

Vespers for the Bishop's Annual Visit
1 Kings 8:1-66
August 3rd, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Will God Indeed Dwell on Earth?

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord God had promised King David that his son would build a temple for Him. Here in the First Book of Kings the eighth chapter we see the completion and dedication of that temple. King Solomon reminds the Israelites that his father had been promised that his son would build the temple. In the temple of King Solomon daily there would be sacrifices made for the forgiveness of the people of Israel. We are even told by the writer of the First Book of the Kings that King Solomon made a peace offering to the Lord God of twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. It was quite the barbecue. But, just like we have talked about in Bible class, these promises are only signs and symbols. This temple is only a shadow of the true Temple. These sacrifices are only a shadow of the once and for all sacrifice made for all mankind. This promise of a son building the temple is only a shadow of the real Son of David Who built the place of sacrifice with the Temple of His Body, our Lord + Jesus Christ.

The temple for the people of Israel was supposed to be a place where they could go and receive forgiveness for their sins. The Lord God would forgive the sins of those who were repentant and retain the sins of those who continued to dwell in their sins. The temple was supposed to be the representation of the physical presence of the Lord God among His people. Indeed, on that day of consecration of the temple the glory of the Lord filled the temple so much that the priests could not continue ministering. The Lord's righteousness exposed their own unrighteousness. And when the Israelites would have their unrighteousness exposed, they would have a place that they could go to in repentance, pray to the Lord God for forgiveness, and receive absolution through the intermediary sacrifice that they had brought to the Lord.

On account of their continual rebellion against the Lord God, the temple that King Solomon built was destroyed and they were exiled into Babylon. And although this temple was rebuilt seventy years later, the true Temple would come among His people a few centuries later.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ came to be our once and for all sacrifice. He paid the penalty of sin for all mankind, so that all those who believe on His Name are justified—made to be at peace—before the Lord God. He became both the Priest and the Sacrifice. He atoned for our sins and the sins of the whole world by His perfect obedience to the Law of God, and by His death on the tree of the holy cross. His sacrifice on the altar of the cross, wins for us forgiveness of all our sins. And, wherever there is

forgiveness of sins, there is also eternal life with our Lord, and salvation from sin, death and the power of the devil.

When our Lord + Jesus was conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, He took upon Himself our flesh. He became the true Son of David; the promised Messiah. The Son Whom the Lord God promised would always sit on the throne of King David. This throne of King David, never lacks a man to sit upon it, for the Lord God took upon the flesh of man in order to redeem mankind from his sins.

When we sin, and we do sin daily, we are as sinful and rebellious as the people of Israel were, to the point that we deserve God's eternal wrath and displeasure. But when we come to our senses and repent—when we acknowledge how little we keep the Ten Commandments, and how little our works can merit God's favor and grace—we have a Temple that we can go to. Just as the temple was the place that the people of Israel could go and find an intermediary between them and God's wrath, we too, have a mediator between God's wrath and us.

Our Lord + Jesus intercedes for us with the heavenly Father, pleading on our behalf for the Father to look at His hands, feet and sides, and see that He has already paid the penalty for us; that He has already endured the wrath of the Father for our sins.

We can go to this Temple whenever we remember our Holy Baptism, and remember that we have been buried in Christ's grave through the drowning of the Old Adam within us through this Holy washing. And just as Christ rose from the dead, we too rise again from the death of our sins to a new and holy life in Christ. This is why we should make the sign of the cross often, to remind ourselves as often as we can that our sins are forgiven on account of the sacrifice of our Lord + Jesus on the cross, and that we are living temples in the sight of the heavenly Father, who shine the light of His Gospel through our words and actions. And when we fail at that, we return to the Temple once again; we make the sign of the cross once again; we repent once again, and beg for His mercy, which He freely gives to us. For, He loves us, and proved it by offering His life for us.

And, we remember His great love for us, and learn to have love for one another whenever we come to this holy altar and receive our Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine. When we eat His Body and drink His Blood, we remember His sacrifice for us, and we remember what sort of love it takes for a Person to do that for someone else. So that, we learn to love one another in like manner; we learn to look past each other's sins, and rejoice that each of us has been called out of the darkness of sin, and into the marvelous light of our salvation found in the Temple of our Lord + Jesus. And when we remember His sacrifice of love for us, we also remember that we receive the gifts that He won by His death on the holy cross—forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation.

The people of Israel only had a shadow of things to come. We have stepped into the full light of the Christ, and see that we have a Temple wherein all the sacrifices necessary are fulfilled, so that all those who believe on Him, receive the forgiveness that He won for all mankind. Let us then daily and often go to our Temple—to the Lord + Jesus Christ—and plead Him to intercede for our sins, and to take us from this vale of tears to our home in Heaven, when this life is ended. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!