

HIDDEN: HIS HOUSE OF PRAYER

What an amazing 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting we have had! We have so many testimonies. I don't think I have ever seen a more fruitful time of prayer and fasting.

- Averaging 30+ people at every prayer meeting
- Physical Healing: Joey, Mom, Lorraine, Jeanine,
- Strongholds/Emotional Healing...

We have been partnering with Pray the Bay and attended the conference to end our fast. What a phenomenal time! Jesus entered His house and was given great glory, and He was the center of all things. Many churches experienced His presence in a profound way the following Sunday, including Sanctuary. Experience Church in SF did not stop praying and worshipping for ten days, and now they have launched into being a Dwelling Place for God hosting prayer morning, noon, and night M-F.

For more than a decade God has called Sanctuary His house of prayer. This call got much louder a couple of years ago during a time of prayer seeking Him for our future and His plans. He spoke to one of our intercessors during a fast saying, "I want a house of prayer in this valley/region." Not long after He spoke the same to more of us saying, "My House is a House of Prayer..." This is why we started the prayer room. During this time of fasting and prayer He has spoken many more things concerning His House and He has added a grace on prayer which has resulted in new life, joy, healing, new strength, and renewed purpose...

- The time for Spring has come (Song of Solomon 2). This is a new season. Get ready to move and move quickly with Me. It is time.
- We will need New Wineskins for what is coming.
 - The new wine causes the old container to burst. You must get a new container for the new wine. The Holy Spirit is the wine of the Spirit, and the Father is generously pouring new measures and flavors of His Spirit in expectation of revival. We will not be ready if we keep doing life, church, relationships, and all the same as the past... new wine requires a new container. You can't fit JESUS into your old life, you must surrender and ask Him to give you a new one altogether.
- Build **MY** House... My House of Prayer
- Renewal is coming... are you ready? Are the doors open?

Today, I want to call us to see the vision of what He means when He declares afresh that He is looking for His house to be HIS HOUSE of PRAYER... I already started preaching this sermon a couple weeks ago, but wanted to bring it back because two prophetic art expressions came from it. One was a song God gave Tricia, and the other is a word regarding artwork from Jill.

THE DREAM OF GOD'S HEART

- Since the beginning of time God has established places for people to meet with Him, linger with Him in loving companionship, and learn His plans so they can partner with Him and implement His will in the earth. We see this with Eden, in the first Tent of Meeting, in the Tabernacle of David, the Temple of Solomon, and now the way God dwells in the hearts of His people. Nearness, intimacy, companionship, and tangible presence of holy fellowship have always been God's intention and dream.
- Endless assault on this plan and purpose has been the plight of humanity.
- His people and His house are intended to be a place where this companionship is restored. Not only in our individual lives, but also in our places of worship... as a Church.

Repeatedly in history we see this get twisted, broken, and disconnected. Today, I desire to cast a vision for us regarding the work He is doing at Sanctuary so we can agree with the House He is building in accordance with His eternal plan and the dream of His heart- His House of Prayer.

JESUS LOVES HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

Luke 2:42-52

When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. **43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.**

His parents panic and start looking for Him.

After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." 49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them. 51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Jesus loves His Father's House. He longs to be in the Temple, teaching from the Temple, and abiding in His Father's house. As a 12-year-old, He identified with the Temple as His place to dwell and minister. **Yet, what does He find when returning at the peak of His ministry?**

THE TIME OF HIS VISITATION

His way was paved in garments and branches. The crowds welcomed Jesus with royal acclamations. **"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"** The insinuation of kingship was so insulting to some of the religious leaders, they demanded Jesus rebuke his disciples. **"I tell you, if they were to keep silent," Jesus plainly stated, "the stones would cry out."** Luke 19:40

Luke explains how Jesus wept when He saw the city Jerusalem because He was GOD in their midst and they did not recognize Him: "But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. **"How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes... because you did not recognize it when God visited you."** Luke 19:42 and 44.

Mark 11:11-22 tells us that, after he rode into Jerusalem on the back of the colt, "He went into Jerusalem and into the temple and looked closely at the condition of His Father's house. Let's read the passage:

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14 Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. 17 And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

19 When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. 21 Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"

22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered.

WHAT DID HE SEE? WHAT DID HE DO?

Jesus took time to consider what He had seen in His Father's house.

BEDIKAT CHAMETS- Searching for the Leaven...

- It's fascinating that the timing of His visit took place during a Jewish festival called Bedikat Chamets. It is a time when kids play a game and run around the house and search for any leaven in the house (crumbs, pieces of bread) much like we do with our Easter Egg hunts in the west. **They conduct a veritable "search and destroy" mission to find any remaining chametz (leaven) in their home and eradicate it.**
- **The feast of Passover is the feast of unleavened bread.**

- Like a child entering His House searching for any influence contaminating the purity of the house, Jesus entered His Father's house, searched it head to toe, went back to Bethany, and contemplated how to eradicate the leaven ... "search and destroy" what was contaminating on this week of Passover...

John explains that Jesus braided a whip before going into the Temple the next day (John 2:15), and the disciples recall the Psalm that says, **"Zeal for Your House has consumed Me!"** We are seeing Jesus take note of contamination and eliminate it.

WHAT WAS THE CONTAMINATION?

The LEAVEN- Influence that is not of GOD. Religious Hypocrisy, sin, falsehood. When a little leaven gets into a lump of dough, the entire lump rises. A tiny bit of leaven changes the entire thing.

- LOVE OF MONEY
 - "... he poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." John 2:16-17
- CELEBRITY LEADERSHIP AND OPPRESSIVE POWER- ELITE vs. LOWLY
- CONSUMERISM- quick transactions, and worship that was "all about me" and my comforts/conveniences vs. Sacrificial love, repentance, and reconciliation.
- AN APPEARANCE OF HOLINESS BUT DEAD ON THE INSIDE
- FAVORITISM. The area for Gentiles was overrun with farm animals. Blocking the way.
 - "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces. You won't go in yourselves, and you don't let others enter either." Matthew 23:13

Jesus finds the Temple is fruitless, barren, ineffective... It appeared active, but it was fruitless.

This is much like the fig tree Mark includes in his telling of the story. Just like the fig tree that has leaves and appears fruitful, but is barren, so His house is hustling and bustling, appearing to be alive and fruitful (leaves), but it is dead on the inside... barren and bearing no good fruit.

¹² On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry. ¹³ Seeing from a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ And He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

Jesus treats the Temple the same way He treats the fig tree. He exposes it for what it is... leafy, but fruitless. In this climate, the leaves on a fig tree would indicate new, un-ripened figs, but figs nonetheless for munching. This fig tree promised fruit but when He got near to

inspect it, He found it was barren. His house promised fruit but when He drew near to inspect it, it showed itself to be fruitless.

Jesus visits His House and looks to see what is happening... He looks to see if it is a place where He can dwell... a place where He can rest and work... but it is not.

This is a lesson for us.

As a church or believers, we can look active and alive, but we are not bearing the fruit of life.

Jesus spoke of the Church of Sardis this way in Revelation 3:1-3. He says, "... you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead... Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief." Revelation 3:1-3

In this season, He is eliminating the old wineskin (the old ways) that had a form of religious activity, but lacked the life-giving, transformative presence of Jesus. His HOUSE is a HOUSE OF PRAYER.

We must WAKE UP, come alive, be revived in repentance, love, and turning to JESUS again. We must be about making His HOUSE about HIM and aiming to get out of the way.

HIS HOUSE OF PRAYER

Matthew gives us the best explanation of what Jesus did to restore His Father's House. Jesus didn't just make a mess and deconstruct what existed, He also reconstructed and established the purpose of His House of Prayer. Luke says, "He taught daily in the Temple," and the chief priests desired to kill Him, but they didn't know what to do because the people came and "hung on His every word."

Matthew 21:13-17

"It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

¹⁶"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.

"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read,

"'From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?'"

¹⁷And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

What Does His House of Prayer Look Like?

PRAYER: Interaction with God. It is an open conversation. Prayer is not a list of needs; it is the process of meeting with God to get our greatest needs met. If prayer is about requests, you will get burned out on religious activity and you will foster unbelief as delays naturally occur and inevitable trials persist. If prayer is about a person, you will burn within with love for Jesus and you will foster faith as you enter fellowship with the author and finisher of faith.

If prayer is about requests, you might burn out in your asking, but if prayer is about a PERSON, you will burn within as Jesus fuels every aspect of your life.

“My House is a House of Relationship” but we have made it a place of transaction. Forgive us God.

His house of prayer is a restoration of Eden (word from Peter).

In His House of PRAYER:

- **JESUS IS THE CENTER**

- After turning the tables over, He sits in the center of the House and allows all to come to Him for help. The reason we gather is to meet with Jesus, hear from Jesus, minister to Jesus, and open the doors for others to connect with Jesus. We are removing distractions and focusing on Him.
- **Are we looking AT HIM and talking TO HIM or are we looking PAST HIM and talking ABOUT HIM?** It is easy to slip into the latter, but we must NOT. Prayer is not for one another; it is about ministering to HIM. Often, we can get into preaching or get into lengthy monologues that have not touched HIS HEART. The goal is JESUS... not the people in the room. When we touch JESUS, those in the room will see and reach to touch Him too... This goes for Sundays, Prayer Room, Small Groups, etc.
- Let us be like John the Baptist in our Leadership:
 - You yourselves know how plainly I told you, ‘I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.’ **It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the bridegroom’s friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his voice and His vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.** “He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else.... For he is sent by God. He speaks God’s words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. John 3:28-31 and 34
- The aim is connecting people directly to Jesus.

- **HEALING HAPPENS**

- Jesus heals. He loves to heal hearts, minds, relationships, etc. When we choose to minister to God, and welcome the presence of Jesus, we open the doors for His house to be a place where He dwells, and He works. We get out of the way.
- “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” Matthew 11:28-30 (The Message)
- **HE IS THE LEADER, TEACHER, EVANGELIST, etc.**
 - He brings ORDER and we help keep order in agreement with the work He is doing, not according to our expectations. “...and He would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.” Mark 11:16
 - He is the voice they all crave. Luke 19:47-48 After that, he taught daily in the Temple, but the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the other leaders of the people began planning how to kill him. But they could think of nothing, because all the people hung on every word he said.
 - SCRIPTURE is vital. Jesus is the WORD. We listen to His voice by engaging Scripture daily. We pray from Scripture and pray His promises back to Him and over our own hearts. His voice is life, and His voice is in His Scripture. So often, people tell me they do not hear God speak, but when I ask if they are reading Scripture, they say they are not. Anytime we pick up Scripture and read, we are hearing God speak and we need to know these words are life.
 - The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. John 6:63
- **CHILDREN TESTIFY, DANCE, SING**
 - “Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ Hosanna in the highest!”
 - The young ones are vital and welcome to participate in the prayer room.
- **JOY** Isaiah 56:7 “I will make them joyful in My house of prayer.”
- **TOGETHER**
 - Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? 1 Corinthians 3:16
 - This is not a solo event. The congregation came together in His House daily. From age 12, and into the last days of His ministry, Jesus loved to be in His Father’s house ministering. We must have community under the outpouring of His Spirit. We hold tight to one another. We will be stretched. We will need to stay united and love one another in all the excitement of Jesus entering His own House... we meet with Him together and we stay bound together in the movement of His work...
 - WE are the wineskin- small groups, prayer, worship, gatherings.

HOW?

In this fast, Jesus has been turning the tables in hearts, minds, relationships, and in His house. He has made some messes, but we have taken note that He has also chosen to sit down in the middle of these messes and heal, restore, revive, and renew.

This is the time to take account of what He has done and agree with Him. Do not go back to the dead things of the past but move forward into the new season of life because He has declared, "Spring is here! The Winter is over and gone... arise and let us go forward into the new season!"