- h. This command was given over and over again to Moses. This shows us both the seriousness of what God was asking him to do but also it shows the yearning heart of God to dwell among His people.

*"Se that you make them **after the pattern** for them, which was shown to you on the mountain." – Exodus 25:40*

*"Then you shall erect the tabernacle **according to its plan** which you have been shown in the mountain." – Exodus 26:30*

*"You shall make it hollow with planks, **as it was shown** to you in the mountain, as they shall make it." – Exodus 27:8*

*Now this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold; from its base to its flowers it was hammered work; **according to the pattern** which the Lord had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand." – Numbers 8:4*

- i. The writer of Hebrews also offers a clear testimony that Moses' tabernacle was built according to the heavenly pattern of incessant prayer and worship seen in Revelation 4 and 5.

“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the **true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if he were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; **who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle**. For He said, ‘See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.” – Hebrews 8:1-6**

- j. All the subsequent details of how the tabernacle was to be built have their origin directly in the heavenly sanctuary itself, the most notable being the Ark of Covenant.
- k. It was over the Ark between the cherubim that the manifest glory of God dwelt. He was truly dwelling among His people.
- l. Above all our hearts should be undone at the heart of God for communion and intimacy openly displayed in the structural replication of the Tabernacle of Moses.
- m. He so longed for Eden again that He stepped out of heaven, came in fire on top of Mount Sinai, and gave Moses the divine pattern to build a place of meeting where He could once be within close proximity of His people.
- n. His desire for friendship and nearness is more than we realize and He has been seeking it for longer than we have known. Just like man has been forever groping to reclaim what he had in Paradise so God has been working tirelessly to restore what sin destroyed.
- o. When we read about the tabernacle and the temple what should come to our minds is not the externalism, rituals, or ordinances. Rather every time we peer into the religious life of the Old Covenant we should see the loving desire of our Bridegroom God wooing His people into intimacy and nearness.
- p. The House of Prayer moves to this very same heartbeat. We are cut from the same cloth. Although we live under a new and better covenant that was purchased by the blood of Jesus, the heart of God is still burning for the same thing: relationship and nearness. It is to this end that the House of Prayer primarily exists.

4. Examples of Night and Day Prayer - David

- a. The Tabernacle of Moses stood from the time of Moses all the way through the life of David until the Temple was constructed by his son Solomon.
- b. When David became king of Israel the Ark of the Covenant was no longer in the Holy of Holies but had been abandoned in the city of Kirjath-Jearim. Immediately following his conquest to recapture the city of Jerusalem David goes to retrieve the Ark and bring it back to the city so God would once again dwell amongst His people.

- i. At this point God had no dwelling place on the earth. We are told that the glory of God departed from the Ark when the Philistines took it.
- ii. As he sat in his cedar home filled with gold and precious medals David was restless in his soul and was tormented by the thought that the God who anointed him king, delivered Goliath into his hands, and protected him from Saul was not adored and praised like He should be.
- c. Gripped with zeal and moved by the Spirit David decides that God desires more than the tent of Moses made with cloth and animal skin. David resolves in his spirit that he would build God a suitable resting place on the earth.

“See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.’ Then Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.’” - 2 Samuel 7:2-3

- d. While the preparations for the Temple are being made (David was not allowed to build the Temple because of the amount of blood he had shed, therefore his son Solomon was given the task) David institutes what can only be called the most radical shift in worship in the entire Word of God.
- e. Up until this point worship was primarily expressed through the various sacrifices prescribed in the Law of Moses. We have a handful of songs prior to this (ie. Moses, Miriam, etc.) but the primary mode of worship was sacrifice.
- f. David, who is called a prophet (Acts 2:30), receives a revelation from God concerning the order of worship in heaven and how God desires that to be established on the earth.
- g. David makes three major decisions concerning the liturgy of Israel:
 - i. He removes the Ark from behind the veil in the Tent of Moses and places it in another Tabernacle (called the Tabernacle of David).

“So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it.” - 1 Chronicles 16:1

- ii. He hires and pays 288 singers and 4000 musicians (1 Chronicles 23:5, 25:7) to stand before the Ark and worship the Lord through music and song.

“...and four thousand praised the Lord with musical instruments, ‘which I made,’ said David, ‘for giving praise.’” - 1 Chronicles 23:5

“So the number of them with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the Lord, all who were skillful, was two hundred and eighty-eight.” - 1 Chronicles 25:7

- iii. He establishes 24 “courses” which corresponded to the hours of the day. Each course would take their shift and thus God would be adorned night and day.

“And they cast lots for their duty, the small as well as the great, the teacher with the student.” - 1 Chronicles 25:8

- h. For roughly the next thirty years David stationed singers and musicians before the Ark to minister to the Lord according to the pattern of heaven; day and night.

*“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, **and in His law he meditates day and night**. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” - Psalms 1:1-3*

*“O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and **in the night season, and am not silent**. But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.” - Psalms 22:2-3*

*“The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, **and in the night His song shall be with me**- a prayer to the God of my life.” - Psalms 42:8*

*“O God, You are my God; **early will I seek You**; my soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. **So I have looked for You in the sanctuary**, to see Your power and Your glory...When I remember You on my bed, **I will meditate on You in the night watches**.” - Psalms 63:1-2, 6*

*“O Lord, God of my salvation, **I have cried out day and night before You**. Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my cry.” - Psalms 88:1-2*

*“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; **to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and your faithfulness every night**, on an instrument of ten strings, on the lute, and on the harp, with harmonious sound.” - Psalms 92:1-3*

*“Behold, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, **who by night stand in the house of the Lord!** Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. The Lord who made heaven and earth bless you from Zion!” - Psalms 134*

- i. We know this idea was random but was directly attributed to the Holy Spirit giving David divine revelation.

“Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit...also for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord.” - 1 Chronicles 28:11-13

“All this,” said David, “the Lord made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans.” - 1 Chronicles 28:19

5. The New Testament House of Prayer

- a. The primary identity that Christ gives to His church, in the New Testament, is that of a House of Prayer. Prayer is meant to be our primary occupation and our premier function. In the same way that God’s government in heaven is run through prayer so on earth God’s dominion is released and expanded through His praying church.
- b. Unfortunately we have lost this identity in the church today. Prayer has been relegated to the few radicals in the back room of the church. The church today is known much more for its moral stance and issues, programs and organizations, and heroes and villains than it is for its prayer life.
- c. First and foremost Jesus openingly confirms the Church’s identity as a House of Prayer. This alone should solidify in our hearts any doubts we have about desiring to see the church in our city give itself to prayer.

*“And He said to them, ‘It is written, **“My house shall be called a house of prayer,”** but you have made it a den of thieves.’” - Matthew 21:13*

- d. Paul also taught openly that the New Testament Church is meant to be built upon the foundation of prayer, going so far as to use the Temple as a metaphor to represent the church.

*“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, **being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord**, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” - Ephesians 2:19-22*

*“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself **in the house of God, which is the church** of the living God, the pillar and ground of the ground.” - 1 Timothy 3:14-15*

- e. Likewise, Peter uses the same symbolism as Paul when He quotes Exodus 19 and calls the New Testament church God’s eternal corporate priesthood.

*“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, **are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” - 1 Peter 2:4-5*

- f. There are three preeminent examples of saints walking in this identity in the New Testament, Anna, Mary of Bethany, and the Church at Antioch.

g. Anna:

- i. Anna is one of the clearest pictures of the New Testament House of Prayer. We read about her in Luke 2.

*“Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but **served God with fastings and prayers night and day**. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” - Luke 2:36- 38*

- ii. Anna, we are told, was an old widow that lived for decades in the Temple in Jerusalem. She is described as ministering to God, yet she was not a priest or a Levite.
- iii. Her ministry was described simply as one of prophetic prayer with regular fasting. So what exactly did Anna do? And what did Anna see or know that kept her all those decades in the temple. (Her story also points to the fact that the early church operated in a system of night and day prayer of some fashion)
- iv. We can picture Anna in the temple day after day with the Scriptures opened praying for the Messiah to come and bring salvation to Israel. I can imagine Anna weeping in travail and mourning for the consolation of Israel to be revealed as she reads Isaiah.
- v. Moving in a prophetic spirit it was revealed to her that the Messiah was coming in her day. Coming into the temple that day she laid her old weary eyes upon Mary's newborn babe and the spirit within her bore witness that this Child was in fact the promised One from the lineage of David.

h. Mary of Bethany

- i. Mary of Bethany was one of Jesus' best friends during His time on the earth. We see Mary three different times in Gospels, Luke 10, John 11, and John 12.

*“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, **who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word...**’But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” - Luke 10:38 & 42*

- ii. Mary understood something about Christ and His heart that caused her to do the unthinkable in that day, sit at the Rabbi's feet. In that hour and day women were not allowed to associate with teachers of the Law let alone sit at their feet with the rest of the disciples.

- iii. Yet Mary had understanding that others in the room didn't have for if they did they would have joined Mary sitting at the Master's feet and feasting upon the divine word that poured from His lips.
 - iv. This act and what she received from the Lord that day are described in two different ways by Jesus:
 - 1. That Mary chose the "good part". What Mary did on that day was good in the eyes of the Lord. Her act of humble worship was accepted in the eyes of God.
 - 2. Mary chose the eternal part which would never be "taken away from her". This drastic statement of value and worth towards Mary's heart posture reveals the value system of the Kingdom of God. Not only did Mary choose the good thing but that good thing was eternal in nature, it will never pass away. Right now Mary is reaping the eternal fruit of her decision that day, and so it is with us today whenever we approach the Lord in humility to pray and worship before Him and His word.
 - v. Again being a "house of prayer" is not about organizational structure but about a heart posture and a value system. Mary lived by these and therefore is a premier example of what a House of Prayer is.
- i. Church at Antioch
- i. So far we have looked at two individuals who gave themselves in radical devotion to lifestyles of love and prayer towards Christ. Anna sustained this lifestyle for 60 years and her prayers actually helped bring forth the Messiah. Mary of Bethany had such a clear revelation of God's heart that she broke all the cultural norms and practices of the day just to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear Him speak the word of God. This posture of humility and hunger positioned her to receive an eternal blessing from the Lord.
 - ii. But is there a community that functioned together in a similar fashion and value system as the House of Prayer? In Acts 13:1-3 I believe the church of Antioch provides a clear picture of how the New Testament Church operated and how long hours of fasting and prayer were a vital part of their community.

*"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. **As they ministered to the Lord and fasted**, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, **having fasted and prayed**, and laid hands on them, they sent them away." - Acts 13:1-3*

- iii. The church of Antioch, which went on to become Paul's mission's base and center of ministry, is described as being formed around the values of ministering to the Lord with regular prayer and fasting, teaching the Scriptures, and hearing the voice of the Spirit through prophetic revelation.

- iv. This culture of prophetic prayer and worship that was founded on the teaching of Scripture positioned them to rightly discern what God was saying and launch the single greatest missionary the world has ever seen.
- v. We cannot take Paul's mission and extraordinary works out of the context of the community he was a part of for over a year. For more than a year Paul was part of a community of believers that ministered to God as New Testament priests through prayer and fasting.
- vi. This is the mandate and goal of the modern day prayer movement. To organize communities of priests who minister before the throne of God through prayer, fasting and worship. And it is in the greenhouse of corporate prayer that God releases prophetic direction. Evangelism and missionaries are then shot out like arrows at the heart of the enemy and who are fueled and backed by consistent and persistent prayer.
- j. So here are three biblical examples of individuals and communities that structured their lives and communities around ministering to God through worship and prayer. There are many other examples that could be pointed to but these stand out as clear examples of a biblical precedent for extravagant lives of prayer and worship.
- k. And in each case these lives of devotion are not condemned in any way! **Rather these individuals were the catalyst to launch some of the greatest events in biblical history.**
 - i. Anna prayed for more than 60 years for the Messiah to come and she was among the first eyes on earth to recognize that this Babe was the long awaited Son of David that was going to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth. The hidden life of Anna, an old barren intercessor, brought forth the fulfillment of God's promise to Adam, Eve, Abraham, and David.
 - ii. Mary, in John 12, anointed the body of our Lord for His crucifixion. When no one else understood the gravity of the hour Mary grabbed her flask of oil and broke it over her Lord. It was only a few days later that Christ would be hanging on the tree of Calvary very possibly still being able to smell the scent of perfume coming from His body. Mary's story, we are told, is to be preached wherever the Gospel of Christ is preached. This woman's life of intimate devotion to Christ so touched the heart of God that her story is uniquely tied to the story of the Gospel as a living example of how we should live in light of Christ's love for us.
 - iii. The Church at Antioch was single-handedly responsible for launching the single most influential missions movement the earth has ever seen. Because they created a culture of prayer, fasting, and prophecy they were able to properly hear what God was saying and then obey. This single act of laying hands on Paul and Barnabas is still having impact on our lives today.
- l. Beloved, giving ourselves to a lifestyle of prayer and fasting is not only biblical according to the New Testament witness of the church but it is wisdom. May we so

touch the heart of God that we too could birth something like these three did through their lives of faithfulness.