

Going Deeper

Study Guide For Adults

for use by individuals
and/or small groups

Week Following
Feb 9th, 2025

Sacred Spaces and God's Presence

Start Here:

Begin by thanking God for His church and ask for guidance in your discussion.

Dig Into The Word:

- John 2:13-17 (main passage for the sermon)
- Psalm 69:9; Colossians 1:19; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:22; Matthew 18:20; John 17:1; John 2:19-21; Titus 2:11; Mark 11:17; Acts 1:8; Acts 8:1

Key Takeaway:

1. Wherever God dwells is a sacred place.
2. Jesus fulfills and elevates the concept of the temple.
3. Christians individually and collectively become "temples" where God's presence dwells.
4. Sacred spaces still exist and are important, especially where believers gather to meet with God.
5. We should be zealous for God's glory, grace, and welcoming outsiders in these spaces.

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. How does understanding yourself as a "little temple" of God's presence change your perspective on your daily life?
2. The sermon mentions that when believers gather, there's a special presence of God. How have you experienced this in your own life?
3. Jesus showed zeal for the proper use of sacred spaces. How can we demonstrate a similar zeal for our church building and gatherings without becoming legalistic?
4. Discuss the three purposes Jesus emphasized for sacred spaces: God's glory, fountain of grace, and welcoming outsiders. How well do you think our church is doing in each of these areas?
5. The sermon stressed that the church exists for the benefit of those not yet part of it. How can we better embody this principle in our small group and church life?
6. How does the fact that the church building was freely given to the congregation reflect God's grace? How can we extend that grace to others?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, try to be more aware of God's presence in your daily life, treating your body and actions as a "temple" of God.
2. Identify one way you can contribute to making our church gatherings more welcoming to outsiders.
3. Reflect on how you can use the spaces you inhabit (home, workplace, etc.) to bring glory to God and extend grace to others.
4. Pray for opportunities to share about Jesus with someone outside the church this week.
5. Discuss as a group one practical way you can use your homes or other spaces to serve the community and welcome outsiders.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for His presence among us and ask for His guidance in being good stewards of the spaces He's given us, both individually and as a church.

Scripture for Further Study:

- **Jesus as the fulfillment of the temple:** John 1:14; John 4:21-24
- **Sacred spaces in Scripture:** Exodus 3:5 (burning bush); Joshua 5:15 (Joshua's encounter); Exodus 19:12-13 (Mount Sinai).
- **Believers as temples of the Holy Spirit:** 2 Corinthians 6:16
- **God's glory as the primary purpose:** 1 Corinthians 10:31
- **Grace freely given:** Ephesians 2:8-9
- **Welcoming outsiders:** Luke 14:23; Matthew 28:19-20
- **Jesus as the Lamb of God:** John 1:29
- **Salvation through faith in Christ:** Romans 10:9-10

Kids & Families

Going Deeper Study Guide

for use by kids and/or
in family worship

Week Following
Feb 9th, 2025

Kids (5th Grade Down)

Zealous for God's House

Sermon Recap: In the sermon, we learned about how Jesus showed His love and care for God's house, the temple. He reminded the people that the temple should be a place where God is worshiped, not a marketplace for buying and selling. Jesus was showing us that God's house is special and should be treated with respect and love. God has given Mercy Village Church a new building, and just like Jesus cared for the temple, we should take care of our church spaces today. The building is where we will gather, learn about God, and welcome others. Most importantly, each of us can be like little temples where God's Spirit lives!

Scriptures To Read Together:

1. **John 2:13-17**

2. **Key Verse: John 2:16:** *"Do not make my Father's house a house of trade."*

Discussion Questions:

1. **Why was Jesus upset with what was happening in the temple?** Talk about how the temple was being used for trading instead of worshipping God.
2. **What makes a church building special?** Discuss how church buildings are places where people gather to worship God and learn about Jesus.
3. **Why do you think it's important for outsiders to feel welcome in our church building?** Discuss how welcoming others can show them God's love and can help them feel like they are part of the church family.
4. **How can we be little temples for God?** Consider how God's Spirit living in us can help us show love and kindness to others.

Activity: Gratitude and Giving Tree

- -Materials Needed: Small cardboard box or shoe box, coloring materials (crayons, markers, paint), scissors (with parent supervision), glue, and stickers

-Instructions:

1. **Decorate the Box:** Use your coloring materials to decorate the box however you think would make a good mini-temple for God.
2. **Add a Door:** Cut out a door in the cardboard box to signify the opening to a special place.
3. **Stickers:** Add stickers that might include hearts or crosses, symbolizing that this space is for God.
4. **Place it Somewhere Special:** Put your mini temple somewhere in your room to remind you that wherever God is, it's special.

As you build your mini temple, talk about how you can also be a mini temple for God in the way you live every day!

Prayer:

"Dear God, thank You for teaching us how important it is to love and respect the places where You are worshiped. Help us to treat our church and the spaces we use with care and kindness. Thank You that You live in us like little temples. Help us show Your love to everyone we meet. Amen."

Youth Group

Going Deeper Study Guide

for use by middle school
or high school youth

Week Following
Feb 9th, 2025

Youth Group

Jesus' Zeal for Sacred Spaces

Sermon Recap: The sermon focused on Jesus' cleansing of the temple, highlighting His passion for ensuring that places dedicated to God remain sacred and are used for the right purpose. Jesus drove out those who were using the temple for business instead of worship, showing His zeal for His Father's house. We learned how important it is to treat church spaces with intentional stewardship and to be mindful that we, as believers, are also temples of God's Spirit. As Mercy Village Church prepares to move into a new building, the sermon reminded us that both the building and ourselves should be spaces for God's glory, grace, and the welcoming of outsiders.

Key Scriptures:

- **John 2:13-17**
- **Key Verse: John 2:17** *"Zeal for your house will consume me."*

Discussion Questions:

1. **What does it mean to have zeal for God's house, and how can we show that in our lives today?** Discuss how being passionate about God's presence can translate into faithful stewardship of church spaces and how we gather as believers.
2. **How are we, as believers, like 'little temples' for God? Why is this significant?** Explore the idea of God's Spirit living within us and what that means for how we live our lives.
3. **In what ways can we make our church and our lives more welcoming to others, especially those who might feel like outsiders?** Consider practical steps to showing hospitality and inclusiveness within your community.
4. **How does understanding the significance of sacred spaces impact your personal relationship with God?** Reflect on how recognizing God's presence in certain places—and in ourselves—deepen your faith and purpose.

Journaling Activity: Sacred Spaces in My Life

Materials Needed: Your Journal

Reflect:

- Spend some time in quiet reflection, thinking about what Jesus being the builder of the church means to you personally. How does knowing that He holds everything together give you hope or assurance in your life and faith journey?

Write (spend some time journaling about the following):

- **Identify:** Write about the places where you experience God's presence most strongly. This might be at church, during a quiet moment in nature, or even in your room during prayer.
- **Reflect:** Consider how these places help you grow closer to God and why they feel sacred to you. Also, reflect on how you can create a sacred space for God in your own heart and life.
- **Plan:** Write down one or two practical ways you can contribute to making your church welcoming and sacred for yourself and others.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for showing us through Jesus how to honor the sacred spaces where Your presence dwells. Help us to have the same zeal and commitment to treating these places with respect and to opening our hearts as temples for Your Spirit. Show us how to welcome others, sharing Your love with everyone we meet. Guide us to live lives that glorify You and reflect Your grace. Amen.