

The God of Sanctuary

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[0 : 01] Now, last week Kyle introduced his sermon with something that I actually really appreciated, I found very insightful, and something I don't know that I would have thought of myself, and Kyle said that you can tell a lot about a person by what kind of furniture you find in their house.

And so then he, as you may recall, he then took us on a virtual tour of his bookshelf and all the pictures of, you know, on his wall at home, and I'm not going to do the same this week.

Yeah, I mean, if you want to come see my house, sure, you know, let's have dinner or tea at my place. But this week, the reason that I'm not going to give you an indoor tour of my place is because we're shifting our focus.

We're going to shift our focus from indoor decor to outdoor, to outdoor decor. What's your outdoor furniture like, right? Now, this is the time of year when everybody's probably, like, trying to hide their outdoor furniture in their garage and to protect it from the weather.

But so it's a little bit out of season, but we're going to talk about it anyway. You can tell a lot about a home from the outdoor decor. So let's look at some examples.

[1 : 10] Let's say that you're walking through a neighborhood in an unfamiliar city, and let's say you encounter a house that looks something like this up there on the screen.

Now, what would you think, and maybe I'll throw this out to you instead of giving my own answers. What would you think about the person who lives in this house?

Sorry? Don't come over. A very private person? Sorry? Big dog. Yeah, there's no beware of dog sign, but there really should be, shouldn't there?

That's the kind of thing. Oh, man, everyone's saying everything. I'm losing track here. Bad neighborhood. Bad neighborhood, maybe, yeah. Fearful.

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. No, door-to-door salesman not welcome. You need an appointment if you're going to come over. This is not just the kind of person you can drop in and see.

[2 : 09] Yeah. So this is not the most welcoming sort of site when you see, you know, this nice driveway, but the house is behind this, you know, this metal gate.

You know, you're actually kind of surprised there isn't razor wire on the top of it and everything like that, right? You know, this is very clearly not a welcoming place, and the homeowners don't even need to use words to communicate that to you.

That's all communicated just by the way they're building, just by the way they have arranged the outdoor decor in their home, the way they've arranged their fence, the way they've hidden their house behind it.

Now, let's suppose you walk up to another house. The house doesn't have a fence or a gate, but you walk right up to the doorstep, and you find this lying in front of the door.

Now, what do you learn about this kind of person? They like, all right, so there's a welcome mat laid out, and there's pumpkins next to it, so obviously this is a person who likes pumpkins, yeah, you know.

[3 : 12] They enjoy company. Friendly people. Or maybe they just found a good sale at Walmart at welcome mats or something like that, yeah.

Sorry, did someone say something here? I knew you were going to bring that up. You knew I was going to bring that up, yeah. The Walmart thing, yeah. Yeah. I mean, you might learn a little bit about that person, too, right?

They want to make people feel welcome. They want you to know that, hey, when you come to the door, you're our guest. You're valued. We want you here. Please, please come in. But at the same time, right, that's what's the purpose of an entry mat?

You wipe your feet. What does that tell you about the people who live in this house? They're clean, right? They don't like mud tracked into their house. They don't want you to walk in, you know, having walked through mud and so forth, and just to clomp right into their house, get your muddy shoes all over the carpet.

They're asking you, wipe your feet off before you come in. And, of course, since this is Canada and not the States, not only do you wipe your feet, your shoes, but then you set them aside in the entryway, and you walk in in your socks.

[4 : 21] So, you know, so on the one hand, you're welcome, but on the other hand, you need to clean up as you walk into the house. And it's kind of funny because we recognize instinctively there that those are the two things are actually compatible with one another.

You can welcome people, invite people in, but at the same time, you recognize, look, they do need to be cleaned up when they come into my house. Now, and that's going to be significant as we continue to look at the tabernacle and the outdoor decor.

But let's think about a third house. What if you walked up towards the home of somebody who is really rich, the property of someone who is rich, and you discover that this person's property is surrounded by a fence on all sides.

So similar to the first house that we saw. But in the very front of the property, in the entrance, the fence has this huge gate. It's 30 feet wide, and the gate is wide open.

The gate is left wide open. And then as you walk in, the very first piece of outdoor furniture you encounter is this big, shiny, expensive grill for cooking meat.

[5 : 33] All right, you're immediately thinking, oh, that sounds like the kind of place I want to be. Right behind that, there's something that looks like, you know, this really deep birdbath. A birdbath that's been just polished to a brilliant sheen.

And then behind that birdbath is the actual home of this rich person. And it's ornamented in gold and silver. It has all these expensive textiles around it. No pumpkins, sorry. You know, but, you know, what could you learn about that kind of person?

You know, we're like, what would I even make of that? Well, that's what we're going to talk about today, because we're going to learn about the Lord God by looking at the outdoor furniture for the tabernacle. This is a movable palace that the Lord God commanded the people of Israel to build for him.

This is his home as he lives among them, as he is present among them. And so we see here the parts that we're going to learn about today are this outer doorway. You see that on the right, on the east end.

And then you come in, there is an altar made out of bronze, a big grill. And then we have this wash basin, a thing that looks like a really deep birdbath.

[6 : 42] And that all comes in between the person entering the courtyard and the tabernacle tent itself. And we're going to be focusing on Exodus chapter 38 this morning, in which the people of Israel are obeying the Lord's commands to build the outdoor furniture of his tabernacle, to build the fencing material that encloses the courtyard.

And we've learned a lot about the Lord so far in the first 37 chapters of Exodus. And I want to mention that because we're building on things that we already know about the Lord. We've learned that God is great as he overpowers this empire, this ancient empire of Egypt.

As he rescues the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, we've learned that God is good as he provides for their needs in the desert, as he gives them good laws at Mount Sinai.

And now we're learning that God is with us. God is great, God is good, God is with us. As he gives them his tabernacle, as he shows them how a great and good God can be with us, how a great and good God can be present among a sinful people, among a people who are rebelling against him, which is what we saw at the golden calf incident a few weeks back.

We learn in Exodus chapter 38 that this great and good God has given them instructions to build this movable palace that can journey along with them.

[8 : 08] This is a place where his presence is revealed to them. This is a place where they can meet him, where they can worship him in their travels. This tabernacle tent is surrounded by, first of all, a courtyard.

And this courtyard that you see up there on the screen there, it's about 100 feet long, about 75 feet wide. So lots of space in there. The courtyard was set apart as a sacred space, as a holy space in the middle of the Israelite camp.

It was marked out as holy. It was set apart. It was fenced off by these bronze pillars that you see all around the edges of the space there.

And there are these linen curtains that are strung in between the pillars. And then there on the east end, there's hung this huge gateway curtain that's fancy. It's very blue and purple and red and it's finely woven.

And it's 30 feet long. And one thing that tells you a lot about this curtain is the fact that this is actually, and unfortunately, this is an inaccuracy in the drawing because the curtain is actually one curtain.

[9 : 20] It shows it is two in the drawing, but that's not correct. The curtain, the original curtain, was one giant curtain, 30 feet long. Now think about the way that you would use a curtain that was that large.

You wouldn't just open and close it over and over and over again throughout the day. This is the kind of curtain that the day comes, you open it all the way and you leave it open all day long and then you close it at the end of the day.

That's the way this curtain works so that people can come and go throughout the day into the tabernacle courtyard. This means that anyone anyone from the people of Israel, any man, woman, or child, anyone from that community marked out by their covenant relationship with the Lord, anyone could enter this sacred space through that gate that was left wide open.

They could enter this sacred space, this sanctuary, to worship in the presence of the God of sanctuary. And so the first thing we learn about this God who is with us is this, the Lord welcomes his people into his holy presence.

The Lord welcomes his people into his holy presence. His gates are wide open and everyone who belongs to him is welcome. Now I'm reminded of sort of a similar encounter a few years ago when I was in Washington, D.C.

[10 : 45] with my family and we were touring the National Mall seeing the sights of the American Capitol, all these monuments and museums and as we passed by the White House, we learned from the gatekeepers of the White House that the White House grounds had been temporarily, just for an hour or two, had been temporarily opened for any visitor to come in.

Anyone could come in. Now they do give regular tours of the White House building itself, but you have to sign up ahead of time, there's high security, they're carefully guarded and then you only see bits and just little bits of the White House that they show you and then they usher you on out.

Well this was different. They weren't opening up the house itself but they were opening up all of the grounds, all of the lawns, all of the gardens, the tennis courts, everything else and you as a guest could wander freely wherever you wanted to go and no one would stop you.

There's Secret Service around but they just let you do whatever and you're just walking through all of these spaces looking at all of these places that have so much history. That was a special experience for me.

That's something that I remember very vividly and I often thought too, one thing that just really made me stop to think was not only was it we who were American citizens walking around in there, there were a number of foreign tourists who had come from places like China and they were walking around taking photos of everything of course and they were just, you know, you just wonder what was running through their head just gaping at the fact that they have been welcomed into this foreign place, they've been welcomed into the courtyard of the President of the United States and the most powerful man in the world.

[12 : 34] That's special. And how much more special how much more sacred was it for God's people to be invited into his courtyard, into the courtyard of his palace, into the place on earth that the Lord calls home.

How much greater joy to be invited, to be welcomed into the presence of the great and good God, the God of the Exodus.

In Psalm 84, the psalmist talks about this and he says, how lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts. My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Blessed are those who dwell in your house ever singing your praise. How happy are those who remain, who linger in the courtyard of the Lord, who are singing his praise out of an overflow of joy because he has welcomed them into his holy presence.

[14 : 04] The Lord even, you know, what's amazing about the psalm, the psalm says, you know, the Lord is even welcoming these birds in, you know, the sparrow and the swallow are allowed in. They're making their nests there near the altar.

There they are welcomed into his holy courtyard and there they find a place of refuge, a place of security, a holy place. in a world that is cruel and savage and has been distorted and twisted under a curse, under a fall, this is a place of refuge.

This is a sanctuary and this is a holy place that is good and delightful and beautiful. There is people find that they are home where the Lord welcomes his people into his holy presence.

And we learned just a few weeks ago that this tabernacle and then later on the temple in Jerusalem, they were just shadows. This is just a little taste of the tabernacle of the true temple that was yet to come.

We saw that that was the man, the one man, Jesus of Nazareth, the God man, the full presence of God, everything that God is, dwelling on earth as a human being living among us.

[15 : 33] and everyone who believes in Christ is found in Christ in this tabernacle, in this temple, is found within the courts of the Lord, in this place of sanctuary, this place of holiness and refuge and gladness.

Jesus often tells his disciples, he tells them things like, you know, abide in my love, linger there, remain there, find blessing here.

And together as a church, we who are believers in Christ, we are built into a temple, we are built into the place where God the Holy Spirit dwells among us.

Linger here with the rest of your church. Linger here with the temple of the living God and the courts of the Lord. this is where we belong.

This is where the Lord welcomes his people into his holy presence. Now, when God's people were welcomed into his holy presence, into that first tabernacle, remember, they would first step in through that gateway.

[16 : 49] And the first site, what we learned before, was the first site they would lay eyes on would be something that looked like this big bronze grill for barbecuing meat. and its construction was described in, it's described in Exodus chapter 38 verses 1 and 2.

He made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood. Five cubits was its length and five cubits its breadth. It was square and three cubits was its height.

He made horns for it on its four corners. Its horns were of one piece with it and he overlaid it with bronze. So this altar, it's four and a half feet high.

It's about seven and a half feet long and wide, very large surface. And on the four corners of the altar, there are these four horn-like protrusions. And these things in the ancient world, they symbolized, they seem to have symbolized power.

This was a common feature on many altars of that day. And these horns were probably used in a practical way by the priests to tie down to tether these animal sacrifices as they're being roasted on the altar.

[17 : 59] Now in those times, a person who was on the run for his or her life, that person was sometimes for, you know, trying to escape someone who's trying to get revenge on them, someone who's trying to hurt them, this person would run into the courtyard and grab hold of those horns.

Grab onto the horns of the altar. That's because the altar was sacred. The altar was, it represented the presence of God. It was this place of sanctuary, this courtyard.

Human blood was not to be shed there. It reminds me a little bit of a refugee from El Salvador several years ago who was going to be deported back to his home country by the Canadian government and this man fled for sanctuary to a church in Langley, a church just down the road from where I lived.

And this man lived inside of that church building for two years, never left the building for two years until the deportation order was withdrawn against him and he could reunite with his family.

This man knew that a sacred place was a place of refuge. That just like that sparrow, just like that swallow, just like those birds, he would be welcomed there, he would be safe there.

[19 : 14] And so it is for everyone who seeks refuge. It is found at the altar of the Lord. Even the birds can make their nests at the altar. It's safe.

It is a place of sanctuary. The altar provides refuge not only from the wrath of man, not only from the anger of other people, it provides even greater refuge from the wrath of God.

If we think about it, especially as we've learned about the holiness of a great God, a good God, the tabernacle, it really shouldn't be a place of safety. We've seen as we study the Ten Commandments, we've seen as we've studied what happened when the people of Israel constructed a golden calf to worship, we've seen them breaking God's laws, we've seen them dishonoring Him, we've seen them rebelling against this great and good God, and we've seen that we are guilty of the same.

We don't belong there. This should not be a safe place for us. God with us should not be safe. We've learned this year that every man and woman on earth stands guilty before the God of heaven.

And yet, somehow this place, the courts of the Lord, this is a place of sanctuary, and it's a place of sanctuary first of all because of the bronze altar that stands in the courtyard.

[20 : 33] That very first thing you encounter when you walk in. The altar was a place where people brought sacrificial offerings to the Lord. Now, there were many reasons that the people of Israel would bring sacrifices.

They served many different purposes in the covenant community of God's people. And the first and the primary reason, the biggest reason of all is because they were guilty of sin.

They had broken God's laws. They'd broken God's laws intentionally, knowing what they were doing, knowing it was wrong, and doing it anyway. Consciously choosing. They'd broken God's laws unintentionally.

Don't we do that sometimes? You, without consciously thinking about it, you lash out at somebody and utter an angry word. You didn't consciously sit down and think, you know what, this person could use an angry word right now.

You just did it. You just, sometimes we do things that come out of us, of the unconscious sin that's resident in our hearts.

[21 : 35] And the people of Israel did that too, and they were guilty of that too. And so the first and primary purpose of the altar, it was to provide a place where their sins could be atoned for.

Where their sins could be dealt with. Where God's right and proper anger against them, it could be satisfied. So they take an animal, a bull or a goat, and it would be killed.

Its blood drained, its body roasted on the fire. And what this did is this animal served as a substitute. It was a picture of a substitute.

It was dying in the place, its body broken, its blood shed in the place of the one who had sinned. In the place of the people who had sinned.

So that they would not face that fate themselves. And this practice, that someone has to die for sins. There has to be death. It must be atoned for.

[22 : 40] This practice of bringing the sin offering over and over and over and over because we keep sinning. That practice was meant to point to these people and to point us toward the true sin offering, towards the final sin offering, the one that actually could take away all of our sins.

It was meant to point towards Jesus Christ. In the New Testament book of Hebrews in chapter 9, these words are written about Jesus. He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

those high priests, they would take an animal and they would sacrifice it. Jesus didn't take an animal and sacrifice it. He laid himself on the altar. Jesus died as a substitute.

His body was crucified on a cross. His blood shed for you and for me. Jesus died in my place. He died in your place so that you would not bear the punishment for your sin.

He did it so that he would take it in your place. So everyone who believes in Christ will not perish but have everlasting life.

[24 : 01] The good life. The life that comes from being in Christ by faith. The joy of living in the courts of the Lord. The life that comes from dwelling in the house of the Lord.

The God of sanctuary. This is the one way that the Lord has established for us to be forgiven and to live with him.

Many people will say, oh there's many ways to God. There are many paths and many roads. There's only one entrance into that tabernacle. It's through the one gate and when you walk in that gate there's only one way towards the tabernacle.

It's through that one altar where that sacrifice is made. And so there's only one sacrifice for sin. Only one way to God the Father once and for all.

The sacrifice of the one Savior Jesus Christ. There is no other way to God the Father. There is no other way to be forgiven. And the Apostle Peter says in Acts chapter 4, And there is salvation in no one else.

[25 : 09] For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. He is the one way into the presence of God.

The one way to the good life. The one way into the courtyard of the Lord. And so the Lord welcomes his people into his holy presence only by atonement for their sin.

Only by atonement for their sin. And when atonement has been provided by this sacrifice, what's great is that this altar is no longer, it doesn't stop being used.

Rather, his worshipers continue to offer sacrifices. There's a second form of sacrifice that this bronze altar is used for. A memorial offering. God's great acts of salvation are recounted to the people.

They remember him and they worship him by sacrificing meat and grain and giving monetary offerings. And they do this all because their own sins have already been atoned for.

[26 : 12] And because our own sins have been atoned for by Jesus Christ, we continue to offer sacrifices. Because Jesus has atoned for our sins.

In the book of Hebrews, we've already seen Jesus offered as that one final sacrifice for sins. But lest we think that, okay, no more sacrifices should be given.

In fact, the author, towards the end of the book in chapter 13, writes, through him, that's through Jesus, through him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.

That is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

So when we sing praises to God, when we say how good are the courts of the Lord, how good is the life that God has given us, when we sing this morning and we're here to sing not only to the Lord our God, but we're here to sing to one another to remind each other of how good he is, how great he is, how he is with us, when we tell of all that he has done for us, when we tell, when we leave here and then we tell those who don't believe the good news who Jesus is and what he's done for me and what he's done for us, we are offering a sacrifice to God.

[27 : 43] When we do good, when we take our money and we share it, when we open up our homes and we share our homes and our resources, we open up our lives to one another, we are offering a sacrifice to God.

We are honoring the Lord our God by saying that what is mine really belongs to you. It's yours because of all you've done for me. We are honoring the Lord our God in response to the atoning sacrifice he has provided on our behalf.

So we have sin offerings, we have memorial offerings, third and finally, the bronze altar, that's a place where fellowship offerings are made to the Lord.

Fellowship offerings. The people would offer meat and grain and other food as a sacrifice and then what they would do is, you know, this food wasn't just thrown out. This food would be perhaps eaten by the priest, but in this case, in this fellowship offering, the people would take that food that's been grilled and they would sit down and have a meal.

If there was room, they would have it there in the courtyard. If not, they would have it outside. But they would be having this meal in the presence of the Lord. They would be holding a feast in the presence of the Lord, sharing a table with him, because they had been welcomed into his family.

[29 : 07] We learned about that covenant meal several weeks back from Exodus chapter 24. God's people sitting down and having a meal with him.

That's something that in the ancient world you never did with someone you were enemies with. You never did with somebody who you were at odds with. You only sat down and had a meal with family, with friends, with guests, with people you were at peace with, people you were reconciled with.

And so we too, we are welcomed into God's family because Jesus has made atonement for us. And Jesus has provided an offering for us, this fellowship offering.

Jesus has set the table for us to sit down and feast and have a meal with the Lord. And in John chapter 6, Jesus tells his followers that the meal they would have would be him.

That he is the true feast. It's a very odd sort of image, one that's hard for us to wrap our minds around, but the whole point is that we have this fellowship relationship with God because we have Jesus.

[30 : 18] He has given us his body, his blood. And here's what Jesus says in John chapter 6. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.

And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, that's himself, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.

Let me stop for a moment there, because it's easy to think, oh, Jesus is using a metaphor, you know, his flesh isn't really food, his blood isn't really drink. What Jesus is saying is the opposite.

He's saying, you know that food and drink that you eat over the course of your day and your lives? That's actually the metaphor, that's the image, that's the shadow. You know what the real food and the real drink is?

[31 : 29] It's me. I'm the reality. I am the feast. I am the reconciled covenant meal with God.

And he continues, whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, lingers in me, remains in me, and I in him.

As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died.

Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever. And so we preach Christ crucified, because as we come to know this God man, we find life in his name.

we eat the bread, we drink from the cup, we do this at the Lord's table at communion, because his body was broken, his blood was shed for us to give us a feast, to give us a family meal, to celebrate the goodness of God in the presence of the Lord.

[32 : 48] That's a meal that's better, you know, that's better than American Thanksgiving. Forget that, this is the real meal. Jesus Christ, he has offered himself to restore our fellowship, our communion, our oneness with God and with one another.

And Jesus has done this because the Lord welcomes his people into his holy presence only by atonement for their sin. That's the basis for this new relationship, this new life in the courts of the Lord.

Now if you and I were to travel back again to the tabernacle, if we were to walk through that gateway in the sacred courtyard, if we were to continue past the bronze altar, we would find in that courtyard a bronze basin.

And that basin might look a little bit like a really deep birdbath. That's probably about the closest equivalent we would have in this day and age. If we were to look at Exodus chapter 38 for a description, here's what we would find.

He made the basin of bronze and its stand of bronze from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting. That's the entrance of the tabernacle. So that's one verse, that's all that this tells us about, and really all you learn from that is that it's made of bronze, bronze that's pure enough that you can make mirrors out of it.

[34 : 19] So this is really nice stuff. Not a lot of impurities in this. But that doesn't tell us anything about what the basin is for, so what we'll have to do is turn back to Exodus chapter 30. And so this is actually the passage that Doug read earlier this morning.

And in Exodus chapter 30, the Lord explains the function of this basin. So it's not a bird bath, it's a human bath, which is why it's bigger.

chapter 30, the Lord says, it's going to be a water. Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. When they go into the tent of meeting or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash with water so that they may not die.

They shall wash their hands and their feet so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations.

And so this is what we may call a wash basin. In some older commentaries, they often call it something like a laver. This is designed for the priests, and the priests would come and they would wash their hands and their feet.

[35 : 48] Whenever they would approach the altar, that holy sacred altar, whenever they would approach that holy, sacred tabernacle tent, if they were to approach these things, if they were to approach the Lord in these ways with bloody, greasy hands, with grimy, nasty feet, the Lord says that they will die.

Imagine putting that on your welcome mat. Wipe your feet or you will die. die. The Lord says they will die because what they are doing is they are defiling, treating as grimy, dirty, and nasty.

They are defiling his holy presence with all of this contamination. It's the equivalent of trampling mud into the king's palace, all over his courts.

It's the equivalent of smearing blood and grease onto the king's food. The lesson that the bronze wash basin teaches the people of Israel is this.

You've been contaminated. You've been defiled. And you need to be washed clean. You need to be cleansed of what's contaminated you.

[37 : 06] This is something that we get on a gut level, on a very deep level that runs far deeper than our physical appearance and the physical mud and dirt and whatever that's on our bodies.

This is something that we as human beings understand deeply. We try to pretend this isn't a thing, but this is a thing. You and I have a very real sense of being defiled, of being contaminated, of being dirty.

For thousands of years, this has been given the label shame. Shame. In many cultures, shame is such a deep component of how they think. Shame controls us deeply.

We try to pretend it's not a thing in our culture, but it is. People are driven deeply by this craving for honor, this desire to be rid of shame. We're ashamed of who we are inside, deep within us, deep down where other people can't see us.

We're ashamed of the defiling things we've done. We're ashamed because of the defiling things, not only that we've done, but that have been done to us. That sense that I feel dirty, I feel unclean because someone has said or done something to me that makes me feel unclean, contaminated.

[38 : 33] If everyone found out that this is what I'm like or this has happened to me, they would think I'm gross, they would want nothing to do with me, they would stay far away from me.

To feel ashamed is to feel dirty and gross, contaminated, to feel small and worthless and unclean. This past week I had a conversation with a pastor in Vancouver, the Vancouver Eastside.

He told me, this pastor and his church, they work a lot with a lot of individuals in the inner city, First Nations, people from the First Nations community and the shame that many of these people felt as children after spending years in their residential schools.

For years they were told that they and their people were worthless. Their culture was filthy and evil. Their language should not be used. Some of these children, they tried to whiten their skin, tried to scrub it clean to hide the shame of their darker flesh.

When they returned home they didn't want to speak their language. They didn't want to participate in anything in their culture. They thought it was dirty and gross. They felt horrible inside. Maybe you've had an experience in your life that's brought such an overwhelming sense of shame on you.

[39 : 51] Maybe it's sin that you have committed. Maybe it's sin that someone else has committed against you and the difficulty is it feels the same. Either way, both of them bring shame. Maybe you felt the need at that time to stand in the shower to scrub your body raw.

A desperate urge to clean off that shame to wash away an invisible spot. You're like Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's play who's crying out, what will these hands ne'er be clean? Will they never be clean?

That experience of shame, that came into the world when man first rebelled, when our ancestors first sinned against God in that first place of sanctuary, that predecessor to the tabernacle, the Garden of Eden.

And we read about that in Genesis chapter 3. They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.

[41 : 14] He felt naked and exposed, and so do we. Naked and exposed, dirty and contaminated. The presence of the Lord no longer feels like this place of sanctuary. It feels like a threat because of our shame.

And so what people do a lot of times is they withdraw. They withdraw from the Lord. They run away from him. They don't want to be near him. We withdraw from his people.

We withdraw from other people in general, maybe, but especially people withdraw from the church. They hide away their shame. Perhaps they stop attending, or maybe they do attend, but they never let people know who they are deep down, or what's going on in their life, because they're afraid if someone were to see the real me, they would be disgusted.

They'd be horrified. But the Lord provided sanctuary for his priests by giving them away to wash away their defilement, to wash away their shame, to restore their honor before the Lord.

These priests, they wash themselves with water. And they were made clean. The Lord welcomes his people into his holy presence only by atonement for their sin and cleansing for their shame.

[42 : 34] Cleansing for their shame. So in later centuries, how this practice continued is whenever Gentiles wish to join the people of God. Someone who's a Gentile says, this God you worship is amazing.

How do I join your covenant community? How do I become one of the people who can come into the courts of the Lord and enjoy this good life with the people of God? And so the Jewish leaders, they developed a way to invite Gentiles in.

Not only would they be circumcised if they were male, but the Jewish leaders would have them take a ritual bath. They would get in the water, they would immerse themselves in the water, washing them clean, to wash away the impurities of their Gentile background, the shame.

And so, in the time of Christ, John the Baptist encouraged the Jewish people also to come down to the Jordan River to be washed, immersed, baptized in water, washed clean in repentance of their sin, turning away from their sin.

And Jesus and his disciples also commanded that those who believe in him should be baptized. And in baptism, we show that our contamination has been washed away.

[43 : 42] we have been cleansed from our shame. Because Jesus Christ, not only did he bear our sin, all of it on the cross, but he bore our shame on the cross.

Jesus died in a public place, naked and exposed and ridiculed and mocked even by the criminals on the crosses next to him.

So that you and I would not bear that shame any longer. But we would find honor in the presence of God.

So the author of Hebrews urges us, don't hide from the courtyard of the Lord. Don't hold back. Don't stay hidden. Come, enter. Enter the throne room of God himself.

Don't just enter the courtyard. Walk past the altar. Walk past the bronze wash basin and go right into the tent that only the priest can enter and go right through that first room and go right into the most holy place.

[44 : 50] Enter the presence of the Lord because we trust that Jesus has sprinkled us with his sacrificial blood, atoning for all of our sin. There is no more anger, no more wrath left for us.

We trust that Jesus has washed us with pure water, cleansing us from every spot of shame. And in Hebrews chapter 10 we read, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

So we can find joy in the courtyard of the Lord, knowing that we are welcomed into his presence. This is a place of great glory that we enter.

That shadow and copy that we read about in Exodus chapter 38, this tabernacle that's a shadow and copy of the real tabernacle. This place is a place of incredible wealth.

The New Living Translation of the Bible, it translates all the quantities and weights of the material used and it tells us how much precious metal went into the construction. In Exodus chapter 38, it says, the people brought special offerings of gold totaling 2,193 pounds.

[46 : 16] The whole community of Israel gave 7,545 pounds of silver. The people also brought as special offerings 5,310 pounds of bronze. This is not packing light for a camping trip.

This is a place of incredible value, glory, worth, massive wealth, massive wealth, jaw dropping beauty. This is a place that no man or woman is ever worthy to enter, ever worthy to walk into the courtyard, its bronze furniture, let alone to enter that tent with its silver and its gold progressively more valuable.

But you and I, we've been welcomed into the true tabernacle. If this is how precious the copy is, imagine how precious, how great the real thing is, the true presence of God, a place far more valuable and precious and glorious.

And God says, draw near, come, enter. And maybe you will say to him, I can't be welcomed by you, God. I'm guilty of sin.

I deserve only your anger. I deserve to be punished. But the body of Christ was broken for you. His blood was shed for you.

[47 : 36] His sacrifice is atoned for you so that you can serve the Lord and be welcomed at his table, forgiven and free from guilt.

And maybe you will say to the Lord, I can't be welcomed by you, God. I'm unclean. I'm shameful. I deserve to be rejected. I deserve to be driven away. But Christ has taken your shame on himself.

He invites you to be washed by the water of baptism. Jesus has restored your dignity so that you can boldly approach the presence of the Lord, honored, receiving words of honor from him, free from shame.

God, our father. This is eternal life. This is the good life. In the presence of the Lord, the God of sanctuary.

And so the Lord welcomes his people. He welcomes you. He welcomes me into his holy presence only by atonement for their sin and cleansing for their shame. God, our father.

[48 : 48] Father, I delhible. Amen. Father, I love you. Amen. God, we love you. I love you. Don't believe you. I love you. I love you. I love you. See you. God, we believe you. All right.