

Enter In

Topical, Acts 2:1-4, 40-47

Isaiah 26:2

Open the gates, That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.

Luke 11:52

"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

Hebrews 3:18-19

And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Since the beginning, God has wanted to spend time with us.

To be close to us.

The garden

We remember what happened...**how sin separated us**

Moses and the Israelites...God wanted to meet with them.

The mountain was covered in smoke. It was terrifying. The people didn't want to go. The Lord had them wait at the bottom.

There was sin and unbelief in their hearts. It prevented them from going.

Instead, while Moses was getting the 10 commandments...they made idols and worshiped them. The golden calf.

They were brought out of Egypt by God but they refused to go up to meet with Him. They wanted someone else to do it for them.

Being afraid as a kid to go up to the counter at McDonald's, encouraging my kids to go up

But this is the heart of God - to meet with us. To be with us.

It would take more than a law and a sacrificial system to do it.

1. The Tabernacle (Tent of Meeting)

I think it tees up for us something important in the heart of God and how we come to him.

[Video: The Tabernacle and What It Reveals to Us]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7K8faUuCD2Y>

We won't get into detail on this...but we see that God wanted to meet with the people. The symbology of the ordinances were about meeting him.

[Exodus 25:1-2, 8-9 NKJV] Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. ... "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. "According to all that I show you, [that is], the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make [it].

The Tabernacle was meant as a place for God to live among the people. For God to come down and dwell with them (In a way, not for them to reach him) - without them being destroyed by his power and holiness.

It provided a way in to his presence, in time, before His son Jesus would make it possible by fulfilling the sacrificial system

**Outer court - to Inner Court - to Most Holy Place
Dealing with sin, receiving the things of God, entering into his presence**

I think, at least in many churches I've seen, we come into the outer court and go through the rituals there, but expect someone else to come out and tell us the things of God. Both in churches that are clearly doing some type of priesthood and others that don't but the effect is the same.

There are others, that in some way rightfully want everyone in, but ignore the way to actually get in as they know the people won't go in that way **because of unbelief.**

God wants us ALL to go further in.

The church "experience" should have similar elements spiritually to the Tabernacle...but it's not about the ritual or the doing. It's about going all the way in, to meet with God, ourselves.

1. **Outer courts - Dealing with sin and being cleansed**
2. **Holy place - prayer, fellowship, the word, God's spirit**
3. **Most Holy Place - presence of God, manna (spiritual food from heaven), budding staff, fulfilled law, mercy seat, shekinah glory - that most intimate place that God ministers to us face to face that no one else can see or hear but they see the results**

Everything about church should be getting us to enter in to that Most Holy Place with Jesus. To meet with him ourselves. Through the corporate worship. The teaching of the Bible. It should be the opening of the veil, in some ways, an invitation to go in and talk with God ourselves. To hear what he would say to our hearts both individually and corporately.

After all, he made the way for us to enter in.

[Matthew 27:50-54 NKJV] And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

That veil to the Most Holy place was torn from TOP to BOTTOM when Jesus died. The way in is easy now. Doesn't require priesthood or one day a year or the blood of an animal.

John 4:20-24 NKJV - "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you [Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. "God [is] Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

**The way in is by God's Spirit and with His Truth - the Scripture.
We can't conjure up another way.**

- No matter how good the music is (methods of song writing to stir emotion)
- No matter how engaging the preacher is
- How friendly and inviting the atmosphere is

If it's not God's spirit, God's leading and it's not done in light of God's Word, it's a fruitless system. At best it works. It's attempting to go in by another way.

John 10:1-2, 7, 9 NKJV - "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ... Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ... "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

Being here - this Sunday - we're so glad you're here. But, we want you wherever God wants you. If that's here for this season, great. If that's at the church you've been going to. Maybe even better. But the point is. When you go. Where you go. Do you truly meet with Jesus? Do you hear from him?

Are you led? Are you fed?

Logos & Rhema - there will be both for the individual and the church, in most every message
 What is the heart of what is being taught? Is it God's heart of encouragement, conviction, correction? Or is it man's heart of guilt trips, works and following your own heart?

2. The Church

When was the "church" born? Pentecost [50 Days from Passover ,7th week, grateful recognition of harvest]

The Church age - Pentecost to the Rapture, the Age of Grace

Acts 2:1-4

From this moment forward we see a distinct difference among the believers.

They go from drawing straws to make "spiritual" decisions about apostles

Going from being afraid and hiding and denying

To being bold, gifted, and martyred and the World is changed from it.

The Church is not a location. Not a building. Not a business or organization.

The church is each believer individually together with other believers corporately with Jesus as the foundation.

[Psalm 118:22 NKJV] The stone [which] the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. ...

[1 Peter 2:4-5 NKJV] Coming to Him [as to] a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God [and] precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We are all kings and priests. There is only one mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus. The roles in the church, the gifts, the callings, are meant to lead people to offer up themselves as sacrifices to God. As priests to offer him prayer and thanksgiving.

[Ephesians 4:15-16 NKJV] but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Built up together. Living stones. Not dead! Resurrected! Rejected by the world and the law. Accepted by the blood and the Spirit.

So, so, so much to unpack! Way more than one little message today can do.

Acts 7:48-50 NKJV - "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 'Heaven [is] My throne, And earth [is] My footstool. What

house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what [is] the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?'

God is the one who builds the church. We can meet. We can organize. We can do. But if God's not really leading it, building it, it's just a shell. Just a cheap imitation. It will lack all the power, authority, increase and fruit that only God brings.

What does that look like?

Seven lampstands, specific churches, church ages (Revelation), and I think to some degree a litmus test for individual churches no matter the denomination in our day and age

- Some say the same things but practice differently
- Some practice the same way but say different things
- Some practice and say the same thing but look different

Location, money, power, influence, nationality, time period can all affect how the church looks from the outside. But the church should truly all operate the same from the inside.

Hands / doctrine analogy

5 Spokes - Teaching/The Word, Evangelism/Outreach, Fellowship, Prayer, Worship

**These things should be in the believer's lives and the church's
It can't be separated**

Some of it might be chicken or the egg...but the corporate church should encourage these things in the believer's lives and the giftings of each believers should play out in the church to fulfill these things.

"You can't take someone farther than you've gone yourself."

If these things don't exist in the leadership, they won't exist in the church.

The church's function is an extension of the believer's personal lives
The church cannot function without the life of the believer being right

3. The Problem

The problem is we've lost sight of what it really means to be a believer and, by extension, what it really means to be the church

***Idolatry is turning a gift of God into a god
Turning a good thing into an ultimate thing
Deifying something to enjoy into an object of worship***

- **Alistair Begg**

(doing church vs. being the church)

We get off track when we begin to worship the things of God vs. actually worshipping God

The worship

The teacher

The atmosphere

The serving

Whatever it is...

Because it's easier to do those things and feel good about what we're doing maybe but we're avoiding the deeper relationship. Because we know it'll cost us something. We know something will need to be fixed in us. Or left behind. Or start doing.

But believe me, it's not about the doing. It's all throughout scripture. God could care less, and will even sadly show people that they didn't even know him when they did things in his name, but he could care less if the "things don't get done" if we haven't met with him.

God would rather 10 people earnestly meet with him than 10,000 go to a concert with music with His name in it.

That's not to say BIG THINGS are BAD THINGS. They're not. The first church became a megachurch overnight. Thousands saved right away.

But the minute we turn from God we turn to idols. We turn to things to fill the gap of God in our lives, in our worship, and it is obvious. We can't make spiritual life on our own. It has to come from the breath of God.

4. The Solution

The solution always starts with simple repentance. Turning back to God. It really doesn't take a lot of effort. It probably sometimes takes a lot of stopping.

Pastor Tony Schott / Yeshua Festival

#1 Is turning our own hearts back to Him and His Word (Josiah and the Word found)

Four distinct "experiences" we see when the word of God goes out and four distinct "results."

Wayside - birds (enemy) came and devoured

Stony - not much earth, not deep - sprung up right away but scorched and died

Thorns - (soil may have been good), but it had thorns in it (cares of this world)

Good ground - actually yielded a crop. 100x, 60x, 30x - all good crop

Has your life ever truly changed direction since coming to Jesus? If not, it might require an honest look. Was Jesus an add-on or is he truly the corner (foundation) stone?

The point is not that you are good soil automatically/naturally, but that you allow God to MAKE you perfect soil through allowing him to break you up, pull up the weeds, dig deep remove the rocks, water, plant, spray pesticide, put up a scarecrow in your life.

“If your Christian conversion did not reverse the direction of your life, if it did not transform it then you are not converted at all. You are simply a victim of the “accept Jesus heresy!”

AW Tozer

#2 Is pursuing holiness. Getting rid of idols. The put offs and put ons of the epistles.

On what do you base your decisions?

Is the the Word of God and prayer? Does he direct your paths? Or is God an afterthought?

“Is prayer your steering wheel OR your spare tire?” Corrie Ten Boom

**Sometimes we get saved, we put away the bad things, but begin to do some good things
But we haven't moved on to the best things**

Worship with friends early on

It's the same individually and corporately. If we move on to the better things personally, it will affect how we worship corporately.

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing

5. The Vision

- Vision will birth vision in other people - Pastor Richard Cimino
- Novices argue tactics, professionals argue logistics. (unknown, military)

Ekklesia - a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly...united into one body

It is believers, being believers, together

**And we're not to forsake it, as Hebrews tells us.
An imperfect church is better than no church.**

Before getting saved - getting saved - visiting church - the love, the teaching, God's spirit, the fellowship, the evangelism, the worship. Life together. No one needed to be poked or prodded to do. Most of the church served and help was barely ever an issue. We did life together. It wasn't perfect. Eventually what we had ended - but God used it to send people out. God's spirit was there.

Discipling naturally. Pursuing relationships. Doing life together. Not lording it over anyone. Not divided.

If God's doing it, it's going to happen

"Where God guides, God provides"

We can't conjure it up anyway. Sure, we can encourage, but we can't make it happen.

The church is not the leadership. It's everybody. The pews should not be warmer than the relationships. God has gifted everyone (study in Corinthians).

God wants us all to step up and step out. "Hide it under a bushell? No! I'm gonna let it shine."

To help produce 100x, 60x, 30x fruit

The Acts church

Act 2:40-47

If they're not saved, they're not the church.

Should the church minister to the lost? Absolutely. But is that the main purpose for a church service? No. Altar calls? Sure. Evangelism in the message? Absolutely. **But it's meant to be for the church.** When service is over, then the church's attention focuses on those outside the church.

But all these things will likely happen naturally by God's spirit. Sure, we may need some prodding, but the message will contain everything necessary, the worship will provide an opportunity for hearts to soften, etc.

The miracle is, He meets with us. The very opposite of religion, us trying to meet with him.

When we come to church, do we want Jesus?

Because He's there. He's here. And he's reaching out to us, calling us, inviting us to ENTER IN.