



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Living In the Greater”

Ps Jim Laffoon – June 22, 2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What is something you hope to do before your life is over?
- What achievement did someone else accomplish that moved you to rejoice with them?
- What is a memorable graduation or promotion you experienced, and why?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

Haggai 2:9 ESV - *The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.*

- Ps Jim's prophetic word to Bethel at the time of Ps James' Commissioning Service: God will bring a greater manifestation of his glory among us in days to come.

Four things we must embrace in order to see God's word fulfilled among and through us: (1) A Greater Place, (2) A Greater Priesthood, (3) A Greater Presence, (4) A Greater Power

A Greater Place

Ezekiel 43:10-12 ESV - *“As for you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and they shall measure the plan. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, that is, its whole design; and make known to them as well all its statutes and its whole design and all its laws, and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe all its laws and all its statutes and carry them out. This is the law of the temple: the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.”*

- Ezekiel received a vision of a greater Temple that God would establish among his people. God is going to build something great among his people, greater than what they known before. Ps Jim's prophetic word to us is that this is what God is going to do at Bethel

A Greater Priesthood

Ezekiel 44:15-16ff ESV - *“But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me. And they shall stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord God. They shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge.”*

- God requires a greater priesthood to serve in his greater sanctuary. Zadok had been loyal to David from the early days of David's calling. Zadok was a descendent of Phinehas. Phinehas rose up with zeal for God's honor in the days when Israel was being seduced by pagan immorality. Zadok walked in the same spirit of zeal and commitment to God.

- Three qualities God is looking for in our priesthood as we serve God's purposes:
 - Purity: God was displeased with Israel's deceptive practice of hiding Egyptian gods in the Temple and worshiping them. Private impurity will keep us from inheriting our Promised Land.
 - Praise: Psalm 149:6 speaks of praise as a form of (spiritual) warfare. We must fight our problems and challenges in faith, speaking God's Word, both written and prophetic, in order to receive our inheritance.
 - Perseverance: Zadok never quit. He was faithful to David throughout all his ups and downs. He persevered. Don't look for a way out; look for a way through.

A Greater Presence

Ezekiel 43:4-7ff ESV - *As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple, and he said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name..."*

- God is pleased to fill his new temple and its prepared priesthood with his glorious presence. This principle is true for the church, as well. As we prepare ourselves for Jesus' continuing work of building his church, we can expect his presence to fill the church, just as we see recorded in the Book of Acts.
- As God's presence fills his temple, which now is his people, we can also expect his power to come upon us, so that we may carry out his purpose of going into all the world to bring the Gospel and it's transforming power to many peoples and cultures.

A Greater Power

Ezekiel 47:1-5ff ESV - *Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east)... Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through.*

- A mighty river of God flows out from under the threshold of the Temple. What begins as a trickle of water becomes stronger and mightier the further it goes from the Temple. This points to the principle that God's life and power are not meant for the four walls of the Church, God's New Testament dwelling place. Instead, God's life and power are meant to be taken beyond the church into the whole world.
- The water was first ankle deep, then knee deep, waist deep, and then so deep that one cannot pass through it, but one may swim in it. This points to the principle that God's power increases as we obey Jesus' charge to go into all the world and make disciples. As we go and follow Jesus into the world, we can expect increasing power and help from the Holy Spirit.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- Are there areas in your life that God wants to sanctify? What do you need to do to obey him?
- What challenges are you facing? How can you practically praise God and speak his Word in relation to these challenges?
- What people in your life require loyal perseverance on your part, so that you might help them do God's will and accomplish his purposes?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- That God would sanctify us and make us pleasing to him and ready for what he has planned.
- That God would fill us with his Spirit of faith and boldness as we praise him in the face of our problems.
- That God would strengthen us to faithfully persevere with those who God has called us to serve.