

**Ephesians 2: 22; “A Dwelling Place of God”, Message # 19 in a series entitled –  
“The Exceeding Greatness of His Power”, A Bible Study prepared  
by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020,  
for those gathered at his home.**

I want to impress upon you this thought as we begin to study this verse together this evening; that there are 3 different levels of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling that are implied here by the way that the apostle Paul is speaking. Because I believe that this is true, I am going to make three points of them in regard to our teaching tonight. 1<sup>st</sup> – Paul is speaking of the Universal Church as being a dwelling place of God. 2<sup>nd</sup> – He is speaking of the local church, which you are a part of, as being a dwelling place of God. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – He is speaking of you, the individual Christian as being a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. I want you to be aware of the fact that Paul will speak more specifically of Christ’s indwelling in relation to the local church and of individual believers in his prayer in chapter 3, verse 17, when he says – “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”, and so we will delve more into the particulars of what that means when we come to it in our study. But this evening we do want to get the overview of the Spirit’s being a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Paul is speaking of the Universal Church as being a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**

Paul, you will notice, in this letter, and in many of his letters, likes to speak of what is common to all believers; what is common to the Universal Church of Jesus Christ spiritually, when he speaks of spiritual blessings. And he does this for this important reason, that he wants to convey to the lowliest believer, the one who might see themselves as the least of Christ’s brethren, the idea that they are included in all of the spiritual blessings of salvation that he mentions. Ours is a common salvation. We see him doing this over in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 12, verses 12-14. “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.” “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” “For in fact the body is not one member but many.”

I want you to see that Paul is not talking about any particular local church when he is speaking of the one body having many members because he says – “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body”. Spirit baptism places us into the one body of Christ. That is, mystically and spiritually we are placed into His Universal Church and become members of it. He is the Head of that body, and all true Christians are members of that body. The Spirit dwells in every believer, because every believer and all believers, it says here, were “made to drink” into one Spirit. Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, are all made to drink, they are all made to partake of the Holy Spirit’s working in their life in regeneration, and in their initial or definitive sanctification, in their being sealed with the Spirit. And they come to realize that they are part of the body of Christ.

Christ’s mystical body is His house, which He dwells in, by His Spirit. Look over at Hebrews chapter 3, verses 1-6. “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.” “For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.” “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.” “And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken of afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end.”

So we need to see certain things here from these words. Christ is the builder of His house, the Church. That is, He is it’s builder because He is God the Son, and in time and space came into this world as the Son of God. In regard to the house that He would build a house, a temple for God, out

of all the people whom He would save. He would do this because He was faithful. Moses was faithful in his house; that is, in relation to the Old Testament, Old Covenant people of God, to help God in delivering them from Egypt. He was then faithful to shepherd them, leading them and guiding them, according to the grace that was given to him by God, until they came to the Promised Land.

But Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, because He was actually laying the foundation, and securing all the merit by His obedience and His sufferings, which would be needed to build the Church; that is, to purchase by His life and by His death, the actual spiritual blessings that it would take to form a spiritual building unto God, a house of people, composed of both New Testament and Old Testament saints, people who would be saved from their sins, and made into worshipers of God forever, by giving to them, the Holy Spirit, who would dwell with them forever. We who believe in Christ are a part of that house, it says, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope in Christ, firm to the end. What does that mean – “the confidence and the rejoicing”? I believe that it means the confidence that we have in Christ, that His finished work was adequate to bring us to God through the power of the Spirit, and His Holy Spirit’s being with us and working in us, will insure that we really shall come to dwell with God forever, because He dwells with us forever, not only individually, but also as the Church Universal. We can hold fast that confidence and rejoicing of hope because we have precious promises such as these because the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

Now turn over with me to Ezekiel chapter 43, verses 1-9. I want to show you that there is a greater glory that is yet to come to Christ’s Church, because the whole building of the Church by the Spirit’s working, is being fitted together over the generations of this present Church age into a holy temple of the Lord. Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore, it says in Psalm 93: 5. This is true in all generations of the Church age. But this verse that we are studying implies progression; that is, that there is a progression in the building of the temple by the Holy Spirit which will result in greater holiness among many nations and many peoples. And it begins with as we see here, with physical Israel’s conversion, but it will affect the whole world.

Listen to these words – “Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. It was like the appearance of the vision which I saw – like the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city. The visions were like the vision which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.”

“Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me.” “And He said to me, ‘Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever.’ “No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings, by their harlotry or with the carcasses of their kings on their high places.” “When they set their threshold by My threshold, and their doorpost by My doorpost, with a wall between them and Me, they defiled My holy name by the abominations which they committed; therefore I have consumed them in My anger.” “Now let them put their harlotry and the carcasses of their kings far away from Me, and I will dwell in their midst forever.”

So, here we see the glory of the God of Israel which came to visit Ezekiel in a visionary appearance. He came from the way of the East, even as Christ’s star was seen by the wise men in the East at the time of His birth. This is none other than the Person of Christ who is the brightness of God’s glory. His voice is like the sound of many waters. This is exactly as the description is of Christ as the Lamb of God, which is given of Him in the book of Revelation chapter 14, verse 2. In that chapter the saints are singing a New Song of joy and triumph in light of the Reformation of the Church, and the anticipation of the downfall of spiritual Babylon. In these verses the New Testament Church, spiritual Israel, is being prophesied of, as the spiritual temple of God in verse 7,

as “the place of His throne and the place of the soles of His feet, where He will dwell forever. The glory of the Lord comes into the temple by the way of the gate which faces toward the East. I believe that this does not relate to the whole Church age, but to the glory of the Lord being revealed to Christ’s Church in the Latter Day of this present age, when the preaching of the word will be accompanied by great power. As it says in Isaiah chapter 32, verse 15. “the Spirit will be poured out from on high, and the wilderness will become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest”.

In verse 5 of Ezekiel 43, the Spirit, or as the original Hebrew has it, a wind, lifted Ezekiel up and brought him into the inner court to behold the great things that the Church in that day will know and realize in terms of people repenting of their idols and being ashamed of their iniquities. This work seems to be especially connected with the conversion of the Jews and their being brought into the Church. The glory of the Lord will be revealed to them, and that glory will fill the temple, Christ’s Church composed of Jews and Gentiles with great joy. All of this will not come about by Christ’s Second Coming, but by the pouring out of the Spirit; the whole building, as our text in Ephesians says, is being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. This means both now, and in a greater sense yet, in time to come. That is what the Holy Spirit is working to bring about, a holy temple, a holy Church, which will be a fit dwelling place for God in the Spirit.

Verses 8 and 9 speak of a time when the both the Jews and Gentiles will no longer set their threshold by God’s threshold, nor shall they put their doorposts by His doorpost, with a wall between them and Me, to defile His holy name. This means that both the Jews and Gentiles and the Church of God will all agree about how the church is to be entered, and the ordinances and kind of worship that will be engaged in. It will be only be true believers who will enter and it will be through the Door, our Lord Jesus Christ. And there will be agreement in all the churches that worship should be holy. Things commanded by men in doctrine and practice will be excluded. There will not be altars and idols in the house of the Lord. The practical question for us today is – Will we continue to pursue a pure worship and pursue holiness in relation to our helping in the work of the Lord? Will we be a separate people from the world? That is the question that each of us must answer. Do we want to behold the glory of the Lord in our experience?

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Paul is speaking, in this verse, of the local church, which you are a part of, as being a dwelling place of God.**

It says in our verse – “In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” Turn with me over to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 3, verses 9-16. “For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.” “According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.” “But let each one take heed how he builds on it.” “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” “Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.” “If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.” “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

So you see here what the foundation is, that was laid by the apostle Paul; it was the preaching and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. And each member in the local church is either building upon this foundation with materials that are precious and long-lasting, or they are building with materials which will not stand the test of the Lord’s fiery scrutiny on the last Day. What are these materials would you think? Well, they are no doubt the doctrines of the Bible; the doctrines of our faith; the truths that are mined out of the word, and which we promote, working together with each other to understand, and then to build upon them, a united holy life in the church we are a part of. The precious doctrine of the Triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; preaching and teaching on all of His glorious attributes; His Wisdom, Power, and Holiness, and

His Eternity and Immensity and Unchangeable Being. We preach that He is Loving, and Merciful and Faithful and True. We preach the Doctrines of Grace; God's Electing love and Sovereign Grace in the salvation of sinners through the Father's sending the Son, and giving Him as a ransom for many.

We preach that there is one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism; one God and Father who is over all and in all. We preach Christ and Him crucified, and the Spirit being sent by the Father and the Son after His resurrection from the dead. We preach with these lasting materials. For we know that if we compromise these truths as some do, by preaching a man-centered gospel, or a worldly worship, that we will be building with wood, hay, and stubble, things that will be burnt up in the Day of Judgment because they cannot stand the test of the refining fire which God will put it under; that is, our work together as a church, and individual members of it. If anyone's work remains and endures, they will receive a reward. They together, Paul says in verse 17, were the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in them. The same is true of us. God's Spirit dwells in us together as a church of Christ, and we are all working together in relation to the building materials that we use.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> - He is speaking of you, the individual Christian as being a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**

Turn with me over to Romans chapter 8, verses 9-11. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." "And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." These verses really deserve a whole message to bring out the truth of them; maybe several sermons or a whole book! But I would like us to rejoice in the truth of them; that we are no longer "in" the flesh but in the Spirit if indeed we have truly come to know Christ as our Savior and Lord. The flesh is your carnal fleshly nature; not just your physical body. It is the carnal mind and the carnal desires. If Christ is in you, the body is dead; it will physically die someday, and it is already decaying and heading that way now. But the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

I believe that when it says, "the Spirit is life because of righteousness" it means that the Spirit has brought spiritual life to the soul in the New Birth, and will continue to be the essence of our spiritual life, imparting to us spiritual life all through this life because of Christ's righteousness imputed to us, and His grace being imparted to us in relation to our progressive sanctification, at all times. Our responding in faith and obedience to God's word in relation to the Spirit's blessed working, will mean that we will make progress in righteousness and holiness. Since the Holy Spirit dwells with you, dear believer, you will be able to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord all the days of your life until your death. At that point, then, and only at that point, all the indwelling remaining corruption, the flesh, will be eradicated from your spirit. At the time in history, then, when Christ returns, the physical body will be redeemed, along with all of creation, in a New Heavens and New Earth. In that blessed place we will dwell in righteousness forever with our Triune God. All this, because you have become a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Does the Spirit give life to your mortal body now, in this time of your life after you believe in Christ? 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6: 19 says – "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom have from God, and you are not your own?" "For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are Gods." I think that we can reasonably conclude that the since the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, that He dwells there with a view of doing the body of the saint good as well as his spirit, in full accordance with all the purposes of God for that person. At the same time, every Christian must take care that they do not defile the body with fornication or Antinomian doctrines; that I can serve God with my body in a sensual or worldly way and not pursue a righteous or a holy life. No, this will not do, and so we must take care to pursue holiness and understand that we must use gold, silver, and precious stones to build our life with, if we would glorify God in our time here upon the earth.

