

“An Habitation of God”

by Wayne Goff

“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22, KJV).

This statement in Ephesians has always captured my attention. It is impressive to me that God desires His people to be **a united, holy temple** which serves as *“an habitation of God through the Spirit.”* What more could a Spirit-Being like God ask for?

By contrast, mankind in general is impressed with **outward appearances**. Consider how much money, energy and time is spent on “looks.” We want to “look our best.” We want to “put our best foot forward.” We want others to think well of us, so we buy nice clothes, nice houses and furniture, nice cars, go to nice restaurants, and live in a nice neighborhood. None of this is wrong necessarily, but sometimes we forget what is really important in life.

On the other hand, God always knows what is truly important. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (vv. 23-24).

God the Father desires men to worship Him in spirit and truth. **Why?** Because God is Spirit and Truth Himself! A.T. Robertson remarked: “This is what matters, not where, but how (in reality, in the spirit of man, the highest part of man, and so in truth. . . . Here Jesus has said the final word on worship, one needed today....” [*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, “John,” vol. 5, pp. 66-67].

A “spirit” is not impressed with things physical and fleshly — a spirit does not need food, clothing, the proper temperature, etc. — the body does. As long as you and I dwell in these temporal, fleshly bodies, then we will need to provide these things. But do not think for a second that God is impressed with them! The “fruit of the Spirit” are not **things**, but *“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”* (Galatians 5:22-23). Spirit-led disciples *“have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”* (Galatians 5:24). They have become transformed by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:1-2).

So when you see all these glamorous, expensive, sometimes gold-lined edifices, who do you think their builders were trying to impress? God? God desires and seeks after the “true worshiper” not the **building!**

It is sad to me that many so-called “churches” have become nothing less than a “Disney World-like” campus to impress mankind and to cater to his needs. One church in Texas, for example, offers sports activities, an arcade, a bookstore, a food court with a Starbucks, a children’s play section, and — oh yes — a bit of worship. This mega-church has three Sunday services which accommodates 24,000 people each week, so it is very popular! Their preacher is astounded with how many people come to “join the church.” Perhaps that statement is a bit absurd. Somebody has spent hours of research finding out what people like, and then they offer it to them on a silver platter. So don’t be *surprised* when it works! **But is this what God wants?**

If we look at the Divine purpose of the church, then we see it is for the **purpose** of salvation. It is supremely a teaching institution, as the “gifts” of Ephesians 4:11 show: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. Its **results** are to bring everyone *“to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God”* and *“to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:13). So faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17), and that faith must constantly be nurtured, improved and solidified — eventually resulting in eternal life.

Christians worshiping in spirit and truth, **together**, provide *“a habitation,” “a dwelling place”* of God. This is what God wants for us, and for Himself.

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