

God's Presence in the Home

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[0 : 00] So yeah, I'm looking today at God's presence in the home. So your home is a place that is unique.

It's also a place where your best friends see who you really are. And definitely your family see you warts and all. There's often loving, arguing, learning and resting that goes on there.

And it's a home where memories are built and people can be themselves and find refuge and rest.

And it's also a place to offer hospitality to family, friends and neighbours.

So I don't know about your home. Maybe it looks like a show home most of the time. But I can definitely say that ours definitely doesn't.

It often gets very cluttered and very messy very quickly. So I'm not going to get you to share, but just a question. Think about your home right now, how you've left it.

[1 : 06] And on a scale of 1 to 10, think what it's like. Are there clothes maybe thrown on the bedroom floor or, you know, stuck on a chair?

Maybe the dishwasher is full with dirty dishes that nobody's bothered to wash. Or maybe, as in our house, the dishwasher is empty but the dishes are still on the top because nobody's bothered to check.

And maybe there's a lovely basket of clean washing that's at the bottom of the stairs that stays there for two weeks until I finally bring it up the stairs.

I don't know whether that's just my angst here or whether that resonates with anybody here. So we can think that other people have perfect homes. And we can think that actually maybe our homes and our lives are too messy and we don't want anybody to come in and see it.

In fact, the best way for our family to have a really good clean-up of our house is when we know that we've got visitors coming to stay. But it's our home for better or for worse.

[2 : 11] And to let somebody into your home is to let them into your life. No matter the state of your family or your home life, let the Lord Jesus come in.

He's knocking at the door. The reading we've had takes place in a home. It's the home of Peter and Andrew and it really illustrates Jesus' amazing acts of compassion when he was invited into their home.

So the first thing is that Mark tells us is after Jesus left the synagogue with James and John, they went to Simon and Andrew's house, Simon and Peter's house. So Peter and Andrew not only brought their friends James and John home from church, but they also brought Jesus.

And that's a really good tip for us. Let's not just leave Jesus at church. Let's take him home with us so it's going to impact our home life, our daily life, and those of our friends and our family and those that live under the same roof.

These two brothers, sorry, these two sets of brothers, James and John and Peter and Andrew, they'd abandoned earthly pursuits to follow Jesus and pursue the kingdom of God that Jesus had been talking about.

[3 : 25] And the day that we're talking about, they'd received an up-close and personal front-row seat of Jesus' love and power. And when you follow Jesus and invite him into your home, blessings are going to happen.

You're going to see Jesus do some things in your life and the lives of others that only he can do. Are there going to be challenges? Yes. Are there going to be difficult times? Of course there are. We know that.

But following Jesus is much better than walking away from him. So question, how do you bring Jesus home with you from church? And how does what we do here on a Sunday affect what we do on a Monday?

The Book of Mark is a really great introductory book to the Bible, if you've never read the Bible before. It's short, it's quick, and it explains the life of Jesus.

In chapter 1, there's a really wonderful thread that weaves its way through it. The focus is not only what Jesus does and says, but it's also got a wonderful message of where Jesus goes.

[4 : 37] There's kind of a holy covering, a massive holy umbrella that covers all parts of our life. And Jesus belongs in all parts of that. We in the modern world tend to kind of separate and compartmentalise our lives into who we are at work, who we are at home, who we are out there in public, who we are personally.

And that's why we can have sort of parallel and contradictory lives. So are we the same person on a Monday at work, or a Saturday out at the football, or a Friday evening out with our friends, that we are on a Sunday?

Anyway, when I was preparing this sermon, I highlighted all the places Jesus goes in Mark 1. The wilderness is mentioned a couple of times, and the wilderness is when we're alone, but it's really important to invite God to come into that with us.

Nazareth is also mentioned too, so Jesus being seen in the city and the towns. Nazareth at the time was seen as a bit of a second rate and a bit of a rubbish kind of a town.

And a common phrase that we used when Jesus was about was, nothing ever good comes from Nazareth. Well, that's quite interesting because Jesus was from there. And when Jesus is baptised in verse 10, the heavens get in on the act.

[5 : 57] The sacredness and the supernatural and the heavenly realm get together and they meet with him. And in verse 16, Jesus goes to Galilee to call his first disciples, the fishermen, their place of work.

So Jesus belongs in all areas of our life. He is Lord over all. Then he goes to Capernaum and he heads straight to the synagogue, basically like our church.

It's a specific place that's been built for worship. And of course, in the UK, I think a lot of people just kind of imagine that Jesus is kind of only found in churches.

So we find Jesus in the wilderness, the workplace, the town, the country, the church, and then finally the home. So God, we invite you into our messy homes.

Thinking that our lives are part of that vast, holy umbrella. And we invite Jesus into all aspects. Come into our messy homes.

[7 : 01] Your home is your personal space. To be home is a retreat and to have some form of control. When people are really ill or maybe they're dying, it's really common that they want to stay in their own home to be familiar and be comfortable.

I know when I've just got a cold, I just want to be in my own bed, in my own home, with my own cup of tea. But sometimes, and actually very often, our homes get really messy and our lives can get out of control.

So invite him in. No matter how cluttered your house gets, no matter how out of control your life is, invite the Lord Jesus Christ to enter your home. He's knocking at the door of your home.

Don't worry about the messy kitchen or the clothes all over the place or the washing up. The Lord wants to help you to clean up your life. And the first home that Jesus goes to in Mark is a messy, multi-generational home.

The night was getting late. It had been a really long evening. And the disciples and Jesus were tired. The crowds had been gathering at the synagogue. And they'd been amazed at what he'd been teaching and the fact that he'd delivered somebody of a demon.

[8 : 12] So at the end of the evening, Peter and Andrew invite Jesus to come back because everybody's quite weary. And Mark goes on to tell us that Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever.

So with this, we're not just talking about a minor cold. Obviously, they didn't have antibiotics then. So I imagine that if you had a high fever, actually, you could stand a really good chance that you might die.

So it's very serious. So Peter's home was a mess. His mother-in-law was really sick. But actually, that didn't stop him from inviting Jesus into the home. And I like the way the Bible says they told Jesus about her right away.

Right away. When you're facing something that is out of your control, don't wait to take it to Jesus. Take it to Jesus right away. Yes, go and speak to close and trusted friends.

But talk to him first. Don't hesitate and don't procrastinate. Because Jesus wants you to bring your concerns to him. He wants to help you and encourage you because he loves you.

[9 : 19] And I think this little insight out of Peter is just telling Jesus the first thing is a lesson in prayer. Telling him what's going on. So they told Jesus right away.

I'm not sure what Peter was expecting Jesus to do. He'd certainly seen him do some amazing things during the day. But I think that Peter was really just compelled to want to tell Jesus what's going on.

And if you or I are ill or struggling with something, often we feel the same way, don't we? We want our friends to know. I often visit people in their homes when they're ill or they're struggling with something like bereavement.

I don't do anything dynamic. I just go and visit. I sit on their sofas. I listen to them. Have a cup of tea. Chat. And I pray for them. Nothing special.

But they tell me that it helps. And I know for myself, if somebody comes down and does that with me when I'm struggling with something, that really helps too. So be honest. Tell him what's going on with your life.

[10 : 20] And verse 31, I think, is the most beautiful of verses. He went to her bedside. And as he took her by the hand and helped her to sit up, the fever suddenly left her.

And she got up and prepared a meal for them. So Mark says that Jesus went to her bedside and took her by the hand. He could simply have just entered the house and sat in another room and just said, be healed, and her fever would have gone.

But no, he went to her and he took her hand. And I believe that this tells us masses about what Jesus is like and how much he loves us. And this is what Jesus wants to do with each of us, both Christians and non-Christians.

He wants to give us all a touch of his grace and his love. And then she prepared a meal for him, it goes on to say. I find the reaction to her healing really fascinating.

Mark tells us she prepared a meal for them. Some translations say she began to serve them. So let's be clear here. She was completely healed.

[11 : 22] There wasn't a recovery period. One moment she was kind of at death's door. And the next she was up, she was fit, and she was making a meal. And I think that this verse demonstrates two things.

One, obviously, that Jesus had authority in healing physical sicknesses. But it also illustrates what our response should be whenever God heals us of something maybe spiritual or physical.

And it illustrates what our response should be when Jesus touches us with his hand of salvation.

And I'm convinced that this miracle reveals that God heals us so that we may serve him and others.

As a good friend of mine says, and is always reminding me, we're saved to serve. So a question.

How often has God touched our lives and then we don't do anything with that blessing or that opportunity?

Your home is a sanctuary. The most personal of places. And when you invite Jesus into your house, when you don't leave him at the door looking in, when you're totally honest about the condition of your house, and he then helps to transform your clutter, other people are going to notice.

[12 : 36] It says, that evening at sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. I think this is a wonderful example of stewardship. The idea of being good stewards of what we have and what God gives us is that we don't really own anything.

All we have belongs to God, including our homes. So on one hand, our homes are our most personal, sacred places, a place to rest and peace. But actually our homes are entrusted to our care to be used in the service of God.

So the crowds came to Peter's house because they knew that Jesus was there. They knew that he'd healed the mother-in-law. And so people kept coming, coming and coming.

People were ill, people were being brought to him. And he healed them because the news of him had gone viral. Jesus may not ask us to use our homes in quite the same way as that.

But actually invite Jesus into your home and others are going to notice. Invite other people into your home and show them God's love. They're going to see the difference that Jesus makes in your house.

[13 : 45] They're going to be amazed and they're going to want the same thing. And you can be a light for Christ to help your friends with their own messy homes and their own messy lives. Your life will be an example of Jesus bringing peace and wholeness.

So Peter and Andrew, let their home be a gathering place for the town to come to meet the Lord. And as I finish, I just want to think about two or three things. Number one, how do we do the same? Maybe think and pray how we can do that. Now, also, I'm aware that I'm talking about a lovely safe house. Some people in this congregation, you may be sitting there thinking, you know what? I don't live in a safe house. I feel under threat. And if that's the case, please tell somebody. Tell a trusted friend. Tell one of us. Tell the ministry team, whatever.

Don't sit there in silence. And also, you might be sitting there thinking, well, that's all very well for you to say about your life and everything. But you know what? You don't know me. You don't know the mess that I've made, the things I've done wrong.

[14 : 52] God's not going to be interested in coming into my life. But I'm telling you that he is. He wants to be there. He's knocking at the door. So when I finish later, there will be prayer ministry.

If you want prayer ministry for anything that I've said, good, bad, or indifferent, anything that Tim said, please come and have prayer. So we'll just pray together as we finish.

Dear Lord, we invite you into our messy homes and our messy lives.

Lord, you know who I am and what my life is all about. Somebody is sick. There's messes. There's anxiousness.

There's worries. You are the Lord of all life, including the most private of places, my home. And I want to tell you all about my mess.

[15 : 54] Help me to transform the clutter of my life and come to my messy home. For it's not my home, but it's yours to be used in your service.

Amen.