



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

# The Trophy of God's Triumph

Bible Reading: Ephesians 2:13, 19-22

[Watch LIVESTREAM here at 10am](#)

[Join our post-sermon discussion on Zoom at 11am](#)

**SUMMARY:** Audacious claims merit justification; the title: 'Greatest of all Time' applied to an athlete is substantiated by trophies won. Military victories are celebrated with monuments. Ephesians claims God in Christ won a cosmic victory at the cross. That assertion is substantiated by his achievements (Eph. 2) culminating in the Church as God's masterpiece, his temple. The Church—composed of Christ's believers—is the lasting monument, the trophy celebrating God's triumph. What does it mean that the Church is God's living Temple among humanity? Today's message examines these issues.

## God's Triumph needs Trophies (Evidence)

A. Assertion of Christ's Cosmic Lordship (Eph. 1:20-23)

B. Christ's Triumphs (Eph. 2:1-16)

1. Raising the Spiritually dead & releasing the captives (Eph. 2:1-7)
2. Reconciling divided Humanity, creating a 'New Humanity' (Eph. 2:11-19)

C. Christ's Trophies (Eph. 2:10; 19-22)

- "In Eph. 1:20-23, Paul states that Christ has been exalted [as] Cosmic Lord, situated 'far above' the powers & authorities that rule the present evil age. Such a bold claim [needs a] defense. The assertion...must be vindicated by...his triumphs over all competing powers..." —Tim. Gombis
- 1. The Church—God's Masterpiece (Eph. 2:10)
  - "We are God's masterpiece [workmanship] created in the Messiah Jesus to perform good actions..." (Eph. 2:10 ISV)
  - "A masterpiece is 'an outstanding piece of artistry or workmanship; a person's best work.' The church is the best work of 3 persons: Father, Son & Holy Spirit." —Kevin Vanhoozer
  - "The church...is...the house where God lives... *Far from being an accident or appendix to God's plan...the church is at its apex.*" —Kevin Vanhoozer

## 2. The Church—God's Temple, His dwelling place (Eph. 2:20-22)

- "Because of his victory...Christ has the right to build his *temple...as a lasting monument to his triumph.*"—T. Gombis,
- The Church—the Monument to God's Victory

## The Trophy of God's Triumph—the Church, God's Temple (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Cor. 3:16-17)

- "Don't you yourselves know that you [pl.] are God's temple & that the Spirit of God lives in you?...God's temple is holy, & that is what you [pl.] are." (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

## A. The Temple—God's Dwelling on Earth, among Humanity

- "The church is the Temple of God—the place of God's presence among his people." —Frank Thielman Three Levels—micro-, mini-, & macro-levels (1 Cor. 6:19; 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22)
- "Where God's Spirit is, there is the Temple...:
  1. [Individual—'micro'] the body of each believer as a Temple (1 Cor. 6:19)...
  2. [Congregation—'mini'] each congregation [as] also a Temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17 [Eph. 2:22]) &...
  3. [Universal—'macro'] the whole church as a Temple (Eph. 2:21)...

## B. Here the Church is (God's people are) God's corporate Temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22)

- "Don't you yourselves know that you [pl.] are God's temple & that the Spirit of God lives in you [pl.]?" (1 Cor. 3:16)
- In the NT "*Jesus' followers, equipped with his spirit, are...individually & together...walking temples*" —Tom Wright D. God's Temple—Organic or Inorganic? 1. Not merely a metaphor
  1. The *Temple is not simply a metaphor for the church*, but the church...[is] an actual temple."—GK. Beale, M Kim 3. Built on the Apostles' authoritative foundation
  2. The Church is an 'Organized Organism'—Timothy Keller

## C. God Temple—a Work in Progress

- Eph. "2 depicts the church as God's temple, *a work in progress by & for...the triune God.*"—Michael Gorman

D. "Being built, fitted & *joined together stone by stone*"—a painful process? (Eph. 2:21-22)

- "In the ancient world, *stones were not 'joined together' with mortar, but were shaved down to fit perfectly together ...Each stone was chipped away & refined to fit...so God shapes & forms each believer (sometimes painfully) to be joined together.*" —GK. Beale, M. Kim

## As God's Temple the Church is God-centered

## A. The Church belongs to God—"You [pl.] are God's temple" (1 Cor. 3:16)

- "The building...belongs to God...[it is] God's Temple. The church does *not* belong to *any apostle or teacher*, but to God alone."—Eckhard Schnabel
- "*The church is not...people-centered, but God-centered. When the church is God-centered they'll know His awesome presence.*"—Henry & M. Blackaby

## B. To Worship, Praise &amp; Glorify God (1 Pet. 2:9)

- There are multiple "metaphors of the church...Yet all the church is & does can be described in one phrase...'to *proclaim the praises* of the One who called you...' (1 Pet. 2:9)...There's basically one mission: to 'proclaim the praises'"—T. Keller The Church—God-centered or People-centered?
- The "danger...of a church [being] anthropocentric rather than theo-centric—centered on people [not] God."—John Harbison
- "The mega-church is not only church it's an experience...a theatre...a show...These elements have failed us...*we have crowded out God Himself.*"—Robert Webber
- "Many contemporary church-planting and church-growth movements *lack theological depth* because they *emphasize technique...& methods...rather than genuine biblical...principles.*" —Ed Stetzer, D. Im
- In some churches "the best practices...from business & leadership literatures [are used] in running...& *marketing* the church. —Craig Van Gelder
- Methods, "*& strategies must be the servant, never the master, of the mission of God.*" —G. Van Rheen

- “Those who depend...on technique are afraid that by teaching theology they...won't attract seekers...However...a church that ...applies true discipleship will accomplish both...growth & depth...*The higher the standards of biblical teaching the longer people remain engaged.* Today's seekers are seeking depth. They won't interrupt [their] Sunday...to attend a church that serves up shallowness, at least not for long.” –Ed Stetzer, Daniel Im– **Realized by being filled in Spirit** (Eph. 5:18)
- “In exhorting the Ephesians to be filled with Spirit...Paul is...commanding them to *become corporately, the unique temple of God, the dwelling place of God...by the Spirit.*” –Abraham Kuruvilla
- “The church is to be the temple of God...by being the community that *speaks God's word...sings praises* to the Lord, *renders thanksgiving* to God...& lives in relationships [of] mutual submission” –Tim. Gombis

## QUESTIONS:

- A. Eph. 2:10, 19-22 uses multiple images of Christian believers—masterpiece/workmanship, citizens, familymembers, a building, temple, God's dwelling. Each image offers a slightly different 'angle' on the church.
1. What is the distinguishing feature of each of these images? What terms describe this 'angle'?
  2. Based on each image (metaphor):
    1. How should we view ourselves?
    2. How should we view & relate to other Christian believers (at CIT & elsewhere)?
    3. How have you experienced this at CIT: Church in Toronto?
- B. Focusing on the metaphor of God's temple; Paul in his writings applies this image on 3 levels:
1. [Individual—'micro'] the body of each believer as a Temple (1 Cor. 6:19)...
  2. [Congregation—'mini'] each congregation is a Temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:22) &...
  3. [Universal/global—'macro'] the whole church as a Temple (Eph. 2:21)...
    1. How should the realization that we are God's Temple affect us on each of these 'levels'?
    2. How can we fulfill our 'mandate or role' as God's Temple?
    3. What does being God's temple imply about our attitudes & actions? How can we apply being God's Temple in our daily life? ...in our interactions with others at CIT?
    4. Based on this one scholar says: “The building...belongs to God...[it is] God's Temple.” What does this imply about how we 'do' church at CIT?
    5. Another says: “*The church is not...people-centered, but God-centered.*” Do you agree with this? (Why or why not?)