

The Church As House of Prayer

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Preacher: Samuel Yilma

[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everybody. How are you? It's a pleasure to be here, and I'm really pleased to stand in front of you as a Bible teacher. I've been taught by American Mission School in Ethiopia from my childhood. My father was working for the American company called the Bottling Company of Ethiopia, and then he got the opportunity to put his children to the American Mission School. And we went there and we graduated our elementary class there, and I passed with good grades. And then I joined the high school and also joined the...

Can you put that speaker? That's so powerful here. Can you put it closer? I can't use it, but can I have it with my hand? Yeah. Okay. And I got good study in a place called the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Fellowship Bible College, ETC. And I did my Bachelor of Theology there and graduated in 2000.

And God gave me another opportunity to come here in America to study my master's degree. And I went to Gordon Conway and graduated in 2013. And me and my wife, we came alone, but God blessed us with two children. I have two girls, seven and three years old. The second one is look like a boy. She's energetic. So we don't need to have another boy anymore.

So I became a pastor for Ethiopian and Eritrea ministry here at Trinity. And it's been seven years since we started this ministry. And we are very thankful for Trinity Baptist. We are working with Trinity Baptist for a long time. And you are like family for us. Of course, God gave us this as his family and part of we are part of family. So now I'm going to teach you about something that I touched with my life. And I really love to pray. And my wife is even better than me. She's really a prayer woman. And something that we helped us to found the base for our understanding about prayer. So I want to challenge you, brothers and sisters, for a little time,

I want to take you to back from the Old Testament and build up some foundational things. And we're going to come to the New Testament and we will conclude with some practical ways of prayer. Okay.

[3 : 3 7] So this is my outline. And you will get that. If you have your handouts, we can follow the handouts. If you don't understand my pronunciation when I speak English, you can find there so that, oh, he can say this. He means this one. So the church as house of prayer. This is the title.

We need to find for us to where this phrase, house of prayer comes from. I chose three scriptures and I want two people to help me by reading scripture. And we will see three biblical passages, the Bible passages.

And the first one is Matthew 21. The second one is Isaiah 56. And the third one is 2 Chronicles 6. But when we discuss about these three passages from the Bible, I just rather to choose to...

The last one are the first and the second and the third, okay? Chronologically. Because I want to get from the historical background what the house of prayer means in the Bible.

So I ask somebody to read for me 2 Chronicles 6, verse 12 and 13.

[5 : 1 1] Okay, thank you.

Thank you. We see the temple of God was built in 2 Chronicles 5.

And you see the dedication and the inauguration, the blessings and the prayers from this chapter up to chapter 7.

From chapter 5, 2 Chronicles up to chapter 7. And in these chapters, we focus into two things that I want your attention to see how the house of prayer founded there by the end of this temple building has been finished.

So when we understand this chapter, when we understand this passage, definitely we can understand what Jesus is going to say in the temple when he meets some bad people, I could say, in the church.

[6 : 58] So that he can say, in the church, so that he can say, this is the house of prayer, but you did this and this. Why he did that? Why he said that? Because he must have heard some concept in his mind from the Old Testament.

That's why we are digging from the past, from the Old Testament to understand that concept. So Solomon finished the work, and Solomon did for house of the Lord was finished.

It says in verse 1. They watched the ark enter the temple. The chronicler described the temple as filled with cloud.

This is chapter 5. When chapter 5 finished, the Spirit of God came upon his people and filled to this temple.

So the temple, how the temple was built, you know that David brought the intention, God gave him promise, and his child, Solomon, it's in our pronouncement Solomon, okay?

[8 : 04] It's kind of Hebrew. Hebrew language and Ethiopian language are similar. So Solomon built it. So it's a sign that God is among his people.

So this is a very significant time for Israel's history. So the second one is dedication. In chapter 6, from verse 1 to 11, you see Solomon's speech.

He addresses or bless the people and talks about his father, David, but gave the credit to God. Even though his father gave him this opportunity.

But he gave all the credit to God. He reminded the people that there is no God like their God.

It's just like that time God promised that David's family would always rule in Israel. Solomon's really, really hope the Almighty will stick by that. And the third one is Solomon's prayer of dedication, which I want to focus on.

[9 : 11] Solomon's prayer you find in 2 Chronicles, chapter 6, from verse 12 up to 13. Then Solomon stood up, that our brother read for us.

Solomon stood up before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. Solomon had made a branch platform five cobbets wide and three cobbets high and had set it in the court and had stood on it.

Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands towards heaven. Do you see the picture?

I tried to put it in the PowerPoint. I couldn't finish. I'm sorry. So I don't use the PowerPoint today. But it was emotional.

When you see that, for me it was emotional. Because I got a chance to visit Israel and I got a chance to get into the temple. And then I cried there.

[10 : 17] I don't know why in that time. Because one of the things that reminded me and came to my mind is, was in that time when I was in Israel.

By the way, I have a blood connection with Israelites. And half of my family, they live in Israel. So when I saw I visited that place, I cried.

I cried. And I saw many things came up to my mind as a vision. The things that I read from the Bible. One of the things that came to my mind is Solomon's prayer.

The first day he prayed to the new temple of God. So he raised his hands and prayed to God. This is the first time for Solomon prayed as a connection, as a connector, or as a contact person at the temple of God.

So when you go to 2 Chronicles 6, from verse 18 to 21, you see the long prayer passage.

[11 : 31] I don't want to get you to get through there. So I leave that to you to read by yourself. But I want to mention some things. You find prayer, the word prayer, five times here.

And Solomon prayed primarily to God, asking God, not only for his personal request or for the situational request for his current people, but also generational prayer.

He prayed for the generation come through after the Israelites, you know, so that God will listen to their prayer. Whenever any person come to this temple and want to contact God, want to connect with God, so that God will pray, God will listen to his or her prayer.

Amen? Amen? That's the foundation. That's the foundation. You know, the good thing is God responded to him by the next few verses.

Let's read first from chapter, next chapter, chapter 7 from 11 to 14. Somebody can read that for me.

[12 : 46] Chapter 7 from 11 to 14. So Solomon prayed, asked God about what? Not only just for the personal issue or for the people that they had any question on that situation, but he prayed for generations.

He, like, inaugurated the house of God with the name of prayer house. The house of prayer.

This is the house of prayer. Praise God. Whenever anybody comes with any request and nailed to you, raise their hands, listen to their prayer.

You know what God responds? Who got that passage to read for us? Chapter 7, verse 11 to 14. 2 Chronicles.

Okay. Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house. All that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the Lord and in his own house he successfully accomplished.

[13 : 54] Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him, I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. Amen.

When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain or command the locusts to devour the land or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.

Amen. This is now the prayer we pray. We always pray. For that last time we had, you know, fasting prayer time in our church for our country, for Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is now in crisis. And of course in a changing time, but there is big tensions. Here we have God's promise.

Amen. Amen. We pray. We read this scripture. And we ask God, you promised us. If your people come together and ask you, you will listen and bless our country.

[15 : 05] This is the foundation. This is the foundation. Let's go to the second part. The second part, we're going to go to the name or the phrase that we find directly as it is in Matthew chapter 24, 21.

So it is in Isaiah chapter 56 from verse 1 to 7. If anybody willing, he can or she can help us to read this scripture.

Isaiah chapter 56 from verse 1 to 7. Okay. Thank you. You can. Yes. Thus says the Lord, preserve justice and do righteousness.

For my salvation is about to come and my righteousness to be revealed. How blessed is the man who does this and the son of man who takes hold of it, who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and keeps his hand from doing any evil.

Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, The Lord will surely separate me from his people. Nor let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.

[16:20] But thus says the Lord, To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths and choose what pleases me, And hold fast my covenant. To them I will give in my house and within my walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters.

I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off. Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, To minister to him and to love the name of the Lord, To be his servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, And holds fast my covenant.

Even those I will bring to my holy mountain, And make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar.

For my house will be called a house of prayer for all the people. That's great. So this is the name that Jesus used to correct what was the wrong situation in the temple in Matthew 21.

As you know, after Solomon, The Israel kingdom divided into two, the north and the south. And as you know, Isaiah was a prophet and ministering to the southern part of the kingdom.

[17:49] So Isaiah's focus was, as you know, Most of, almost all of the prophets, Because there were false prophets during that time. But the good prophets' focus was helping the people to come back to God, So that they can keep their promise and covenant.

But the people of Israel were very far from God. They disobeyed God, re-blessed, And they were far and far and far. And the destruction comes.

So when you see the book of Isaiah, You divide it into two, two major things. Some people divided it into three, but I divided it into two. And the first part is from chapter 1 to 39.

It is like telling the people how they are sinned, How they are far from God. And that brought destruction.

And the destruction follows with judgment. So Isaiah was telling the Israelites before the exile, A little bit before the exile, Telling them that they need to repent.

[19:01] They need to go back to God. They need to come back to God. And the good thing, Every prophet in the Bible, And every prophecy, Ends with hope and restoration.

Amen? It doesn't finish with like any judgmental message. Because God is mercy for God. So Isaiah's message continued with another tone, From chapter 40 to the end of chapter 66.

And telling the people that, of course, God will judge them, That God will come, And you think to their neighbors, You know, Gentiles, And they invaded them.

They will take them to captivity. But God also will restore them. One day. So Isaiah started from chapter 40.

He will tell them that, How God will save them. How God will come. After a while to rescue them. And that way, Is his son, Jesus Christ.

[20 : 15] So through that, The second part of Isaiah's book, You find this chapter, Chapter 56. That's why, As brother told us, As brother read for us, We see that, God will tell them, When the restoration comes, The people come, Back to the house of God.

With what? With songs. With joyful songs. Which, Which place they come? With the place called, The house of what?

Prayer. So that's, That's why he mentioned. It is what, When do he, It happens, After the captivity, After 70 years. Because they, They should have to, Go to the captivity, With the Babylonian, Stay there, And one day, God will send, The, The messengers, And they rescuer them, And they, They will take them out.

But, All these things, Were, A shadow, For the New Testament, For the, The, The major, The prophet, You could say, That's the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Amen? That's why, Now Isaiah, Is telling the people that, These, Judgment, Will end up, With restoration. So, We see hope here.

[21 : 36] We see hope. But, But we need to understand that, Why, This old destruction, And judgment is coming, Because the people, Of God, Were, Far, From God.

They were, Like, Stuttered enemy, From God. They do bad things, Even in the house of God. You know the stories, Many stories you find. Even, Who are, Who, They, They were elected, To serve the Lord.

Their families, Their children, They did sin, In the house of God. Now, You can see, This picture, Almost similar, With similarity, In the New Testament.

That's why, Jesus, Immediately after, He got in the, Jerusalem, He immediately, Went to, The temple. And, You know, We're going to see, In a few minutes that.

So, The main point, In Isaiah chapter 6, The main point, Is, Hope, Of restoration, For, The house of prayer.

[22 : 46] So, We see the foundation, In second chronicles, The foundation, How, The temple of God, Built, For what purpose?

The purpose is what? People can come, And, Connect with God. Have relationship, Have fellowship with him. Pray, With him, Prayer is, What's prayer?

Prayer is, A conversation, Right? Talking with God, Spending some time with God, Sitting with him, Talking to him, Anything you like, You can talk to him, And he responds, Amen?

That's the house of God. That's the purpose. The house of God, Built, In, In the middle of, Israelite. Now, Through history, That's, Destroy, That's, Relationship, Go, Now, Isaiah is, Telling them, Please, Go back to God.

Repent. Unless, Otherwise, God will come, With judgment. But, God also will rescue you. The Messiah will come, And he will save you.

[23 : 58] That's why, We see in the last part, Of our passage, Let's go to Matthew chapter, 21. The, And I ask also, Any person to read for us, From, Verse, Verse 1 up to 13.

Now, When they drew near to Jerusalem, And came to Bethphage, To the Mount of Olives, Then Jesus sent two disciples, Saying to them, Go into the village in front of you, And immediately you will find a donkey tied, And a colt with her.

Untie them, And bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, You shall say, The Lord needs them, And he will send them at once. This took place to fulfill, What was spoken by the prophet, Saying, Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, Your king is coming to you, Humble and mounted on a donkey, And on a colt, The foal of a beast of burden.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, And put on them their cloaks, And he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, And others cut branches from the trees, And spread them on the road.

And the crowds that went before him, And that followed him, Were shouting, Hosanna to the son of David, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest. And when he entered Jerusalem, The whole city was stirred up, Saying, Who is this?

[25 : 30] And the crowd said, This is the prophet Jesus, From Nazareth of Galilee. And Jesus entered the temple, And drove out all who sold and bought in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the money changers, And the seats of those who sold pigeons.

He said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, But you make it a den of robbers. Now you get the story, Right?

And you get the connection, From the Old Testament to here. The foundation, The restoration, Now the Messiah. Now we see the Messiah is entering, In the last week of his life.

And the first thing what he did is, He go to the temple of God. And all surprisingly, He found another rebellious people.

They are doing their business. They are not rebuked by Jesus, Because they are doing the business. But he rebuked them, Because they are thieves.

[26 : 39] The Naive translation says thieves. So, They do bad things there. Why don't they do that, You know, Outside of the temple?

But that's in the temple. That's also significant. And Jesus does three major things there. I did not write this. You can write it, You know, By your notes.

So, Three things. The first one is correction. He corrected that. He corrected, Why he came to this world? Because he wanted to correct, The, Things that, Made, Chaos, Into Christianity, Into any spirituality, Into the relationship with God, And his people.

So, He corrected that. It is not, A business place. It is not, Bad people, You know, Comes for no repentance.

You know, For no change. This is the house of prayer. So, He corrected that. And, The second thing is, He confirmed, That, The house of prayer, Who was built by Solomon, Who was, Prophesied by Isaiah, Is now, Will continue, To generation, To generation, Because, Is that, Is that not the prayer that Solomon prayed, For the first day, Where, The, The, The, The, The temple of God, Was built.

[28 : 13] He prayed, Father God, Make this house, Is the house of prayer. Anybody, When he comes, To pray for his country, To pray for his family, To pray for anybody, Any problem, Listen, Their prayer.

Now, Jesus confirms, This is the house of prayer. Nothing changed. Sometimes people say, I'm going to preach you now, Sorry, Okay? When the time goes, When, Now, We are now 21st century, So they try to change Christianity, With, With like modernism.

No, Jesus said, God remains forever. God, Need his people, To come to his house, For prayer. He wants to connect them, He wants to talk to them.

That's, Why Jesus came to this world. And the third one, Is, He, Connect, His mission to this, The, Old Testament, With the New Testament.

That's why, He came, To fulfill, The Old Testament prophecies, Right? From the beginning, As my brother, Read for us, From verse one, He came as triumphal entry, Right?

[29 : 29] Then, Everything there, There happened, Is in purpose, Because it is being, Prophesized, Right? So, He came to fulfill, These old prophecies.

So, One of the prophecies is, He restored, The house of God. He brought, Bring back the name, The original name, To the house of God. Now I say, To the church, For this generation, Also, May God, Bring back, The name, The house of God, For every church.

Amen? Because, Nowadays, Some churches, They neglect this, They avoid this. Some churches, They are, Giving high priority, Maybe high emphasis, For other activities, In the church.

But you don't find prayer, That much. They don't pray. In old times, Even in America, People pray when they eat, When they, They go, Right?

Because I know that, I've studied, The American history. Now I don't see, Many people do that. You see, Jesus tells the people, This is the house of the Lord.

[30 : 44] This is the house of prayer. This is the major, The, The main purpose, That house of, Uh, God, Has been built.

So he is restored, Restoring, You see that he is restoring, These, Major, The purpose, Of, You know, The building of God's house. The prayer, And bringing back to, The right position, The right place.

So, I, I, I'm, I'm, I'm just going to tell you, Some, Some things, And I'm going to finish, Because my, My, My, My time is running, So, Uh, Let's jump a little bit, To the down, Because I already, Uh, Paraphrase for you, The, The, The, Some of the points.

Let's, Let's raise question, Why would Jesus refer to, His house, As house of prayer? First of all, Christ himself was a house of prayer, And he was teaching, His disciples to become one, By modeling this, For, Them, Uh, When he continually withdraw, And was taking, With church, Is primarily, Who we are in relation to him.

Church is primarily, Who we are, In relation to him. Uh, This is our picture, The picture of, At the church. That's our title. And we then, Relate to one another, And to, The world, Out of, Uh, Our relation to him.

[32 : 15] We then relate to one another, And to the world, I'm sorry, This is repeated, And first Peter, Uh, Chapter two, Verse five, You also, As living stones, Are being, Built up as spiritual house, A holy priest, To offer up, Spiritual sacrifices, Acceptable to God, Through Jesus Christ, A royal, Priesthood.

So then, What's prayer? Prayer is that, Longing and intimacy, Restored in the true, Back, Throw back to life, Which was dead, In our sinful state, Apart from Jesus Christ.

You can read, You can read, Ephesians chapter one, Chapter two, From verse one, Even you can go up to chapter, Verse ten, And it says, We were dead, Spiritual, And because of Jesus, We rose down, And God, And God, Uh, And God, Uh, Put us, Uh, Uh, With, With Jesus, In his right hand.

So, Prayer is the intimate, Communication, With the father, In heaven, And the house of prayer, Is the earthly, Expression, Of what, Is in heaven.

And the church, As house of prayer. In many of our modern churches, There is much focus on the music, The sermon, Or both, But prayer life, Often seems like, Out of the circle.

[33 : 42] And I'm going to see, Figures, Some picture over there. But don't forget, When we say, A church, We mean that, We all individual members, It's not, An organization, We are not talking about, The organization.

So that, That means prayer should be, The center of every, Activity, Of the church. And it should be, Exercised in everyday life, Of an individual. I want to, Upshade, Trinity Baptist church leaders, And Sunday school coordinators, For the emphasis, They give up on prayer, At the beginning of the year.

May God bless you. In this, Now, Let me go to the, The, The, The, The, The figure over that picture. In this church, Prayer ministry, Is just, One of the ministries, Of the church.

So, You find, Many different activities there, The ministry activities, And the prayer ministry, Also among them. But, It, It doesn't mean that, The other ministries, Does not pray, They don't pray, But, They don't have any connection, With the, Prayer ministry.

The prayer ministry, Just sit alone. Sometimes, When I, You know, In my church, We, We have, Prayer ministry too. But, People say, Pray for me. Pray for me.

[35 : 01] But, They don't pray. They, They think that, Prayer ministry is responsible. It's not their, Responsibility. It's not their responsibility, By the way. It's a life.

God wants us to talk to him. Right? So, The prayer ministry, By itself, And alone, Sitting in a church ministry, Under a church ministry activity, Is not enough.

And the second one is, This church, Passionately practice, And practice, Participates in prayer, As a foundational, Or, Cornerstone ministry of the church.

Not only does, Each ministry find, Its strength in prayer, But, It in turn, Refocuses its attention, Back to strengthen, The prayer life of the church.

The individual prayer life. So, You see, Prayer is the center here. That's the concept of, What Jesus is telling to the people.

[36 : 00] As the head of the church, As the body of, The church, We are the body of the church. He is the head of the church. We are connected, With conversation, With relationship, With fellowship, With God.

That's why, He came, To correct, He came, To the world, To confirm, And he came to the world, To connect us, With God. That's why, We need this kind of church.

So, In conclusion, I want to include, With two points, As, To clarify, What I have been saying, So far. The first one, After we receive, Jesus Christ, As Savior, You become, The temple of the Holy Spirit.

According to, First Corinthians, Chapter 6, Verse 90. And the second one, As we assemble, Together, We are the corporate, Expression of prayer.

So, We are all called, To participate, In the house of prayer. That's what the church, Is all about. To connect, Ourselves with God.

[37 : 06] So, Prayer should be, Everywhere, In church activity. Prayer, We need to, You know, Bring all the prayer lives, All the prayer activities, Into our family.

We need to teach our children. Sometimes, The children, They don't even, Start to speak, Good language, Like my child, The third year, So, The third year, Even though she's, Third, Third year old, But she, She's not still, You know, Because bilingual family, It's very late, To catch one of the languages, Until they get to the school, Right?

So, So, But she prays. We don't understand, What she means. Father God, We need, We hear this one, And after that, We don't hear, She, As if she, She look like, As if she speak in tongues.

But we like her, Her prayer. We like, We give her, Always opportunity to pray, Because she, She is, Like in, You know, Compete with her, Her, Oldest child, Oldest sister.

She, Oldest sister, She prays perfectly. And, She, She, She, When she feels jealousy, We like that. We give her a chance. So, We need to teach our children.

[38 : 22] That's, The purpose, Of, Jesus' correction, At the temple. Jesus went, Also correct, Today's church, Today's Christians, Come back to the prayer life.

May God bless you. And I want to, Leave, Uh, These, The practical, Uh, Some practical ways, And practical, Uh, Principles for prayer.

I don't know how many minutes, Does, Pastor Greg, How many minutes, Uh, Do, Do I live? Yeah, We should, We should be done in five, Five minutes.

In five minutes, Yeah. So, We, We, We can't, Uh, Get the prayer time? Uh, We could, We could, Five minutes for prayer. Five minutes? Okay. Okay.

Yeah, So, You will lead us. Okay, You're gonna come here, And lead us. Yes. Yes. So, I will encourage you to read these practical, Uh, Some practical ways, And practical, Uh, Principles for prayer.

[39 : 26] I just wrote down some, Some principles, And I hope it will help you. And teach to others. And God, May God bless you, And thank you very much. All right.

Thank you, Pastor Samuel. Um, Uh, Since we have a short time, I'm not going to jump into groups, And share a prayer request. But why don't we just have a few of us, Um, Uh, Lead out of prayer.

Maybe, Uh, Three of us. Um, Uh, Would three people be willing to just, Lead out in prayer? Maybe, Um, Someone could give a prayer of thanksgiving. Someone could pray for our church. Uh, Someone could pray for the Ethiopian Eritrea ministry.

Um, Maybe one for each. I have three volunteers. Ralph, You can give, You can pray at thanksgiving.

Someone like to pray for our church. Matt. And, Uh, Could someone pray for Pastor Samuel, And for the, Uh, Ethiopian and Eritrean ministry. Pat.

[40 : 27] And then I'll close us. All right. All right.