

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. Nov 4th 2007

Going Deeper into worship

The Holy of Holies

Word:Key points from Sunday's sermon



1 Kings 6 : What an amazing place the Holy of Holies was the most inner sanctum of the whole temple designed to be dwelling place home of God, who constrained himself to be amongst us. A place that speaks of: purity , holiness completely beyond us.. not how we live. Only furniture, huge cherubim statues and the Ark (box) containing the stone tablets of the 10 commandments, God's heart expressed in his ways or laws.

God is so completely different from us He is completely Good and completely full of Love. We call him HOLY, and those who came into his presence in the Holy of holies had to be holy too. Only the high priest was allowed to be in God's presence, He had already gone through all the courts of the Temple and offer a particular sacrifice for his own sins to be made holy. His job was to offer the blood of a lamb as sacrifice for the sins of all Gods people. A curtain divided separated the Holy of Holies from the people.

Can you imagine what it is to receive a gift you do not deserve..?

We have an invitation to enter God presence the holy of holies .Matthew 27:45-51: Jesus came to pull down that curtain of divided and make the way open for us to enter into God's presence. God wants us be in his presence, right beside him and have a two way relationship with him. This is an invitation to come further up to worship and further into his presence.

How? Jesus is our High Priest has made it possible: Hebrews 4:14-16 God is both beyond us, transcendent, and intimately close to us Immanent. He fills us with awe .His acts in the book of Acts are evidence of that: in Acts 1 and 2 - God lifts His son up to heaven and shakes buildings nad descends on people with tongues of fire ; heals a crippled man from birth and strikes down dead those who hold back their financial giving from him and lie about it. First prayer in the Spirit filled Church of Acts 4 23-30 : appreciated the otherness of God. It begins with words 'Sovereign Lord'.. word means one with absolute power.. continues to show God as v24the king of creation, v 25-28the King of History,v29 the Head of the church and yet in John16:27 Jesus speaks of the Father (Daddy's) love for us. This one reason why so many songs of worship focus on our intimate expression of love and adoration of Him. The songs of Revelation 5 give us some insight into the adoration that goes on in that most intimate of places. When we truly go deeper into worship and prayer God welcomes us in. There is nothing for us 'to do' in this deep place of worship but to enjoy his presence, his company and gaze upon Him. It' s amazing to think that God who is so much greater and so completely different from us AND, at exactly the same time, the most loving and wonderful parent that we could ever know and love; a father such that you have never ever imagined before.

Our response to this invitation to come to Him is often one of fear. In the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis we hear from Mr Beaver that Aslan the Lion and the King of Narnia.. in our world: God.. is indeed not safe, but he **is good**.

There is nothing we can do to get into his presence the Holy of Holies other than receive his invitation,. And there is nothing we need to do when we are there except to look upon and enjoy hi, there is no work for us to do there, just rest and be with him. That is His desire.

Some of us have reached this stage, and when we pray and worship and meditate upon his face we enter God's presence. Some of us however, have not. We have gone partway. We know how to praise, how to give him thanks, but maybe stopped at the point of confessing what we've done wrong. We've got stuck or turned back because we think we're unworthy. God doesn't think we're unworthy, he wants to draw us in closer. Some of us may be comfortable with asking God for help, but we can't step over the final threshold into his Holy of Holies, to come face to face with God. Don't give up. Wait upon the Lord and live through his word and you will always be welcomed and be able to enter in to his deepest presence.



Witness: Questions to discuss

1. Recount the stages of worship and where you seem to be most t home in this model of the Temple.
2. How do you see our forms of worship reflecting these stages of the Temple?
3. What kind of songs, readings, movement, liturgy, help you to engage with each stage?
4. What is the place of silence in worship and prayer?
5. I you can, share with the group where you get stuck and can't move on in these stages. Is it confession? Is it praise? Is it the adoration of the Father in the Holy of Holies? Is it belief in his goodness and ability to hear our prayers? Etc. What do you need? More understanding the truth of who God is and what he has done for you? Or to go with some one into that place of prayer and have them help you pray, praise and worship?
6. As a group prepare a time of worship incorporating these 5 stages, use words, music songs, reading as you wish, and allow space nad item to be in His presence. You may like to do this by dividing up the different stages between members of the group to prepare and then bring together, you may like to prepare this all together.