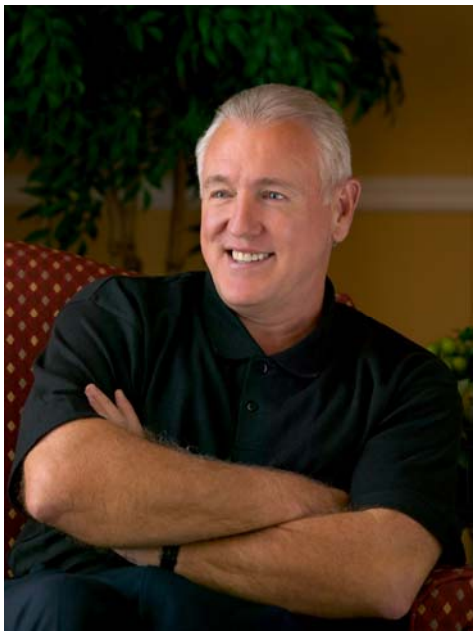
— MESSAGE DISCLAIMER —



David O. Dykes
Pastor, Green Acres Baptist Church
Tyler, Texas

These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***"Some*** (or ***"much"*** as the case may be) ***of the ideas I'm sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas."*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, "You're mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!"

For the Joy…
Pastor David Dykes

INTRODUCTION

Everybody seems to be on a diet these days. Scientists are making amazing discoveries every day about nutrition and diet. If you're struggling to lose weight these recent scientific findings may help you. Scientists have discovered:

(1) If nobody sees you eat food, it has no calories!
(2) If you drink a diet soda while you eat a candy bar, they cancel each other out. (If the soda weighs more than the candy bar, you actually LOSE calories.)
(3) Desserts remove stress. Remember "stressed" is just "desserts" spelled backwards.
(4) Foods consumed for medicinal reasons have no calories; this includes chocolate and ice cream when eaten as a source of energy.
(5) Cookies contain calories, but cookie pieces do not—the breakage causes calorie leakage.

Now, I want some of you to test those rules and let me know how they work!

There are many reasons people go on diets: They want to look better, or they want to be healthier. Those are good. But today we're going to discover that there's a better why we should take care of our bodies. The take-away truth I want you to carry out with you today is this: Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. When that truth grabs your heart, you will never again be the same. Let's see what Jesus did and what He said about this.

> Matthew 21:10-17. "When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, 'Who is this?' the crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.' Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those selling doves. '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.'' The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were indignant. '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 have ordained praise?'' And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night."

My family got me an iPad for my birthday and I've enjoyed playing with it. I don't think it will ever replace my MacBook Pro, but it's great for other things. One of the great apps, also on the iPhone, is Google maps. You can enter any address into the search field and not only will it pinpoint the location on a map, in many cases, it will show a photograph of the house. This feature is called Google Street View. Since 2007 Google has covered the globe with thousands of employees in cars with a 360-degree camera mounted on a pole on top of the car. They have taken over a billion photos of houses, businesses, and neighborhoods. They created a controversy over privacy because sometimes the pictures captured people as well. Since then Google has been blurring faces and vehicle tags.

I entered the address of the home I grew up in Florala, Alabama, and there it was: a color picture

of my house and the other houses around it. My initial thought was, "Wow, it's a lot smaller than I remembered!" But I got to show my family my childhood home. Pretty neat.

Let's imagine for a moment that we're going to look at God's house. What address would we put into the search field? Where does God live today? Well, of course, we know God is omnipresent. That means He is everywhere. But the Bible teaches that throughout history, the Shekinah glory of God's presence has resided in several houses, or temples. Let's do a quick tour of the different houses God has occupied.

First, there was the Jewish Tabernacle Moses constructed when the Jews were making their way from Egypt to the Promised Land. The Shekinah glory of God was present there in the Holy of Holies. We call it a tabernacle, which is another word for tent, but the actual Hebrew word means "residence." This was God's house from about 1437 B.C. until 957 B.C.

The next house was Solomon's Temple built in 957 B.C. The Ark of the Covenant that had been in the tabernacle was transferred to a more stable building. This temple was God's address until the Babylonians ransacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple in 586 B.C.

God's next address was the same location, but a different house. The Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple in 516 B.C. This second temple was rather drab compared to Solomon's edifice, but about 45 years before Jesus was born, Herod the Great undertook an extreme makeover of the temple. It took them almost 50 years to upgrade the temple to the majestic appearance it had during the time of Jesus. Herod created a huge flat area where people could gather called the Temple courtyards. It was large enough for thousands of people to gather. This is where Jesus taught and where He drove out the moneychangers. Only priests could enter the temple area. Jesus wasn't a Jewish priest, so He never entered the actual temple. But that wasn't a problem because Jesus WAS the perfect temple of God!

The Bible says, "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him." (Colossians 1:19) Jesus knew He was God's temple because He said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." (John 2:19) When the Jews heard that they said, "It took 46 years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" The Bible goes on to say, "The temple he has spoken of was his body." (John 2:21) His prophecy was correct. They crucified Him, and in three days, He was raised to life.

But all that is history. Where does God live today? Look at the screens to see a picture of God's current residence. Wave at the camera. Surprise (or no surprise) today God lives in us! I'm not talking about the building at 1607 Troup Hwy; I'm talking about the believers inside the building. This is where God lives today. In this message I want to mention God's collective address, the church, and God's individual address, a believer. Then I want to talk about how the things Jesus did in the temple courts that day are the things He wants to do in us.

1. GOD LIVES IN US, THE CHURCH

The New Testament teaches that God lives collectively in all the believers who make up the church. When Jesus was living on planet earth for 33 years, He had a body. Jesus still has a

body: The Church.

The Bible says, "For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.'" (2 Corinthians 6:16)

Here's an easy way to remember this. In the Old Testament, God had a temple for his people, and in the New Testament, God has a people for His temple! He lives in the hearts of His people. Jesus said, "Where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." (Matthew 18:20) God lives here in our midst when we gather to worship and serve Him.

People still mistake the church house as God's dwelling. Sometimes people revere these buildings as if they are more holy or special than any other building. I call that an edifice complex. God doesn't live in bricks and mortar and steel. The early church didn't even have buildings for the first 300 years of Christianity.

We've all been aware of the arrest and convictions of the two church arsonists. Arson is a terrible crime, and our prayers are with those men and their families. And GABC has helped several of the congregations rebuild their buildings. But when those arsonists burned the buildings, they didn't destroy the churches. None of those congregations stopped meeting because the building was burned. They kept on meeting in other locations until they could rebuild a more permanent place for them to meet. God didn't live in those buildings; He lives in the hearts of the people who gather in those buildings. And He lives in the hearts of believers who gather in hotel ballrooms, or outside under a canopy of palm trees.

When I was little, my parents taught me this rhyme you recite using your hands. "Here's the church, and here's the steeple. Open it up, and where's all the people? Here's the church, and here's the steeple. Open it up and THERE'S all the people."

Here's my version: Here's the building, and here's the steeple, open it up and here's the church. It doesn't rhyme, but it's better theology.

2. GOD LIVES IN ME, A BELIEVER

Not only does God live in His people collectively, He also dwells in each believer individually. Wow! Stop and think about that for a second. If you embrace this truth, it will change the way you think of yourself and every other believer. The Bible says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) You might hear someone say, "It's *my* body, and I can do with whatever I please!" Well, if you're a child of God, you can't say that. You are *not* your own. We are to honor God with our bodies.

The most life-changing truth I've ever discovered is that the bottom line of Christian life is Christ in me. God WITH me is comforting. God FOR me is encouraging. But God living IN me is transforming. My entire life was radically changed when I started to grasp the impact of

Colossians 1:27 which says, "God has chosen to make known…this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Now, I'm not talking about that new age mumbo-jumbo that claims God is in me and God is in you, and God is in that tree, and in that song. The new age is just the old age heresy with a Hollywood hairdo. Panentheism is a pagan philosophy that taught that god is the life-force that resides in every person and everything. That's not true, but it is true that Jesus is standing at the door of your heart and asking to come into your life. If you open the door of your heart, He comes in to live in you, and your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus dwells in every believer, but not in every body.

With those two revolutionary truths, let me make four applications about what happens when Jesus rules in us, His temple. When Jesus rules in us, four things happen.

(1) Jesus drives out dishonesty

We read, "Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves." (21:12)

There are many paintings depicting this scene. One is by the Italian master Luca Gidordano, who portrayed Christ cleaning out the market areas. Some people think about this event and ask, "Did Jesus get angry? Isn't that sin?" He was filled with righteous indignation, and His anger wasn't directed at the people, it was directed toward the injustice and the dishonesty.

There was a certain amount of commerce that had to take place on the temple mount. Pilgrims from other countries had to change their coins into a Jewish shekel because it would have been blasphemy to offer a coin with a graven image stamped on it. But the moneychangers charged exorbitant prices to exchange the money. Pilgrims had to have animals for the sacrifice, but the crooked merchants were in cahoots with the corrupt priests. If a pilgrim brought a lamb from his home, a priest had to approve it before it could be offered as a sacrifice. The priest would disallow the lamb and direct the pilgrim to his buddy running a business selling approved lambs. The pilgrim would trade in the lamb, pay more money, and then the lamb dealer would turn around and sell the lamb that the priest had earlier declared unacceptable. Cha-ching. Cha-ching.

After Hurricane Andrew blew through South Florida in 1992, it left a trail of devastation. A week after the hurricane a sheet of plywood that previously sold for $9.95 sold for $29.95. A gallon bottle of water previously sold for $0.49 was selling for $6.95. We call it price gouging, and it is now illegal in most states. That's the kind of extortion and robbery that ignited the indignation of Jesus. The worshippers had nowhere else to purchase these items for the temple, so the merchants charged whatever they wanted. It's like buying a pizza at Cowboys stadium. You can get one, but it will cost you $60. I wonder how Jesus feels about that?

When Jesus rules in a church, it is a temple of truth. Truth is taught and truth is practiced. When Jesus rules in your temple, He drives out dishonesty too. For a Christian, honesty is not the best policy; it's the *only* policy. You will want to tell the truth and treat people fairly because Jesus

lives in you. You can tell a lie as a Christian, but when you do, the Holy Spirit has a holy fit, and you experience His internal conviction. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

(2) Jesus promotes our prayer

Jesus quoted from Isaiah 56 where God said, "My house will be called a house of prayer…" (21:13). Jesus wants every church to be a house of prayer, not the building, the people. In the temple worship, there was music, sacrifices, teaching, offering, and fellowship. But God never said His house would be a house of singing, or a house of offering, or a house of teaching. He said it was to be a house of prayer for all people. Not just the Jews, but for ALL people. Green Acres has a reputation as a great missions church, and a great worshipping church, and a great Bible teaching church. But I long for the day when we are known as a great PRAYING church. We have a wonderful new 24/7 Upper Room Prayer Center on the third floor of the Crosswalk Conference center, but God isn't impressed with a fancy prayer center, He is more interested in whether or not we are a praying church.

And as an individual temple, Jesus wants to make you a house of prayer. I believe the best barometer to gauge your spiritual health is your prayer life. When people talk about you do they ever say, "He is a real prayer warrior!" or "She is a real prayer warrior!"

When the missionaries first penetrated Africa with the Gospel, thousands of Africans turned to Christ. They didn't have the fancy buildings, and resources we have, so they focused on prayer. In one particular village, each Christian would follow a certain path into the brush to spend hours in prayer. The paths became easily marked by daily use. And if any Christian started neglecting prayer, it was soon apparent to others. They would gently remind them by saying, "Brother, the grass grows thick on your prayer path." What about you? Does the grass grow thick on your prayer path to God?

(3) Jesus heals our hurts

The Bible says, "The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them." (21:14) We have some wonderful hospitals in our community. They can fix heart problems by bypassing clogged arteries or replacing defective valves. But they can't heal a broken heart. Jesus said the Spirit of the Lord anointed Him to heal the brokenhearted.

The church should be a healing station for those who are brokenhearted. I've often said the church isn't a showcase for shiny saints, it's a hospital for sick sinners—but they can find healing here.

In our own lives, sometimes we have trouble walking in the Spirit—we're lame, and Jesus can fix that. As I mentioned last week, sometimes we are spiritually blind and Jesus touches our spiritual eyes. I love the expression of praise David expressed in Psalm 103. He said, "Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all my inmost being, praise his holy name." He goes on to say, "Who heals ALL your diseases." (Psalm 103:1, 3) Some diseases are physical, but most of them are not. Jesus is the great Physician who can heal your broken heart. But you must offer Him all the pieces for Him to help you. If you need any kind of healing today, cry out to Jesus.

(4) Jesus wins our worship

When the Jewish leaders complained to Jesus about the children who were praising Jesus, He quoted, Psalm 8, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise." (21:16) I love the fact that the children were the ones leading the worship that day. They were shouting, "Hosanna to the King!" I love it when our children's choirs or our student choirs sing praises to God. There is something fresh and powerful in the way they worship. Some of the greatest experiences of worship I've ever had have been at Kid's Kamp or youth camps. I'm afraid the older we get, the more dignified we think we have to be. There's another word for dignified—dead! A dead corpse is probably the most dignified countenance you'll ever see. We need to all worship Jesus with a childlike exuberance.

Do you need some help when it comes to prayer or worship? I love the passage in Romans 8:26 where it says, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness."

Christina Aguilera isn't the only singer to botch the National Anthem. In 2003, the Dallas Mavericks were in Portland playing the Trailblazers in the NBA playoffs. 13 year-old Natalie Gilbert won the chance to sing the National Anthem. She made it through the first two lines, and then went blank. She laughed nervously, and then froze. It was quiet for a moment, and then some rude fans started booing her. Natalie stood there embarrassed and looked around for help. After only a few seconds of silence, the Trailblazer coach, former NBA All-Star, Maurice Cheeks stepped up and gently put his arm around Natalie. He gave her the next line and she started singing, and then he gave her the next and the next until her confidence was restored. Soon a strange thing happened. All 20,000 fans, including all the players and coaches started singing the National Anthem with Natalie and Coach Cheeks. When it was over there was a thunderous cheer. It's a cool video that you can watch on YouTube.

Coach Cheeks will always be an All-Star in my mind. As I thought about what happened, I was reminded of how, when we worship, the Holy Spirit puts His arm around us and helps us and gives us courage o worship freely. And when that happens, other believers join us until there is a crescendo of worship and praise!

CONCLUSION

If the Bible teaches anything about where God lives, we learn that God won't live in a dirty house. You may live in one, but God won't. He is holy and He can't abide with the presence of sin. I heard about a group of college guys who lived in a dirty dorm room. They were the keepers of the school's mascot, a goat. The asked the dean if they could move the goat into their dorm room during cold weather. The dean said, "Well, what about the smell." The college guys said, "Oh, he'll just get used to it." College guys might live in a dirty room, but God won't.

God has been moving in and out of houses throughout history. We saw where God lived in the tabernacle and then the two temples. But the temple in Jerusalem was desecrated by sin and God had already moved out when Jesus arrived. The Jews were worshipping there during the life of Jesus and even for 40 years after Jesus ascended into heaven, but God wasn't there. It was only

empty religion. In Matthew 23 Jesus pointed at the temple and said to the Jews, "Look, your house [not "My Father's House"] is left to you desolate." (Matthew 23:38) Why did God move out? Because God won't live in a dirty house.

And when I realize Jesus is the perfect temple of God, what happened to Him on the cross boggles my mind. God placed all the sins of the world on Jesus on the cross. In a way, Jesus was desecrated by sin. He became sin for us. For a few hours on the cross, God moved out of His perfect house Jesus. That's why Jesus cried out, "My God, my God WHY have you forsaken me?" Why did Jesus lose the presence of His Father, which had been His from the beginning of the beginning? Because God won't live in a dirty house.

Now let's come to God current address. If you're a Christian, you are His temple. So what comes to your mind when I say, "God won't live in a dirty house?" (the following is for dramatic effect) I mean it! I'm warning all you Christians, God WON'T live in a dirty house!!

Are you feeling thoroughly guilty now? There was a time much earlier in my ministry when I would have taken this thought and it would have led me to say, "So you'd better clean up your act if you don't want God to move out of you!" But that was before I came to understand grace.

Now, let me tell you what it means. God won't live in a dirty house, that's right. So the truth that can change your life is: You're not a dirty house. If you're a child of God, you might occasionally have a dirty thought, but you're not a dirty house. You may even commit an occasional dirty deed, but that doesn't mean you're a dirty house. Being clean is a state of grace, not based on your behavior.

God is no longer moving in and out of houses. He has come to take up permanent residence in believers. Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes, "He will be in you…and he will be with you forever." (John 14:16) So some of you are thinking, "Are you saying to me that when I came to Christ, the Holy Spirit came to live in me, and even when I sin, God doesn't forsake me?" That's right. If you're thinking, "That sounds too good to be true," you're exactly right. Grace always sounds too good to be true.

But if this truth makes you think about how you can go out and sin all you want to, then, my friend, you have some kind of spirit in you, but it isn't the Holy Spirit. If you're thinking about how much sin you can get away with and still make it to heaven, I doubt you know Jesus.

You may think Jesus is like an honored guest who is about to arrive so you have to grab the spiritual broom and start sweeping like crazy. No, Jesus dwells in you, and He can handle the broom far better than you can. If you ask Him, He will keep you clean.

So where does God live today? He lives in His church and He lives me and in you. And as we continually yield control of our lives to Him, He will keep His temple clean. He will make us a house of prayer; He will heal our hurts, and we will worship him with the uninhibited attitude of little children.

OUTLINE

1. GOD LIVES IN US, THE CHURCH

"For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.'" *2 Corinthians 6:16*

2. GOD LIVES IN ME, A BELIEVER

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." *1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

3. WHEN JESUS RULES IN THE TEMPLE, HE:

(1) Drives out dishonesty

"Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves." *21:12*

(2) Promotes our prayer

"My house will be called a house of prayer…" *21:13*

(3) Heals our hurts

"The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them." *21:14*

(4) Wins our Worship

"From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise." *21:16*