

“The Tabernacle of Witness”

Summary

In this powerful message, we're reminded of our calling to be living witnesses for Christ. The central theme revolves around the tabernacle as a 'tabernacle of witness' and how we, as believers, are now called to fulfill that role. Drawing from 1 Corinthians 3:9, we're urged to 'take heed how we build' our spiritual lives. The message beautifully connects the Old Testament tabernacle's design with our spiritual journey, showing how each element - from the altar to the Holy of Holies - represents aspects of our walk with God. This parallel invites us to consider: Are we allowing God's presence to transform us into true witnesses? Are we building with 'gold, silver, and precious stones' or with 'wood, hay, and stubble'? The world is watching, waiting to see God's glory manifested in our lives. Let's embrace this calling, allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us, demonstrating God's love and power to a world in need.

Main Points – The Tabernacle of Witness

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the concept of Christians as living witnesses of God, drawing parallels between believers and the Old Testament tabernacle. Pastor Zach emphasizes that God is building a people to be His living temple and holy priesthood. The importance of how we build our spiritual lives is stressed, as Jesus is looking for a bride that resembles Him. The sermon delves into the symbolism of the tabernacle's structure and furniture, relating it to the Christian life and witness.

Key Points:

- God is building a people to be His living temple and holy priesthood
- Christians are called to be witnesses, duplicating God's character to the world
- The tabernacle serves as a pattern for heavenly truths applicable to believers today
- The presence of God is what makes us effective witnesses
- Our response to suffering can be a powerful witness to others
- Building with eternal materials (gold, silver, precious stones) rather than temporary ones (wood, hay, stubble) is crucial

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 (Take heed how you build)
- Acts 1:8 (You will be my witnesses)

- 1 Peter 4:7-11 (Using gifts to glorify God)
- Matthew 5:14-16 (You are the light of the world)

Stories:

- Story of choosing a bride for Isaac based on her willingness to water camels
- Account of Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16), praising God and witnessing to the jailer

Small Group Study Guide – The Tabernacle of Witness

Key Takeaways:

1. God is building a people, a living temple and holy priesthood.
2. We have a responsibility to build with God, using materials that are eternal (gold, silver, precious stones) rather than temporary (wood, hay, stubble).
3. Jesus is looking for a bride that resembles Him in character and actions.
4. We are called to be witnesses of Christ, duplicating His nature to the world.
5. The tabernacle serves as a pattern for us, showing how to be true witnesses.
6. Our lives should reflect the presence of God, just as the tabernacle did.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to you personally to "take heed how you build" in your spiritual life?
2. The sermon mentioned that Jesus is looking for a bride that looks like Him. How can we work towards becoming more Christ-like in our daily lives?
3. Discuss the concept of being a "witness" for Christ. How is this different from simply sharing information about Jesus?
4. The tabernacle contained different elements (altar, laver, lampstand, etc.). How do these elements relate to our spiritual walk today?
5. How can we ensure that we're building with "gold, silver, and precious stones" rather than "wood, hay, and stubble" in our spiritual lives?
6. The message mentioned four ways God gives us opportunities to shine as witnesses: good works, love for truth, dedication, and suffering. Which of these do you find most challenging, and why?
7. Reflect on the story of Paul and Silas in prison. How can our response to suffering be a powerful witness?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, intentionally perform an act of kindness for someone who may not "deserve" it, reflecting Christ's love.
2. Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas in your life where you might be building with temporary materials rather than eternal ones.

3. Choose one aspect of the tabernacle (e.g., the altar, laver, or lampstand) and meditate on how it relates to your walk with God. Journal your insights.

4. Practice being a "living epistle" this week by consciously considering how your actions and reactions might be read by others around you.

5. If you're going through a difficult time, reflect on how your response to this situation could be a witness to others. Share with the group next week if you're comfortable.

6. Dedicate time to studying God's Word this week, focusing on growing in your love for truth.

7. As a group, discuss ways you can support and encourage each other in being effective witnesses in your community.

Discussion Questions – The Tabernacle of Witness

How does the concept of being a 'tabernacle of witness' challenge or inspire you in your daily life as a Christian?

In what ways might our response to suffering serve as a powerful witness to others, as demonstrated by Paul and Silas in prison?

How can we ensure we are building with 'gold, silver, and precious stones' rather than 'wood, hay, and stubble' in our spiritual lives?

What does it mean to you personally to be part of the 'bride of Christ', and how might this impact your choices and behavior?

How can we cultivate a deeper awareness of God's presence in our lives, similar to how the Israelites were constantly aware of God's presence in the tabernacle?

In what ways can we practically demonstrate 'fervent charity' among ourselves as believers, as mentioned in 1 Peter 4?

How might understanding ourselves as 'living epistles' change the way we interact with non-believers in our daily lives?

What are some practical ways we can let our 'light shine before men' in our current cultural context?

How does the idea of creation 'waiting expectantly' for the revealing of God's glory through us impact your sense of purpose and responsibility?

In what ways can we cultivate a deeper hunger for God's presence that might make others 'hungry' for Him as well?

Scriptures – The Tabernacle of Witness

Here are the scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

1. 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 (Take heed how you build, building with gold, silver, precious stones vs. wood, hay, stubble)
2. Isaiah 43:10 ("You are my witnesses")
3. Acts 7:44 (Tabernacle of witness)
4. 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 (Events of Moses as patterns for us)
5. Acts 1:8 ("You will be my witnesses")
6. Proverbs 14:25 ("A true witness delivers souls")
7. Matthew 7:17-18 (Good tree cannot produce bad fruit)
8. Romans 8:18-19 (Creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God)
9. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (Nine gifts of the Spirit)
10. Galatians 5:22-23 (Nine fruits of the Spirit)
11. 1 Corinthians 10:17 (We are one bread)
12. Matthew 5:14-16 (You are the light of the world)
13. Titus 2:7-8 (Show yourself a pattern of good works)
14. 1 Peter 2:11-12 (Live honorably among unbelievers)
15. 1 Peter 4:7-11 (Using gifts to glorify God)
16. 1 Peter 4:14-16 (Suffering as a Christian)
17. Acts 16:25-31, 40 (Paul and Silas in prison)

Devotional – The Tabernacle of Witness

Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:

Day 1: The Living Temple

Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-10

Devotional: As we read about being "living stones" in God's spiritual house, reflect on your role in the body of Christ. How are you contributing to building God's kingdom? Consider the ways God has uniquely gifted you and how you can use those gifts to serve others and glorify Him. Remember, you are part of a "royal priesthood," chosen to declare God's praises. Today, look for opportunities to be a witness through your actions and words, showing others the transformative power of God's love in your life.

Day 2: Building with Purpose

Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Devotional: Paul's warning to "take heed how you build" reminds us of the importance of intentionality in our spiritual lives. What materials are you using to build your life - gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay, and straw? Consider the motivations behind your actions and decisions. Are they rooted in eternal values or temporary pleasures? Ask God to reveal areas where you might be building with perishable materials, and seek His guidance in aligning your life more closely with His eternal purposes.

Day 3: The Presence of God

Reading: Exodus 40:34-38

Devotional: The tabernacle was a powerful witness because it contained God's presence. As believers, we are now God's temple, with His Spirit dwelling within us. How aware are you of God's presence in your daily life? Take time today to practice being mindful of His presence. In moments of decision, stress, or interaction with others, pause and acknowledge that God is with you. Allow His presence to guide your thoughts, words, and actions, becoming a living witness to those around you.

Day 4: Suffering with Grace

Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Devotional: Suffering is an inevitable part of life, but as Christians, our response to suffering can be a powerful testimony. Reflect on times when you've faced challenges or persecution because of your faith. How did you respond? Did your actions glorify God? Remember that when we suffer for Christ, we participate in His sufferings and the Spirit of glory rests on us. Today, if you face any difficulties, big or small, choose to respond with grace, patience, and trust in God's goodness, knowing that your response can be a witness to others.

Day 5: The Power of Love

Reading: John 13:34-35

Devotional: Jesus said that the world would know we are His disciples by our love for one another. This love isn't just a feeling, but an action - it's sacrificial, patient, and kind, even to those who don't deserve it. Today, challenge yourself to show Christ-like love in a tangible way. Maybe it's forgiving someone who has hurt you, showing kindness to a difficult person, or going out of your way to help someone in need. As you do, remember that your acts of love are a powerful witness to the transformative power of God's love in your life.