



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Ephesians 2:13, 19-22

The Trophy of God's Triumph

¹³ But now in Christ...you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ...¹⁹ So, then, you are no longer foreigners & strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, & members of God's household,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles & prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building, being put together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit." (Eph. 2:13, 19-22)

1. God's Triumph needs Trophies (Evidence)

a. Assertion of Christ's Cosmic Lordship (Eph. 1:20-22)

- God raised "Christ from the dead & seated him at his right hand in the heavens—²¹ far above every ruler & authority, power & dominion, & every title given...in this age [&] the one to come. ²² And he subjected everything under his feet & appointed him as head over everything for the church." (Eph. 1:20-22)

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

- "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, "Ephesians 3:2-13: POINTLESS DIGRESSION...?" WTJ, Vol. 66, p. 313]
 - a. Raising the Spiritually dead & releasing the captives (Eph. 2:1-7)
 - b. Reconciling divided Humanity, creating a 'New Humanity' (Eph. 2:11-19)

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

- a. 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. [The church] is a triune masterpiece, an outstanding piece of creative artistry.
- 'We are his workmanship...' (Eph. 2:10)." [Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, p. 457]
- "The local church...is the reality of the new creation in the midst of the old [creation]. The church...is now the house where God lives...*Far from being an accident or appendix* to God's plan of salvation...*the church is at its apex*. It is through the church that 'God's multi-faceted wisdom [is] made known...to the rulers...in the heavens...according to his eternal purpose' (Eph. 3:10-11)." [Kevin J. Vanhoozer, D. J. Treier, *Theology & the Mirror of Scripture*, p. 77]

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

- "In his death, Christ...created the new humanity...of believers from...every race & nation (Eph. 2:13-16). Because of his victory...Christ has the right to build his temple...as a lasting monument to his triumph (Eph. 2:20-22). His temple consists of...the church...where God in Christ dwells by his Spirit." [T. Gombis, "*Eph. 3:2-13...*" WTJ, Vol. 66, p. 313]

c. The Church—the Monument to God's Victory

- "Ephesians 2...follows the logic of divine warfare...: the triumphs of Christ over the evil powers vindicate the exalted status of the Lord Christ, who announces his victory by proclaiming peace. His people gather to him in...worship as his temple...as a lasting monument to his universal sovereign lordship." [T. Gombis, "*Ephesians 2 as a Narrative of Divine Warfare*," JSNT, Vol. 26.A (2004) p. 418]

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

- "Built on the foundation of the apostles & prophets, with Christ...himself as the cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building, being put [fitted] together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit." (Eph. 2:20-22)
- "Don't you...know that you [plural] 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) Note: "The phrase '*Don't you know...*' [1 Cor. 3:16a] implies...the concept of *believers as the new Temple* of God...was a *fundamental component* of the apostolic instruction." [Hank Voss, *Priesthood...*, 30]

a. The Temple—God's Dwelling on Earth, among Humanity (2 Chron. 6:2; Eph. 2:21-22)

- Dedicating the Temple, Solomon told God: "I've built an exalted temple for You, a place for Your dwelling forever."
- "The church is the Temple of God—the place of God's presence among his people." [F. Thielman, *of NT*, p. 291]
- "This new body...of believers in Jesus Christ regardless of race, is a 'holy temple in the Lord' (Eph. 2:21) & 'a dwelling of God by the Spirit' (Eph. 2:22). Just as God dwelt in the temple in the OT, so *now the church is the new temple of God*, the place where his presence dwells." [Tim. Gombis "*5:18 in its... Setting*," Tyndale Bull., Vol. 53.2 (2002) p. 261]

b. Three Levels—micro-, mini-, & macro-levels (1 Cor. 6:19; 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22)

- "Perhaps [due to the OT] association between the Temple & the Spirit, the NT pictured the Temple as the dwelling place of the Spirit. *Where God's Spirit is, there is the Temple*...This...enabled Paul to speak of:

a. [Individual—'micro'] the body of each believer as a Temple (1 Cor. 6:19)...

b. [Congregation—'mini'] each congregation [as] also a Temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17 [Eph. 2:22]) &...

c. [Universal—'macro'] the whole church as a Temple (Eph. 2:21)...The image [applies] to all 3 areas [due to] the presence of the Holy Spirit." [Paul S. Minear, *Images of...Church in the NT*, p. 97]

c. 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 [plural] are God's temple & that the Spirit of God lives in you [pl.]" (1 Cor. 3:16)
- In the NT "the Temple is redefined around those who are 'in Christ,' *Jesus' followers*, equipped with his spirit, .. *individually & together...walking temples*, rescued...through Jesus' death, & with the living

presence of God going with them & in them." [Tom Wright, *How God became King*, p. 247] D. God's Temple—Organic or Inorganic?

a. Not merely a metaphor

- The *Temple is not simply a metaphor for the church*, but the church commenced as an actual Temple at Pentecost (Acts 2)." [G. K. Beale, M. Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 100]

b. Built on the Apostles' authoritative foundation

- "The church is God's...temple [which] he indwells. But Ephesians brings *distinctive emphasis*...*The temple is being built on the foundation of the fundamental apostolic/prophetic revelation of its essentially con-corporate [united-in-one-body] nature* (fusing Jew & Gentile)." [Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for Theological Interpret...*, 190]
- '*Built on the foundation of the apostles*...' Some think 'the [early] apostles' here were 'foundational' [–'founding apostles'–] because they proclaimed the...words of God, some of [which] became the books of the NT [e.g. the writings of Matthew, John, Paul, Peter, etc.]. Since a 'foundation' is laid only once (i.e., at the beginning of the church) there are no more ['founding] apostles'...today [so, no one is 'today's Paul'], but their function of speaking the words of God has been replaced by the written Bible, which is the foundation today. [ESV Study Bible, p. 2266]

c. The Church is an 'Organized Organism'—Timothy Keller

- "In whom *the whole structure*, being joined together, *grows* into a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. 2:21 ESV)
- The church combines [1.] "spontaneously generated spiritual life and ministry as well as [2.] an ordered, *structured community* with rules & authority...[It's] an organic, spontaneous movement with [an] 'institutional structure.'... We see...in 1 Pet. 2:4-5...Christians [are] 'living stones' in a new Temple. 'Stones'...represent a *non-organic* metaphor. But Peter [says] the stones of this temple are alive, & so the Temple...'grows'...We should understand the *church to be both an organism* (which grows naturally) & an *organization* (which is structured & ordered)...The Holy Spirit [is] the author of both aspects of...the church." [Tim. Keller, *Serving a Movement*, p.]

d. God Temple—a Work in Progress

- Eph. "2:21-22 depicts the church as God's temple, a work in progress by & for...*the triune God*—in Christ, by the Spirit...*for God*" [Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, p. 592]
- "The church as a temple...[has] an emphasis on the Temple's growth...We are [invited] to visualize a...process of construction rather than a completed edifice." [Paul S. Minear, *Images of the Church in the NT*, 97]
- "Though...stated as an accomplished reality...it is an ongoing process...It is [presently] 'being joined together' (pres. pass.) & is [presently] 'growing (pres.) into a holy temple in the Lord'. In Eph. 2:22, they are 'being built up (pres. pass.) into a dwelling of God by the Spirit'. So, while the church as [God's] dwelling place...is an accomplished reality, it is also...in need of being increasingly actualized." [T. Gombis "Eph. 5:18...", Tyndale Bulletin, Vol. 53.2 (2002) p. 261]

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

- "Since the church is [God's] 'dwelling place... & 'a holy temple...' reconciliation is now possible even between deeply antagonistic groups. [This] doesn't lessen the *pain of reconciliation* as we are being 'joined together' & 'built'...In the ancient world, *stones were* not 'joined together' with mortar, but were *shaved down to fit perfectly together* ['joined together *stone by stone*' (Voice)]. Just as each stone was chipped away and refined to fit into something far more glorious, so God shapes & forms each believer (*sometimes painfully*) to be joined together.' In the early church...this process was particularly painful." [G. K. Beale, Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, p. 101]

3. 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 J. Schnabel, "...*Jesus' Followers in 1 Cor.*," in J. P. Harrison, *NT Church*, 108]
- "Modern culture generally & American culture in particular are committed to...individual autonomy with consequences... utterly antithetical to the [God-centered] perspective." [H. Beckley (ed.) *Gustafson's Theo-centric Ethics*, p 144]
- "*The church is not...people-centered, but God-centered*. When the church is God-centered they will know His awesome presence." [Henry T. Blackaby, M. D. Blackaby, *God Centered Church*]

Experiencing God Together, xii]

b. God's building—according to God's pattern (Heb. 8:5)

- God told Moses re: the tabernacle: "Be careful to make everything according to the pattern shown to you...." (Heb. 8:5) C. To Worship, Praise & Glorify God (1 Pet. 2:9)
- There are multiple "biblical metaphors of the church... Yet all the church is & does can be described in one phrase. 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called...'" (1 Pet. 2:9)...The...metaphors...convey the...multifarious character of the church. But, there is basically *one mission: to 'proclaim the praises...'* We praise God *to God... worship; we praise God to each other...edification, instruction...we praise God to the world...with our words (evangelism) & our deeds (mercy & justice...)*" [Tim. Keller, *Serving a Movement*;] D. The Church—God-centered or People-centered?
- There's "a...danger...in a church [being] anthropocentric [people-centered] rather than theo-centric [God-centered]—i.e., centered on people rather than God. With [some] approaches [to doing church] the focus is on people's response to what the church [does]. A favorable response [means] a particular ministry works. This...consumerist approach means...the audience becomes all-important & each church has to tailor its activities to what the consumer wants...The success achieved is a thoroughly Americanized version of success." [John H. Harbison, *Keeping Christ in Ministry* (2012) p.]
- "The mega-church is not only church, it's an experience...much like a theatre, a worship that's...like...a show in some cases. It fits the ethos of a sports event or concert. People...dress casual, eat on the premises, remain anonymous, come & go as they please...G. Barna writes...'For several decades the church has relied on greater sums of money, better techniques, bigger numbers & facilities, & more impressive credentials...These elements have failed us; in our efforts to serve God, *we have crowded out God Himself.*'...The market-driven church...is so immersed with the culture that it's become enmeshed with it." [Robert E. Webber, *Younger Evangelicals: Facing...the New World*,]
- "Many contemporary church-planting and church-growth movements *lack theological depth* because they *emphasize technique...& methodologies rather than genuine biblical...principles.*" [Ed Stetzer, D. Im, *Planting Missional Churches*,]
- "For...the past half-century, N. American church leaders have turned to business & management perspectives to organize, frame, & inform the organizational challenges they face. The organizational theories underlying major North American corporations have been adopted & applied, often without critical theological analysis, to church organizations...This practice has been a contributing factor in the loss by many local churches...of their unique calling & mission." [Paul M. Dietterich, *Foretaste: Leadership for...Missional Church*, 9]
- In some churches "the best practices promoted by & gleaned from business & leadership literatures have been put to use in running, building & *marketing* the church. Churches have bought into the modern consumer-orientated [paradigm] that seeks to meet the felt needs of the people & that views them as 'objects' rather than as active 'subjects' of the church's mission. The church gets sidetracked by offering programmatic answers to missional questions, In the end, missional answers will be necessary to get the church on track." [C. Van Gelder (ed.) *Missional Church & Denominations*, 187]
- Methods, techniques, "methodologies & *strategies must be the servant*, never the master, of the mission of God." [G. Van Rheenen, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views*, 177]
- "Those who depend heavily on technique are afraid that by teaching theology they...won't attract seekers...driving them away. 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 Sunday... sleep...to attend a church that serves up shallowness...not for long." [Ed Stetzer, D. Im, *Planting Missional Churches*,]

4. Realized by being filled in Spirit (Eph. 5:18)

- "In exhorting the Ephesians to be filled with Spirit...Paul is essentially commanding them to *become corporately, the unique temple of God, the dwelling place of God* in Christ, by the Spirit, & to exhibit the Spirit's control...The OT...depicted the glory of God in the temple...The church is the new temple of God...where the fullness of God dwells (Eph. 1:23), 'God's dwelling place...in the Spirit' (Eph. 2:19-22). Remaining filled...the Christian community is to engage in spiritual worship." [Abraham Kuruvilla, *Text to Praxis*, 186]
- "What does Paul mean by the command to 'be filled by the Spirit'?...When Paul directs his readers to 'be filled by the Spirit' ...[he] is commanding [them] to 'be the temple of God,' or, to 'be

the dwelling place of God by the Spirit'. They are to carry out their identity as the church & to fully realize what God has made the church to be—his fullness, his new temple, his dwelling place by the Holy Spirit." [T. Gombis " 5:18 in its...Setting," Tyndale Bulletin, V. 53.2 (2002) pp. 267-8]

- "The church is...the temple of God...by the Spirit by being the community that *speaks God's word* to one another, *sings praises* to the Lord, *renders thanksgiving* to God for all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, & lives in relationships [of] mutual submission" [Tim. Gombis " 5:18 in its Epistolary Setting," Tyndale Bulletin, V. 53.2 (2002) pp. 270-1]