

October 31, 2021

Reformation Sunday

1 Kings 5:1-5, 8:1-13

Young people's message: If I asked you, where does God live or what is His address? How would you answer. Would you be bold enough to give me your address and say He lives there? As mind blowing as that statement is, it is correct. Many times we do not stop and think that God lives in my house. I have another wild question for you. Does God live inside you? The answer is a very strong YES. God lives everywhere and in everything. Only because He made everything. That includes your home and you. Knowing that kind of makes you want to behave differently. I would say it inspires us to be more kind and loving to ourselves, those around us and our friends. Knowing that God is everywhere is truly a grace.

This morning we read about the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. That King David wanted to build a home for God to live in. David really wanted to do this for God. It would also make the people feel closer to God as well. Then God tells David not to build this house because He is everywhere. God will be present at this spot whether there is a temple there or not. Well David does not listen to God and has the plans drawn up to build God a house to live in. Funny thing was that David dies before the actual work started. David's son Solomon would be the one who would start the actual construction. I sometimes wonder if David needed the temple more for himself than God needed it.

All God really wants from us is our prayers, praise and thanksgiving. God wants to know that we appreciate all that He has given us and does for us. Churches are a great place to do all that as a community of believers. Do not forget that God is also living in our churches too. It is His Spirit that leads and guides the church.

Adult's message: This morning we read about the pomp and circumstance that fills the Temple in Jerusalem. The account is very fantastic and it gives you a sense of awe at the splendor.

We often assume that the Temple in Jerusalem was strictly Jewish in its design and use. I at least believed that. Upon further investigation, I learned that this was not the case. The actual design for the Temple in Jerusalem was based on Syrian and Turkish temple designs. It sounded like King Hiram of Tyre had built temples of this design before. David based the design of his temple on the pagan ones he saw around him. Hiram was the one who started the building project of the Jerusalem temple. So it stands to reason that this temple would reflect the other ones he built. The porch on the Temple in Jerusalem was actually based on the porches used in the Turkish temples. It is beginning to sound that the temple in Jerusalem was a composite of the good elements from different temples. Seems like David put a lot of thought into the temple he wanted built.

Many of us do not realize that our present churches are built on the same design as the Temple in Jerusalem. Our churches are mini replicas. They are generally rectangular with three divisions. The Holy of Holies is where the altar is located. Our altars replaced the Ark of the Covenant that sat in the temple. Where the congregation sits is

where the temple of the people use to be. The temple porch is usually where we enter at the narthex of the church.

Churches were not always used as we use them today. One of the oldest liturgies we have is that of St. James of Jerusalem. At this liturgy the service is conducted in the middle of the congregation. It is designed to reflect how Jesus taught and preached. He was in the midst of the people who would listen to Him. He was literally surrounded by people. St. James liturgy was a first century expression of worship that is uniquely Christian and not temple based. Over time this liturgy became less popular. The Greeks and Russians have preserved this liturgy over the centuries. Our current configuration of church buildings and liturgies have been the most popular over the centuries. Strange how we have opted for the temple like church structures and form of worship over the more early Christian one?

As Christians it is important to realize that our churches are buildings where the community of believers gather to pray and offer thanksgiving to God. A place where we support and encourage one another. To be place of positive energy in our world. A church or a temple is truly empty without people to use it. We are the bricks and mortar. We learned that valuable lesson the past two summers where we gathered on the front lawn. The church building reflects the personality of the worshipping community. Every family has a story connected to the building of the church. The church building tells our history as a community of believers. My family donated the first stove in the church kitchen. Or the timbers for the roof came from our farm. You know what I mean.

The best equation is to have a community of believers and a church. You can have a community of believers without a church building and that is church. However a church building without a community of believers is just an empty building. I will share some musings on the similarities between the Temple in Jerusalem and the Samaritan Temple on Mt. Gerizim. Share your faith this Reformation Sunday with your family and friends. Get the conversation started. Pastor D