

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG149 – The Temple Without His Presence

Hi, and welcome to the podcast today. I have been wanting to continue on with some messages about this idea of revival, or outpouring, and this podcast will follow that pattern. I am titling it, *The Temple Without His Presence*. I feel like we, in this day and age, really have lost the Presence of the Lord in a way that is dramatic; and yet, for the most part, I think people are unaware of it. I think the church, in fact, is highly unaware of what we do not have; and I just want to say it in the most simple terms: there is such a huge difference between having the Presence of God, and not having the Presence of God with us.

I want to start this with Ezra third chapter. This is when they were rededicating the Temple after their return from Babylon. And of course, the Temple is the Temple that Solomon built, and that Temple had been torn down in the invasion of Babylon and the removal of Israel from the land of Israel. They dwelt for seventy years in Babylon, and then they return; and upon their return, they have been rebuilding the walls of the city, and they also are rebuilding the tabernacle that was ruined. And so, we come to the place where the foundation for the Temple has been re-laid. This is the ceremony or the celebration surrounding that event of the rededication of the foundation of the Temple.

In verses 11-13, it begins, “They sang, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, saying, ‘For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever.’ And all of the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Yet many of the priests and Levites and heads of father’s households, the old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, while many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard far away.”

I feel like this really paints a picture, in many ways, of where we are today. Because we see things happening in the church, and there are a lot of people really rejoicing over new styles of worship, and new styles of ministry, and things that are taking place. But there are also those who have witnessed the days, I would say in the late eighteen hundreds, the early nineteen hundreds, even up as late as the early eighties, 1980, where there was a real experience of the Presence of God, the outpouring of His Spirit, the outpouring of His Presence, the dwelling of His Presence with us; and many things transpired. I have talked a little bit about that and I don’t want to go into it now, but there is much that did exist during that time. So we have, in a sense, this great sense of rejoicing. I think of it when I see the worship today, with the platform worship and the bands and the noise and the loud worship and all of these things; but underlying, there is a cry, at least in my heart, and I know in the hearts of many who have experienced another time of another Presence of the Lord. Many have seen it. Many have experienced it. And it is interesting, because I feel like here in Ezra we almost have a picture of, well, you can’t tell. It is like a confusion that is taking place, because you can’t tell the weeping from the shouting, from the singing, from whatever. You can’t tell really what is going on, except that it was a loud shout and a great noise that was heard from far away. So I think that we live almost in a day where there is not a true ability to distinguish the fact that there is a real need that we have. And I know I have talked about it.

Many talk about it that I hear in this day and age, about the fact that they are believing to see a revival in the end time. They are believing to see more outpouring of the Lord's Spirit.

We have just experienced that at Asbury University in this year, where there was a true manifestation of the Presence of the Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit that was touching people's lives. When that event happened, those who were a part of it very clearly could distinguish the chapel services the day before it happened, and the chapel services the day that the outpouring took place, and for the weeks that happened and followed after that outpouring. It was absolutely different. The Presence of the Lord was different. You can say, "Well, the services before, were they horrible, were they bad?" No. But you also have to be honest and say, "Did they have the Presence of God in the way that God manifested when He appeared?" And this is the issue. It is not necessarily that anything that is transpiring is bad. But I think we are unaware of the fact that there is a real lack of the Presence of the Lord in much of what is happening today – in our own homes, in our own lives, in our churches, in our society. We have lost something very deeply of God's Presence and anointing that has been with us, a Presence of God that has rested on this nation of the United States of America, and has rested on other nations. I believe it has departed. And I believe that we have seen it depart from our churches, and from many places of our society.

I am not trying to criticize anything or judge anything. But to pretend that the Presence of God is with us in a way that is fine, and you can say, "Well, God is everywhere. His Presence is everywhere." Okay, great. But to me, that is just not being honest with yourself to recognize the difference between His appearing at that first Temple and His appearing now at this dedication of the foundation of the second Temple. It was two completely, absolutely different events relative to the Presence of God. Even Haggai spoke of it, who was the prophet prophesying during these times. In Haggai the second chapter, verses 1-9, it says:

On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet saying, "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying, 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now?'"

I mean, this is the Word of the Lord coming through the prophet, saying this very same thing that I am talking about to you right now. He is saying, "Who among you saw the former glory of the first Temple, and how" – you guys who saw it before – "how do you see it now?"

"Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison? But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the Lord, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the Lord of hosts. 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!' For thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord of hosts. 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the Lord of hosts. 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the Lord of hosts."

So here God is speaking to them. God Himself is coming and saying, "Look, do you guys see the difference? You who were there, a part of the first Temple, do you see the difference of the way it was then? And how do you see it now? It is like nothing. This is terrible in comparison. This is without My

glory. It is a building without My glory, without My Presence, without what I promised to do of dwelling in this place all of My days.” And so, God Himself is beginning to speak to them. But He also gives this promise. He says, “The glory of the latter house will be greater than the glory of the former.” And that is why I believe, in this day and age, we are in the last days, and we should expect an outpouring. We should not be satisfied with what we see. We should not be fooled or confused by what is going on right now. We should be able to clearly look at what is transpiring and say, “This, in comparison to having God’s Presence standing with us in our midst and His glory with us in our midst, is as nothing.” What we are believing for is that which eye has not seen and ear has not heard; greater than what was seen at the Temple when Solomon dedicated it, greater than anything that has ever been seen on the earth relative to the Presence of the Lord dwelling in the earth with mankind. That is what we should be believing for. But it is very difficult to believe for that if we feel like, “Well, everything is fine! Oh, the Presence of the Lord that we have, our services are great, what is going on is...” – No. What is going on now should be filled with a seeking of the Lord. And that is what the Lord spoke to the prophet, saying, “Okay, look, I am with you. Work. Work at it. Build. Try to build this this new house, because at some point I am going to fill it.” And that is what we should be doing. We should be doing it in our worship, in our intercession, our prayer, our walk with God, our commitment to His Scriptures, and everything that He has given us to walk in. We should be driven as a people in this day and age to see His Presence come and fill the house of God, to fill the body of Christ, to fill the Church, to fill this country, to fill our society, to fill the whole world.

That was the promise. The promise in Joel 2 is that He will pour out His Spirit. In Joel 2:28-30, it says, “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke.” See, things are to transpire. We are to be contending in this day and age for the Presence of the Lord in a way that many that are younger have not seen it. They don’t even know what they are asking for or crying out for; that is where they can be satisfied with what seems to be good. And that is where I feel like there has to be that prophetic voice, those of us who have witnessed something other and greater in God than what we have now, to say, “No, let’s contend. Let’s cry out together for a fresh anointing and outpouring of God’s Spirit upon all flesh in this day and age.”

I want to go back to Second Chronicles and just read about the dedication of the Temple under Solomon. Chapter 7, verses 1-3, says, “Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. The priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord’s house. All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the Lord, saying, ‘Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting.’” And I find that to be so interesting, because that is exactly what they were singing in Ezra when they rededicated the foundation of the Temple. In verse 11 of Ezra 3, it says, “They sang, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, saying, ‘For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever.’” See, they had no clue of the difference between what they were experiencing then, and what had been experienced back in the days of Solomon.

So we remember this prophecy. Here is Haggai speaking to the priests, speaking to the people who had been there in these verses in Second Chronicles, saying, “Do you remember how it was? And how does this look now in comparison? Doesn’t it seem like nothing to you who experienced My Presence in that day?” And so, really, there is so much more that we are to have. It is that which eye has not seen, ear

has not heard, it has not entered into the heart of man what God has awaiting those who love Him. We need to understand that, and recognize that, and be crying out for that, as we walk forward in these days.

I want to reiterate a couple of points here. I think one of the main things is, can we just be honest with ourselves about the difference between having the literal Presence of God with us, as happens in a time of His glory or outpouring, and not living in that? To me, it is absolutely distinguishable, and it is a world of difference. And we need to be honest with the fact that we do not have it right at this moment.

But we also, number two, need to recognize, we do have the prophecies that the glory that comes to the Church, to the latter house, to Israel in the last days, will be even greater than what it was in the days of Solomon – when His Presence was so thick and so glorious that they could not enter the Temple. They could not stand; those who were in the Temple could not even stand to minister – and they didn't have to, because it said the fire came down and consumed the offerings off of the altar. You didn't need the priests. It is going to be that way. There is not going to be a position thinking in this last day. There is going to be the pure Presence and glory of God that rules in the services, and rules in the church. That is what we are going to witness, that is what we are going to see, and we should be believing for that.

So, we can all agree on one thing – the world needs the prophecies of the outpouring of His Spirit that we find throughout the Scriptures to be fulfilled in this day and age. And we say, "Lord, fill Your Temple. Lord, pour out Your Spirit upon all flesh in this day."

Amen.