

God's Home

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Preacher: Rev. Sulmane Maigadi

[0 : 0 0] This morning we have the privilege of hearing from Sulmani Magadi. Sulmani and his wife Miriam attend Church of the Resurrection, where Sulmani also serves as an ordained deacon.

You might recognize Sulmani and Miriam from a couple different places. They have participated in our worship services both two weeks ago singing and later on in this service they will also sing with us.

You might recognize them also from having participated in our annual Easter Vigil, both the year before and the year before that. Sulmani originally comes from Jha's, Nigeria, where he studied at ECWA Theological Seminary, and later on he would study at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the same seminary where pastors Tommy and Kevin also studied.

Once again, we are so happy that Sulmani joins us this morning to preach the Word of God. Sulmani. Well, good morning. I'm happy to be here with you today.

I just want to thank the Advent leadership for giving me the opportunity, the honor to share God's Word with you today. Let's pray before we dive in. We ask, Holy Spirit, that you would speak to us, that you would tell us what you want for us to get from your Word, and that it would revive us, encourage us, teach us, rebuke us, and heal us.

[1 : 3 2] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I want to talk about God's home, the temple of God's home.

When I think of the word home, what immediately comes to mind is the dictionary definition, a place where one lives permanently as a member of a household or a family.

I remember in the mid-1990s, my father wanted to build a home for his family, so he contracted builders and they laid the foundation, set up the walls, you know, they built the house.

And once it was completed, we moved in. But we didn't really move into a house. We, sorry, into a home. We moved into a house.

And it was the shared experiences in the house that really made it into a home for us, that we felt that it belonged to us. So we laughed together. We prayed together.

[2 : 3 5] We ate together. We messed up together. And that's what really made it home, those wonderful memories that we created. And it seems like that's what's happening in Genesis chapter 1, when God creates all of creation.

The first three days, he's preparing these spaces, these places, for the creatures that he's going to create in the last three days of creation.

And the last, of course, is mankind. And then on the seventh day, God rests. And he calls it holy. Now, in the ancient Near East, during the time when Moses was writing this book especially, when a deity wanted to rest, there was only one place that they could rest.

That was in their temple. So here, Moses is using the language of rest that was used in the Aene, ancient Near East.

But that word doesn't necessarily mean a reviving of strength and energy. And that's not what it means. What it actually refers to is the act of taking up residence.

[3 : 46] So when we are told that God rests, what actually, what that means is that God took up residence. And so just like a deity would take up residence in their temple, here God was taking up residence in his creation.

And that was his temple. So all of creation was his cosmic temple. And that is what completed creation. Adam and Eve had a full, satisfying experience of what it means to have a true home.

Because God rested and took up residence with them. And all of creation, being God's temple, that was his desire all along, for all humanity to have a true home by dwelling with them.

But then God did something even more amazing. He decided that he was going to give dominion to mankind, to rule, to steward his cosmic temple.

And interestingly, he intertwined the fate of his temple with the obedience of his children. He gave them things to do. And one thing that they should not do.

[4 : 55] And we know how the story goes. Sin came into the world. And Adam and Eve were exiled from the temple. Unfortunately, they lost the rest, the home of God.

And so we, in our present homes, no matter how great they are, we know that there is disunity at times. Sometimes we say words that we can't take back.

And beautiful memories we created in that place called home sometimes have turned dark and sour for us. Now, as the story unfolds, we see that God wants to create a proximal temple.

So he instructs Moses to build a tabernacle. And then later on, he tells Solomon to build a splendid temple where his name would reside. Solomon does.

And Solomon prays a prayer of dedication. After he prays that prayer, listen to what God says in 1 Kings 9, from verse 3 to 9. I have heard your prayer and your plea which you have made before me.

[5 : 57] I have consecrated this house that you have built by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules, then I will establish your throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.

But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all the peoples.

And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished and will hiss, and they will say, Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?

Then they will say, Because they abandoned the Lord their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshipped them and served them.

Therefore the Lord has brought all this disaster on them. Can you see how yet again God intertwines the flourishing of his temple, of his home, where he sets his name?

[7 : 36] He intertwines that with the obedience of the people, here in this passage specifically the kings. And when the kings don't obey the Lord, when the people don't obey the Lord, there are dire consequences.

Starting with the end of Solomon's reign, the people did not keep the law. King after king after king did evil in the sight of the Lord. Peter Lighthouse tells us that before the temple was finally destroyed, it was looted seven times.

It's like each looting represented a step back, a decreation of the temple, because the people, and more specifically the king, refused to repent of their sins and follow the Lord.

They were destroying their home. And by the time we get to 2 Chronicles 25, the temple has been looted three times. We're told in verse 1 to 5 that Amaziah was a good king.

He was even familiar with the law of the Lord. His father had been assassinated. And when Amaziah became king and had consolidated his power, he executed the assassins who killed his father.

[8 : 46] But he didn't execute their families because he knew from the law that you do not kill the families of those who commit sins. Only the one whose sins shall die. So one would expect that the temple would flourish, that the home of the Lord would flourish, and that Israel would still have a home under Amaziah's reign.

But something went wrong. Something went terribly wrong. Backstory a little bit. During Jehoram's reign, and Jehoram is Amaziah's grandfather, Edom, the nation state of Edom, which at that point was a vassal to Judah, rebelled against Judah.

So now during Amaziah's reign, he wants to bring the Edomites back under the reign of Judah. And it's something that God seems to approve. But he makes his first mistake by allying with Israel.

He asks the northern kingdom to help him to take it over. So a thousand men were sent from Israel. The problem with this is that the northern kingdom had at this point already forsaken the Lord their God.

And so inviting them into this endeavor was inviting corruption into Judah. You woke up this morning and oh how you needed pep.

[10 : 09] And like most people, you wanted to make coffee. That's where you get your pep. And so you brew the coffee. And as it's brewing, the aroma is wafting up to you.

It's calling your name, saying that it wants you to drink it. And you can't wait. You put in the creamer. Oh, you put in the sugar. Stir it.

Put it to your lips. You take a sip and then you immediately spit it out because you actually put salt instead of sugar.

That's what's happening here. Judah cannot mix with Israel at this point because it's like coffee mixing with salt. Who does that? Righteousness and evil cannot work hand in hand.

But it gets worse. From verse 7 to 11, we see that a prophet tells Amaziah to break the alliance. And to his credit, the king does so.

[11 : 11] And he gains victory over Edom. But then, after he gains victory over Edom, he sees their gods and takes them for himself.

We see that in verse 14 to 16. Idolatry. He takes the idols of Edom, brings them back to Jerusalem, sets them up as his gods, and worships them, making sacrifices to them.

I'm not even sure how that makes sense because the Lord your God helped you have victory over Edom. And the gods that couldn't save them are the gods that you take to worship.

God sends a prophet and tells him to correct his ways. But his heart has been hardened by the idolatry. And he tells the prophet to shut up or he'll kill him.

At this point, God is no longer with Amaziah. Now, the 100,000 men that he sent home, he broke the alliance with them. They were, of course, angry.

[12 : 17] And probably because they couldn't, you know, take part in the plunder and they didn't have any honor associated with war because they were allowed to keep the money. So on their way back up to the northern kingdom, they attacked some cities of Judah.

And understandably, Amaziah is angry with them. And so, puffed up by his victory over Edom, he sends a declaration of war to Joash.

And here we see Amaziah's third mistake. It's a prideful disposition. The king of Israel told him, this unrighteous king of Israel tells him not to be puffed up with his victory, to be content with it.

He wouldn't listen. And it was his pride that led to his destruction. So, three things lead to the destruction of Amaziah and the fourth looting of the temple.

The king makes an unholy alliance with another people. The king commits adultery, idolatry. The king commits idolatry. And the king is prideful.

[13 : 25] And that is what leads to the vessels of God being looted in the temple. And in some ways, the looting of the temple is a picture of what happens to Amaziah and what would eventually happen to the people.

The gods of Edom looted him and made him their slave. So Amaziah is destroyed. This was true to God's word to Solomon.

The fate of his resting place was intertwined with the obedience of God's people, specifically the kings. After Amaziah's death, king after king after king just does evil before the law, before the Lord.

And Manasseh is the last straw. Eventually, the temple is destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar comes and he exiles the people to the Babylon, to the east, just like Adam and Eve were exiled to the east.

The place of God's rest is no more. Israel is no longer God's home and the people of God no longer have a home. So after the exile, under the guidance of the prophets, the Jews rebuild the temple and reinstate worship.

[14 : 41] But by the time Jesus arrives, things aren't as they should be. Because in John chapter 2, we're told that Jesus goes into the temple and he clears it, saying, take these things away.

Do not make my father's house a house of trade. My father's house. Jesus is here claiming ownership of the temple. He's saying it's his. Not only that, he drives out those who sell and those who buy in the temple.

He overturns the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sell pigeons and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. Jesus is shutting down temple worship.

And he's shutting down God's resting place because he's doing something new. Though every king before Jesus in some way, in one way or another, failed, Jesus would not fail.

He was victorious in his obedience to God from first to last. Unlike Amaziah, he did not make an unholy alliance. He did not commit idolatry.

[15 : 47] He only worshipped God. God. And he was not prideful. He was humble and obedient even unto death on the cross. So when he shut down the temple, he was inaugurating a new temple, the temple of his body.

And through him, by his death, the people of God would also become the temple of God. Not a building, not a structure, but the people of God would become the temple of God, his resting place.

This is why we're told in 1 Peter 2 that we are like living stones being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

What's amazing is that God's presence in us and through us and with us is secured by the obedience of King Jesus who will never fail completely.

God's resting place will never again be destroyed because Jesus Christ is our perfect king. He will never change. And that means that God is going to stay with us forever. This is wonderful and amazing news.

[16 : 59] God is with us. Take a moment with me and think about this. Think about the magnitude of that statement that you and I are God's resting place if we believe in Christ. Heaven, the highest heavens, cannot contain God.

God. He's majestic. He's all-powerful. His glory is beyond comprehension. He does great wonders. I mean, just think about who God is.

It is this God that has chosen to rest, to take up residence in you and me, to make us his home and by so doing give us a home.

and this is great news because it means Christian that no matter where we are, we are home. God is with us.

We've been welcomed back from exile, from the dark. We are no longer cast out of Eden. We are safe with him. We are loved by him and he is not going anywhere.

[18 : 03] And yes, we long for, we ache for the time when we don't have to contend with sin anymore. We know that it's not perfect. We have that feeling in our heart that it could be better.

We struggle with the sin around us. We struggle with the darkness. We struggle with what we see on the news every day. We struggle with that disunity with other believers because of denominational distinctions or whatever the case may be.

But, in the midst of all this, we are not alone. The spirit of glory and of God rests, has taken up residence on us and we are home and we are his home.

It also means that wherever we go, we are, we are the source of hope to the world. It is, it is by looking at us that the world can see God and understand what that real sense of home actually is because we are God's presence in the world.

and oh, how I long for anyone who does not know Jesus Christ to come and join home.

[19 : 12] If you don't know him, what are you waiting for? It's dark out there. There is no joy. There is no peace in exile. And Jesus is inviting you to come and be part of this fellowship, to come and dine with us.

Brothers and sisters are waiting to embrace you. Why don't you come home? Come. Come to Jesus. Let us pray. Father, we pray that you would continue to make us aware of your, your presence with us, that you are home.

You are our home and we are yours. And that we live, that we live out that truth in the midst of current difficulties and be light to the world. Amen.