

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dearly Beloved,

The chief priests knew what Jesus meant when He said,

**"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."**

You can be sure of this because even after He was dead, they asked Pilate to seal Jesus' tomb, because they told Pilate, **"Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while He was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.'"** <sup>Matthew 27:66</sup>

This was not the first time that Jesus' body was associated with the tabernacle and temple.

In fact, when John writes: **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,** <sup>John 1:14</sup> in His gospel, the word translated "dwelt" is more literally translated as "tabernacled" or "tented" among us. John is showing us that the center of worship established by God was and always is Jesus.

The tabernacle and its contents set up under Moses, the intercessions and sacrifices of the priests, these were all pointing to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

We see that same tie-in here in our text when God promises to build David a house.

He wasn't talking about a building, but a body... made of human flesh and blood, from David's, a human body that would be much more permanent than any stone and cedar construction.

*We read as follows in Jesus' name:*

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But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: Would you build Me a house to dwell in? ... I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over My people Israel. ... Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.'" <sup>(ESV)</sup>

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth.** Amen* <sup>(John 17:17)</sup>

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David desired a good thing.

After the Lord had given him victories and rest from his enemies and established his kingdom and set him in his capital in a comfortable palace, David desired to return thanks.

He looked at the tent that housed the Ark of the Covenant, sitting outside the city gates, and compared it to his own dwelling.

**"See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent."**

He recognized the inconsistency: a mere man is better "housed" than Almighty God.

In the Lord's reply however, He did not seem all that concerned about His humble home.

In fact, He countered that it had served its purpose: by it He moved around with His people Israel as they wandered the wilderness for 40 years and during the Conquest of Canaan.

God's comfort to His people is and always has been that He is with them & cleanses them from sin.

And in this tent, His ministers constantly served them by offering God's sacrifices for their sins.

In fact, not only was the Lord not concerned about His humble dwelling place,

He was willing to stay in that condition for a few more years,

telling David that he was not the one to build a temple for the Lord,  
but that his yet-unborn son would build it after David **lay down with his fathers** (died).

You see, as much as David was a planner, God is much more-so.

The Lord was looking for more than just a building to be erected;

He was looking for another opportunity to point David, and all Christians, to Jesus Christ.

David just wasn't the guy to build the temple; he was a man of blood, a warrior-king.

Not to say that David was more of a sinner than the next king on that account;

the Lord had raised up David to be that warrior king, to slay Goliath and fight God's battles.

But God wanted a man of peace to build it, a son of David to foreshadow **something greater**.

Luke 11:31

As great a desire as David had to do something for God in building the temple,

the Lord had an even greater desire: that David would continue to receive gifts from the Lord.

Did you notice when the full text was read,

how often God spoke about what He had done and would do for David and for Israel?

**I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt...**

**I took you from the pasture...**

**I have been with you...**

**I will make for you a great name...**

**I will give you rest from all your enemies....**

**the Lord will make you a house.**

**I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and**

**I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.**

But what if David had resisted? What if he insisted he was going to build such a temple anyway?

After all, it was his idea. He was just looking for something to do,

to spend his God-given time and energy and concentration and wealth on.

And this was even something he wanted to do for God. Surely, God would want this...

Does that seem ridiculous to you? My guess is though that it shouldn't.

There is a temptation to focus upon what I am doing, and thinking very highly of it,

instead of dwelling on and cherishing what God would do and has done for me.

That was the danger of which Jesus was warning us in the Gospel text.

The invited guests had a great opportunity to receive a blessing from a benefactor, a banquet,

but instead they had become consumed with what THEY were doing,

their business transactions, the marriage, but Jesus tells us that these were simply excuses.

What had really happened is they no longer wanted the man's generosity;

they thought they had something better already.

Christians can get like that, too, you know? So wrapped up in my work, instead of God's for me.

This is a constant temptation for all of us.

There are so many "necessary" things in our lives. Life is busy, with work, with play!

It really is!... or was, and is probably starting to get busier again.

Think of all the blessings that the Lord has given you to manage:

A job. A spouse. A school or classroom. Employees. A house. Physical aptitudes. A business.

A family. Land. Mental capacities. Your body. Citizenship. Animals. Investments.

Shall I go on???

That's a lot. And it all takes time. Sometimes lots of time, and energy, and thought, and....

But there is one more thing that the Lord gives us to watch over and care for... the eternal soul.  
And if you are a husband or father, a mother, or a guardian of someone else,  
you are also to care for that soul, to provide spiritual care and access to spiritual care.

Of all the blessings that we are to manage in service to the Lord,  
which do you suppose is most important to Him?

Well, you don't have to wonder or suppose. He shows you.

When David desired to build the house for the Lord, what was the Lord's response?

It was to build a house for David instead;

not just a son to sit on his throne after him and complete his dream of making a temple,  
but THE Son, born of his own flesh, who would "house" the true divine mercy seat of God.

Not just a long-standing dynasty or kingdom, but an eternal kingdom and reign of peace.

David wanted to build a temple more befitting of the glory of God.

But God was going *to come down from heaven* and "tabernacle" among His people  
and be gloried for all humanity as He hung on the cross for the sins of the world.

Of all the things going on in Jesus' life, all the people expecting things from Him, or out to get Him,  
of all the things He had to say and do, your soul was always on His mind...

and not only yours but also the souls of your family and neighbors.

He came to make no excuses, but to excuse the sins that haunt and plague your conscience.

He came so that the temple of His body could be torn down in suffering and death,  
and the final sacrifice for sins could be completed once and for all,

so that He could raise it up three days later and extend His kingdom to all people.

Do you remember the Lord's long list of things that He did and was doing for David and Israel?

When you recite the Creed, it's like hearing a list of the good things God had done/is doing for you.

It's as if God were here declaring to you each week:

I have made heaven and earth... for you.

For you, man, and for your salvation, I came down from heaven... and became man.

I suffered, was crucified, died and was buried to atone for your sins.

I rose on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day for your justification.

I ascended into heaven and rule all things for your good.

I will return to judge you righteous on the last day.

I gather the Christian Church around My Word and Sacraments, My invitation and Banquet,  
so that I may dwell in you wherever you may be and declare your sins forgiven,  
so that when Christ returns,

I will raise up your body to a glorious and eternal temple where we will be perfectly united  
for all eternity.

...

As great as the temple that David's son Solomon built for the Lord's glory was,

after centuries of frequent neglect or misuse, it was finally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

The work that had seemed so important and permanent, was, in the end, not very eternal.

On the other hand, the house that the Lord had built for and from David, the promised Son

of his own flesh and blood, that Temple continues to live and reign and will do so for all eternity.  
And what is more, in Holy Baptism the Lord now makes you, your body and soul,  
His living temple, the place where His Holy Spirit dwells and works.

All the sacrifices of the OT priesthood at the tabernacle and temple that foreshadowed Christ,  
have given way to His one sacrifice on the cross for the remission/forgiveness of your sins.  
All God's righteous requirements in the Law have been fulfilled in Jesus' body & soul.  
When you receive the Holy Communion, you are receiving that one permanent sacrifice,  
you are receiving Jesus' temple, His body and soul,  
His righteousness and forgiveness, His eternal kingdom.

...

The day will come when your earthly temple will be torn down in death and decay,  
but we confess an even more life-altering day when your same body  
will be raised up by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
And then you will truly see the greatness of God's blessing to you today,  
though His Word and Sacraments look or sound as temporary as an invitation  
or as fleeting as a banquet, they are the things that He has built for your eternal habitations.  
You see, the Lord was not only building David a house.  
He has built you a house too, and now Christ is preparing a mansion for you.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.**

*Soli Deo Gloria*