



PART FIVE. UNDERSTANDING THE POOR: WORSHIP

1. A Dwelling Place for God

BY MICHAEL HOSTETTER AND JANICE KULP LONG

Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22; Revelation 21:1-6; Psalm 84:1-7; Luke 18:9-14

SERMON: “A DWELLING PLACE FOR GOD”

Psalm 84:1-7; Revelation 21:1-6

Psalm 84 begins, “How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!” This psalm reflects the yearning felt by pilgrims who had traveled far to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. To be in the temple was to be in the presence of God. In the Hebrew Bible, the temple was a symbol of God’s presence and encounter with the faithful.

Revelation 21 presents a vivid word picture of God’s ultimate purposes for human history. The writer has a vision of a holy city, the new Jerusalem coming from heaven to dwell on earth. This movement from heaven to earth is spoken: “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them . . .” (v. 3).

Psalm 84 suggests that life can be seen as searching for and finding God. But Revelation 21 puts a

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Gospel twist on the symbolism of the dwelling place of God. It affirms that God searches for humankind rather than the other way around. God is in Christ reconciling the world to God. In Christ Jesus, God comes to us. At the close of history,

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what has been true since the beginning is reaffirmed. God comes to us. God’s home is among mortals.

The sermon can explore the symbol of dwelling place. The King James Version of the Bible uses the word *tabernacle* in Psalm 84:1 and also in Revelation 21:3. The tabernacle was the tent of meeting and worship during Israel’s years as a nomadic people. God pitches a tent among us. Communion of creature and Creator is God’s first and final will. The image that expresses this best is the new Jerusalem, a redeemed city. Since God’s will is to be in relationship with people, God goes where

the people are—to the city. One may sense God’s presence in the glory of creation, but the dwelling place of God is with people! Often we have been encouraged to sense God’s presence in the out-of-doors. Perhaps we need to retrain ourselves to see how God is present in the city as well. The life God intends is like a redeemed city, full of people and filled with the presence of God.



WORSHIP RESOURCES

Call to Worship

Sisters and brothers—Arise.

Arise and lift your hearts
Arise and lift your eyes
Arise and lift your voices.

The living God,
the living, moving spirit of God
has called us together—

In witness,
In celebration,
In struggle.

Reach out toward each other,
for our God reaches out toward us!
Let us worship God!

Benediction

Go to witness for peace.

Be God's people.

Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous and strong.

Let all we do be done in love.

And may God bless you and keep you,

God be kind and gracious to you,
God look upon you with favor and give
you peace.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

(from *Peacemaking Through Worship* by Presbyterian
Peacemaking Fellowship)

Hymns (Indexed to *Hymnal: A Worship Book*)

“God, who stretched” #414
(Possible alternate for verse 2)

Proudly rise our modern cities, stately buildings,
row on row;
Yet their windows, blank, unfeeling, stare on
canyoned streets below,
Where the lonely drift unnoticed in the city's ebb
and flow,

Lost to purpose and to meaning, scarcely caring
where they go.

—Taken from “God, Who Stretched the Spangled
Heavens” by Catherine Cameron © 1967 Hope
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“Mid canyons deep”

Sing to the tune KINGSFOLD (#493, “I heard the
voice of Jesus say”)

Mid canyons deep of brick and stone, where is your
presence, Lord?

How may your purposes be known in steel and
painted board?

Not, surely, through the marks of greed or monu-
ments of strife,

But through what serves our human need, and dig-
nifies our life.

In honesty of work and plan is your own truth
expressed;

In harmony of earth and soul is grace made mani-
fest.

The leader with a social view, the worker's patient
skill,

Speak eloquently, Lord, of you, whose purpose they
fulfill.

Shine forth within our cities, Lord, not just in field
and wood,

Till to our buildings are restored a sense of com-
mon good.

May the embodiments of sin in which we work and
dwell

Become true temples, Lord, wherein your praises
we may tell.

—Frank E. Greene

Other selections

“All who love and serve your city” #417

“For we are strangers no more” #322

“How lovely is your dwelling” #171 (ref. Ps. 84)