

## The House of God

January 3, 2022 at The First Congregational Church of  
Marshalltown, Iowa

1 Chronicles 17:3-10; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

- Introduction

I once saw an advertisement for a gym membership that included the words, “the body is a temple.” Did the ad writers know what that phrase meant? I don’t know, but it is, like many catchy phrases, taken from Scripture and touches upon destiny, community, and the influence we have on one another. And it all started with a question posed by King David centuries ago.

- Set the stage

In 1 Chronicles, King David was spending some time with the prophet Nathan and noted that while he lived in splendor the Ark of God was in a tent—the Tabernacle. David did not think that was right and that the Ark deserved a temple, a house for God. Nathan told him to go ahead and start making plans, for God was with him. That night, however, the word of the Lord came to Nathan and informed him that David was not to build a temple. God had lived in tents for years and had never commanded anyone to build a temple. Moreover, God noted, that He took David from a shepherd's life and placed him as King over Israel and that He will have a descendant of David build the temple, but that God will build a house for David;

not one made of mortar and stone, but one made of people and that the House of David would include One who would be King forever, even the Messiah. That is the house that God would build for David.

- The house of God; the family of Jesus

That house figures large in the New Testament, even though Jesus, the descendant of David who is the King and Messiah, had no descendants Himself. Nevertheless, the family of God includes all those who trust in the Lord like Abraham did of old, whether they are linear descendants of David or not. Faith in Christ places one in the family of Christ, in the house of Christ. The beginning of John's Gospel (1:12-13) includes these words: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

- The Temple of the Holy Spirit

Later in the New Testament the Apostle Paul would write of this house that is made of people and give it the title "the temple of the Holy Spirit." The temple is in an ongoing process of construction and involves a profound connection between the individual and the church congregation, or for that matter, between the individual, the church congregation and others scattered all over the globe who have never met.

- Individual-the individual life affects the community

Twice in 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul wrote that the church is the temple of God. One time is in chapter six. He wrote:

**1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

<sup>20</sup> For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Here referring to the individual, what we do with our lives is a matter of divine attention and we must be mindful that if we are temples individually then we are accountable for keeping them undefiled.

- Corporate-the community is greater than the sum of the individual lives

But the other reference to "temple" is, I think, about the community as a whole. Paul, writing about the importance of teaching Scripture carefully reminds the church that they are the temple, as a community. So we have two ways of thinking about the temple of God, that house that God is making that is made out of people. First, what we do with our lives is noted by Almighty God, for we are, as individuals, temples of the Holy Spirit and as such are holy. The second emphasis is on the community. We're not just the temple of the Holy Spirit as individuals, but we are also

the temple together. We are to worship together, fellowship together, and grow together in this journey that is a march to heaven. Other's struggles are our struggles and we should be as concerned about them as they were our own. Other's joys and triumphs are ours as well and we can rejoice as if they were our own. We live together and we grow together.

David, long ago, wanted to build a house for God. It turns out that God already had plans along those lines, and they were far greater than anything, I think, that David could imagine. God is making a house of people, united by Christ, and we are temples of the Holy Spirit, both as individuals and as a community. We look to our own living mindful that we are responsible for keeping and respecting the holiness of our temples. We also look to each other to grow together because we are temples corporately. Together we are the house of God.