

SERMON – PASTOR GREG

01.09.2024

WHO CAN LIVE IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD? Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Time and time again I have visited members of the Church and found out that many are unsure of their salvation. Let us pray.

WHO CAN LIVE IN GOD'S HOUSE? This was the cry of the psalmist 3000 years ago. Let us listen again to his words: *LORD/YAHWEH/JEHOVAH who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?*

A little background. God had saved His people from Egypt and was leading them to the Promised Land. Along the way He commanded Moses and the people make a Tent and not just any old tent. The measurements were precise as were all the things that were to be in there: *Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you (Exodus 25:9)* And those words are repeated in 25:40; 26:30; 27:8 which highlights the importance of the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Because it was here and only here that God promised He would be available to meet His people. Here and only here were the sacrifices to be made. Exodus 29:43,43: *For generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the LORD. There and I will meet you and speak to you; there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by My glory.* There and only there did God PROMISE to meet with His people. AND who could go into the Tabernacle? Who go into the Temple? WHO COULD LIVE IN GOD'S HOUSE?

Only the people of Israel- the Jewish people. Anyone could go to the forecourt but only Jewish men and women could enter into the inner court. But there was even more separation to come. The closer to the Holy of Holies- the more limitation there was. Gentiles were excluded, then Jewish women, then only the Levites and Priests and then only the High Priest could actually enter the Holy of Holies and even then that was allowed only on one day of the year. All of this was to teach the people of God that God- the LORD was the Holy One- complete, perfect, pure and dangerous.

So who could enter? Who could live in the presence of God? Only those who were physical descendants of Abraham. Only those who offered their sacrifices. Only those who lived holy lives.

Ps 15: *LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? (ONLY) the one whose walk is blameless. (ONLY the one) who does what is righteous. (ONLY the one) who speaks truth from his heart. (ONLY the one) who has no slander on his tongue. (ONLY the one) who does his neighbour no wrong.* At the end of this psalm in my Bible I have written the words: WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED!

For about two thousand years the only certain place where the people of God could meet God was in the Tabernacle and then the Temple. And there was no place where the rest of humanity could access the Gracious God.

But then came Jesus- the Christ- the Son of Man and the Son of God: John 1:14: *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us-the Greek word says: The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.* The Temple was replaced by the Son of God. It is now that through Jesus Christ and only through that we can have the certainty and confidence to enter into God's Presence: Hebrews 4:16 (Because Jesus is the Great High Priest, who has made the perfect sacrifice- once for all) *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we might receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

WHO THEN CAN LIVE IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD? Everyone and anyone who believes that Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd. Remember the end of the Psalm 23? *And I will live in the house of the LORD forever.*

What then of holy living? What then of the Ten Commandments? What then of the words of James: *Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...Get rid of all moral filth and evil...humbly accept the word of God planted in you...Do not merely listen to the word...Do what it says...keep a tight rein on your tongue...look after widows and orphans.*

This side of eternity this is our constant struggle: to live the holy life even as Christ has made us holy. Through baptism we have been made a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), through baptism our sinful nature has been put to death (Romans 6) but sadly and strangely the old Adam and the old Eve keep on resurfacing in our hearts and minds. So what do we do?

Repent and believe the words: Your sins are forgiven- go in peace...This is my body given for you. This is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins. Go in peace.

WHO CAN LIVE IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD? *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God and believe in me. In my Father's house are many rooms and I go to prepare a place for you...I am the way and the truth and the life. Amen.*