

The Temple of Doom or Glory

Eph 2:13-22

John Hanneman



Background

Despite the challenges that the church has faced over the centuries, it has survived since its inception on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on all those who became followers of Jesus. Today there are many challenges that face churches and church leaders. Even though people still seek a spiritual life, they are becoming disillusioned with the church and organized religion. So how can the church overcome these difficulties and continue to be what God intended?

Sermon Text: Eph 2:13-22 (ESV)

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- b. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- c. What stands out to you the most from this sermon?

2. Sunday questions

- a. In John's introduction, he mentioned how many people in the west have lost confidence in the church. Would you say that you have lost confidence in the church? Why or why not?
- b. Looking back over your life, what has your experience in church been like? Has it been positive/life-giving OR negative/draining/maybe even traumatizing? Has it been a "Temple of Glory" or a "Temple of Doom"?
- c. John talked about how communion, the Apostle's Creed and the hymns stuck out to him most in his childhood church experience. What would you say most sticks out to you in your church experience?
- d. Of the different words to describe the church in Scripture, which one speaks to you the most? Why?
 - The People of God
 - Family
 - Bride
 - Body
 - Temple
- e. Near the end of the sermon, John had us name something in our life which makes us stop in our tracks in a wonder-filled way – maybe it is a sunset or a cathedral or mountains or a painting. Regardless of what it is, take that feeling and apply it to the church. This is the way God wants us to see the church, as a magnificent creation. What do you think of this mental exercise? Does it help you change your perspective of the church? Why or why not?