

Deeper Applications: “The Indwelling Kingdom of God”
John 14:20/2 Corinthians 4:7
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Summary

What if the God of the universe is not distant, not waiting for us somewhere beyond the clouds, but actually dwelling inside us right now? That is the breathtaking reality this message invites us to sit with. Drawing from John 14:20, where Jesus declares a profound mutual indwelling between himself, the Father, and his followers, we are challenged to move beyond a faith that stops at forgiveness of sins and step into something far more intimate. The image of the Undercover Boss serves as a striking entry point: just as a CEO conceals his identity among his workers, God concealed his full glory in human flesh, walking among ordinary people who largely failed to recognize what was right in front of them. The Transfiguration becomes a momentary unveiling of what was always true beneath the surface. And here is where it gets personal for us: that same concealed glory, that same Spirit, is now said to dwell within our own bodies. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:7 about treasure hidden in jars of clay take on a whole new weight. We are the jars. The treasure is Christ himself. This is not a message about how great we are. It is a message about how near God truly is, and how that nearness has the power to transform every lonely, ordinary moment of our lives.

Discussion Questions

Brent described a shift in his understanding of the gospel from 'forgiveness of sins only' to God desiring to make his home inside us — how has your own understanding of the gospel evolved, and does the idea of God dwelling within you feel like good news or something uncomfortable?

Brent used the analogy of a charging cord versus a phone to distinguish between forgiveness of sins and the indwelling presence of God — in what ways might the church today be offering people the cord but not the phone, and what would change if we centered the full message?

John 14:20 describes a mutual indwelling where Christ is in the Father, believers are in Christ, and Christ is in believers — what does this layered relational reality mean for how you understand your identity and your daily walk with God?

Brent drew a parallel between the Undercover Boss television show and Jesus walking the earth as a carpenter while being God in the flesh — how does the hiddenness of God's presence, both in Christ and now in believers, challenge or deepen your faith?

The sermon traced the dwelling place of God from the Garden of Eden to the tabernacle, to Jesus as the living temple, and finally to believers through the Holy Spirit — how does understanding this progression change the way you think about what it means to be the church?

Brent shared that growing up fatherless made the idea of God wanting to make his home in him deeply personal — how does your own background and relational history shape the way you receive or resist the nearness of God?

Second Corinthians 4:7 describes believers as jars of clay carrying a treasure, with the power belonging to God and not to us — how do you hold together the tension of possessing something so great while remaining humble about the source of that power?

Brent argued that the loneliness epidemic of our generation is directly addressed by the reality of God's indwelling presence — do you genuinely experience God's nearness as a remedy for loneliness, and if not, what might be standing in the way?

The sermon emphasized that eternal life is not only a future promise but a present quality of existence because an eternal being dwells in us now — how does this 'already, not yet' understanding of eternal life reshape the way you live from day to day?

Brent expressed deep passion about believers grasping the treasure they already possess in the indwelling Spirit — what practical habits, disciplines, or postures might help a person become more aware of and responsive to the reality that God has made his home in them?

Small Group Guide

"Undercover Boss: The Indwelling Presence of God"

Based on the sermon by Brent Huckabee

Overview

This sermon explores one of the most profound and often overlooked realities of the Christian life: that God does not simply offer forgiveness of sins and then remain at a distance, but actively desires to dwell within his people through his Spirit. Drawing on the image of "Undercover Boss," the sermon traces the movement of God's dwelling place from the Garden of Eden, to the tabernacle and temple, to the person of Jesus Christ, and finally into the bodies of believers through the Holy Spirit.

Key Takeaways

1. The gospel is not only about forgiveness of sins. It is also about God coming to make his home within us through his Spirit.
 2. God's dwelling place has moved progressively throughout history, from the Garden, to the tabernacle and temple, to the body of Jesus, and now to the bodies of believers.
 3. Jesus taught in John 14 that the Father, Son, and Spirit desire to come and make their home with those who love him and keep his word.
 4. Paul describes this reality in 2 Corinthians 4 as a treasure held in jars of clay, meaning our ordinary bodies carry the extraordinary presence of God.
 5. The kingdom of God is not a distant, future-only reality. According to Luke 17, it is within us now.
 6. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in every believer, according to Ephesians 1.
 7. This indwelling presence is the answer to the loneliness and isolation so many people experience today.
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Scripture References for Personal Study

- John 1:14 -- God taking on human flesh and dwelling among us
 - John 14:20-23 -- Jesus promising that the Father and Son will come and make their home with believers
 - Luke 17:20-21 -- The kingdom of God described as being within us
 - 2 Corinthians 4:7 -- The treasure of God's presence held in jars of clay
 - Ephesians 1:18-19 -- The riches of God's inheritance in his people and the power available to believers
 - Galatians 4:19 -- Paul's anguish until Christ is formed in his people
 - 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:13 -- The body as the temple of the Holy Spirit
 - Galatians 2:20 -- No longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me
 - Romans 8 -- The Spirit of God dwelling in believers
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:10 -- Christ glorified in his saints at his return
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Discussion Questions

Opening

1. When you think about your relationship with God, do you naturally picture him as close and present, or as distant and removed? Where do you think that picture came from?
 2. The sermon used the illustration of an "Undercover Boss" to describe how God's presence can be hidden within ordinary things and people. What is one moment in your life when you sensed God was closer than you initially realized?
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Going Deeper

3. The speaker described a personal turning point at age 23 when he realized that God wanted more than just forgiveness of sins -- he wanted to come and make his home within him. Have you experienced a similar shift in how you understand the gospel? What prompted it, or what might be holding that shift back?
 4. The sermon traces the movement of God's dwelling place from the Garden of Eden, to the tabernacle and temple, to Jesus himself, and finally into believers through the Holy Spirit. How does understanding this progression change the way you think about your own body and daily life?
 5. In John 14, Jesus says that he and the Father will come and make their home with those who love him and keep his word. What does it mean practically for God to be "at home" in you? What might that look like on an ordinary Tuesday?
 6. The speaker said: "We live in one of the loneliest generations to probably face mankind. With social media, everybody's all by themselves, all feeling alone, and yet we're not alone." Do you agree that loneliness is a defining struggle of our time? How does the reality of God's indwelling presence speak to that loneliness in your own experience?
 7. Paul describes believers as jars of clay carrying a treasure in 2 Corinthians 4. What does it mean to you that God chose ordinary, fragile human beings as his dwelling place rather than something more impressive or permanent?
 8. The sermon made a distinction between a "forgiveness only" gospel and a fuller gospel that includes the indwelling presence of God. Do you think this fuller picture is commonly taught and understood in the church today? What is gained or lost when it is missing?
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Personal Reflection

9. The speaker said: "I know I've already got it, but I want more of it." How would you describe your current hunger for the presence of God in your daily life? What tends to increase that hunger, and what tends to diminish it?
 10. Galatians 2:20 says that it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us. What is one area of your life where you are still living primarily out of your own strength rather than from the reality of Christ dwelling within you?
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Practical Applications

This week, choose one or more of the following to practice:

1. **Morning Acknowledgment** -- Before getting out of bed each morning this week, take sixty seconds to acknowledge that the Spirit of God is dwelling within you. You might pray something as simple as: "Lord, you are with me. You are in me. Help me to live today from that reality."

2. **Reframe Loneliness** -- The next time you feel isolated, alone, or forgotten, pause and recall the truth of John 14:23. Rather than pushing the feeling away or numbing it, bring it honestly to God and ask him to make his presence more real to you in that moment.
 3. **Read and Reflect** -- Read Romans 8:9-17 slowly each day this week. Pay attention to every phrase that describes the Spirit's presence and work within believers. Journal what stands out to you.
 4. **Share the Treasure** -- The sermon connected this indwelling reality to the Great Commission. Identify one person in your life who seems to be carrying a deep sense of loneliness or emptiness. Pray for an opportunity to share with them not just that God forgives, but that God desires to be near them and to make his home with them.
 5. **Body as Temple** -- Consider one habit or pattern in your physical life, whether related to rest, health, what you consume, or how you treat your body, and ask whether that habit reflects the truth that your body is the dwelling place of God's Spirit.
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Closing Prayer

Use this prayer to close your group time, drawn from the themes of the sermon:

Father, thank you that you have never been content to stay at a distance. From the garden to the tabernacle, from the tabernacle to your Son, and from your Son to us, you have been moving closer. We confess that we often live as though you are far away, as though we are waiting to experience you rather than recognizing that you are already here. Open the eyes of our hearts to see the treasure we carry. Make your presence more real to us today than it was yesterday. And send us out to share this reality with a world that is lonely and searching. In the name of Jesus, who lives in us, amen.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Theme: The Indwelling God -- A With-God Life

Day 1: The God Who Draws Near

Reading: John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-8

Devotional: The God of the universe did not remain distant. He stepped into human skin, walked dusty roads, and looked ordinary people in the eye. He appeared as a carpenter from Nazareth, yet carried within him the fullness of divine authority. This is the scandal of the incarnation -- holiness hidden in flesh. Many walked right past him without recognizing who he was. The

question for today is honest and personal: Do you recognize the nearness of God in your own daily life, or have you grown accustomed to keeping him at a comfortable distance? Draw near.

Reflection: Where in your life have you been treating God as distant rather than present?

Practical Application: Begin each morning this week by pausing before you get out of bed and simply acknowledging that the Spirit of God is already with you before the day begins.

Day 2: The Dwelling Place Moves

Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Devotional: Throughout Scripture, God pursued a dwelling place among his people. First the garden, then the tabernacle, then the temple made of stone. But the trajectory was always moving toward something more intimate. In Christ, the dwelling place became a human body. At Pentecost, that reality multiplied across thousands of lives. Your body is not incidental to your faith -- it is the very address where God has chosen to live. This is not a small theological footnote. It is the central reality of the Christian life. You are not waiting for God to show up. He already has.

Reflection: How does viewing your body as God's dwelling place change the way you treat yourself and others?

Practical Application: Throughout today, before making a decision -- large or small -- pause and ask: Does this honor the One who lives within me?

Day 3: The Treasure Hidden in Plain Sight

Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:7-11; Matthew 13:44

Devotional: Paul describes the indwelling Spirit of God as a treasure carried in jars of clay. Clay jars are common, fragile, and unremarkable. That is precisely the point. The surpassing greatness belongs to God, not to the vessel. Jesus described the kingdom of heaven as a treasure hidden in a field -- something of incomprehensible worth concealed in an ordinary place. You may feel ordinary. You may feel cracked and worn. But the treasure inside you is the living Spirit of the risen Christ. The power at work in you is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. That is not ordinary.

Reflection: Do you live as though you carry something of great worth, or do you underestimate what God has placed within you?

Practical Application: Write down one area of your life where you have felt inadequate. Then write beside it: "The all-surpassing power is from God, not from me." Return to it whenever that feeling resurfaces.

Day 4: Never Orphaned, Always Indwelt

Reading: John 14:18-23; Romans 8:9-11

Devotional: Jesus made a promise before he went to the cross: he would not leave his followers as orphans. The word orphan carries the weight of abandonment, of being left without a father, without a home, without belonging. Many people carry that wound into their adult lives and, without realizing it, into their faith. They believe in forgiveness but live as though God finished with them the moment they were saved. But John 14 paints a different picture entirely. The Father and the Son come to make their home with the one who loves and obeys. This is not distant religion. This is family.

Reflection: In what areas of life do you still feel like an orphan, even as a believer? Bring that specific place before God today.

Practical Application: Spend five minutes in silence today -- not asking for anything, not confessing anything, simply resting in the awareness that you are not alone and that God has made his home in you.

Day 5: Glorified in These Bodies

Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 8:18-23; 2 Corinthians 3:18

Devotional: The call to worship that opened this service quoted 2 Corinthians 3:18 -- that we are being transformed from one degree of glory to another. This transformation is not merely moral improvement. It is the progressive revelation of the One who dwells within us, shining through ordinary lives until that final day when he returns to be glorified in his saints. The world will one day marvel not at human achievement but at what God has done in and through willing vessels. The same Spirit who illuminated Christ on the mountain of transfiguration is at work in you right now, slowly and faithfully revealing glory.

Reflection: What would it look like for the life of Jesus to be more visibly revealed in your daily interactions, your work, and your relationships?

Practical Application: Choose one relationship this week where you will intentionally ask God to manifest his patience, kindness, or peace through you. At the end of the week, reflect on what changed -- in the relationship and in yourself.

