

IMAGINE

Pt 4: Presence

INTRO

- Can you recall a hobby or new activity you tried out that you thought might be fun but ended up with laughable results?
- What's the longest you have been stuck in traffic or at an airport?
- If you could live anywhere in the world, where would that be?

READ

1. Habakkuk 2:14
2. 1 Cor 3:16-17
3. 1 Chron 22:2-5
4. 2 Chron 5:13-14
5. 2 Chron 6:20-21
6. John 2:18-21

REFLECT

In part 4 of our series, we looked at the temple as a biblical metaphor for the church. For the Jewish people, the building of the temple in Jerusalem was an apex in their history. The temple is where the glory and presence of God dwelt among humankind.

In our day, we should covet the presence of God in our lives and spread it everywhere.

Temple Highlights

- Preparation
- Manifestation
- Anticipation

*Qu: What significance do you think the extensive **preparations** for the temple signified?*

*Qu: What does the **manifestation** of the presence of God look like in your life? Have you ever had an experience like the priests who could not stand when sensing the presence of God?*

The presence of God is not only a feeling, but also a marker of the ongoing blessing of God changing circumstances to go in your favour as you obey the will of God for your life.

God sometimes pull back His presence to wake us up and get us back on track.

Qu: Can you recall a time when you wanted to do something that you knew probably was not the will of God, but you proceeded anyhow? How did God get your attention?

Solomon **anticipated** that not only would the temple be a great thing for the people, but also realized the propensity for God's people to stray from God and sin in many ways. In his dedication prayer, he asked God for the temple to be the place where the people could repent and return to him. Here is a part of Solomon's prayer:

“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 sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

RESPOND

We are not always faithful representatives of Jesus and extenders of His Kingdom, but thankfully, Jesus himself is the true and better Temple who will not fail.

With this truth in view, we can, as Tim Keller states, be a faithful presence in all areas of life.

While the mission of the institutional church is to preach the Word and produce disciples, the church must disciple Christians in such a way that they live justly and integrate their faith with their work. So the church doesn't directly change culture, but it disciplines and supports people who do. Another balance has to do with society's cultural institutions. Rather than taking them over, or avoiding them as a corrupting influence, or treating them with indifference—Christians are to be a faithful presence within them. — Tim Keller

PRAY

- Pray for one another to grow in experiencing the presence of God and bringing His presence to all areas of our lives.