Solomon and the Temple

A chiasm, a king on his knees, and a temple that was never a vending machine

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, February 13, 2022
PASSAGES	1 Kings 8; 1 Chronicles 22:8-9; 1 Kings 9:1-3; Exodus 19:6; John 2:19; Hebrews 7:25
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:10:10 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Solomon finishes the house everyone would expect to be about sacrifice, and then dedicates it almost entirely to *prayer* — asking God to hear his people, and even the foreigner, whenever they turn toward this place. The chapter is built to put that prayer at its center. And the Son of David praying it is pointing past himself to the one whose own body is the true house, and whose intercession never stops.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Read Solomon's dedication prayer and count how often he mentions sacrifice. He barely does. What he asks for, over and over, is that God would *listen*.
- The story is told in parallels — assembly, sacrifice, blessing, posture, prayer, posture, blessing, sacrifice, dismissal. The weight of that shape falls on the middle, and the middle is the prayer.
- David wanted to build the house and was told no, because he had shed much blood. The builder would be a son yet unborn, a man of rest.
- Solomon intercedes by deliberately using his own office: the anointed king asking that *his* words stay near God day and night, so that the people's words would be heard.
- He asks God to say yes to outsiders — not because every foreigner will come, but so that those who do become witnesses to their own clans and God's name is known.

- The 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep bought nothing. God had already appeared, the house was already built, the promises were already kept. They gave it just to give it.
- The temple was never bait to lure a distant God back. In the garden it was the man who hid, not God.

▶ 1:13:51

Matt handed last Sunday back to Wes first — David and Bathsheba, and the gravity of that sin, which in the end magnifies the grace of the God who forgave him. This week stays in the same family line. Solomon had come up a few weeks earlier for the deliverance ministry he and his father were remembered for, so that when Jesus cast out demons people called him son of David. This time the focus is the Solomon who builds the house.

The house David was not allowed to build

▶ 1:15:27

Matt stopped to read background he had not made a slide for, because without it the chapter loses its hinge. David looked around at his own house and decided God should have one.

> "But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days.'"
>
> 1 CHRONICLES 22:8–9 ↗

David still did the pre-planning and the arrangements. Solomon became king, got established, and the work took around seven years. Our chapter opens the week it is finished and they are ready to move in.

The shape of the chapter is the argument

▶ 1:17:29

Walk the sequence: assembly, sacrifice, blessing, a note about Solomon's physical posture, the prayer, the posture again, blessing again, sacrifice again, dismissal. "I promise I don't just look for these everywhere," Matt said. "I just bring them up when they're there." Israelite writing ran on parallels the way American poetry runs on end rhyme — compulsively.

▶ 1:18:26

Assembly and dismissal prove nothing on their own; you have to show up and then leave. But sacrifice mirrored by sacrifice, blessing by blessing, and a writer spending precious ink twice on what a man was doing with his body — that is deliberate. And the point of such a structure is never the ends. It is the middle. The middle here is the prayer Solomon prays out loud as the temple is dedicated.

The ark comes in, and the glory comes down

▶ 1:19:40

The elders, the heads of the tribes and the leaders of the fathers' houses all gather to bring the ark up out of the city of David (1 Kings 8:1–5), sacrificing sheep and oxen in numbers too great to count. That assembly matters: Solomon is not staging an upstart revolution. He is the guarantor of Israel's most sacred traditions, and the ark is being handled with the whole nation's leadership standing behind it. Then the priests come out of the holy place and a cloud fills the house so that they cannot stand to do their work. Whatever ratification the elders gave, the presence of God gives far more.

▶ 1:22:03

Solomon turns and blesses the assembly, and the wording of it is startlingly personal:
"I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house… but I chose David to be over my people Isra
The emphasis lands on a man rather than on Jerusalem. That is how relational God is.

▶ 1:23:42

He then rehearses the whole arrangement — it was in David's heart, it was good that it was in his heart, and the son would build it. Where they stand today is not Solomon's achievement. History is providential, and this day is the culmination of things God had been doing generationally.

A prayer about praying

▶ 1:24:54

Solomon stands before the altar and spreads out his hands toward heaven. What follows, Matt admitted, gets meta — and the meta is the point.

> "Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive."
>
> 1 KINGS 8:28–30 ↗

"My name shall be there" is not lettering over a door; it is God's reputation, his fame, his own presence. And notice what the servant is asking for. Not favor, not provision — that God would *listen*, to him, and then to the people when they pray.

▶ 1:27:13

Then the specific cases, and they follow one pattern.
A man sinning against his neighbor; Israel defeated by enemies; the rain shut up because of their iniquity — in each one the people turn, repent, confess his name, pray toward this house, and Solomon's petition is the same five words: hear in heaven, and forgive. Sacrifice goes unmentioned every single time. By verse 38 he is openly teaching the room: whatever prayer, whatever plea, by any man or all your people, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this place — exactly as the king in front of them is doing — hear, and forgive, and act, so that they may fear you all their days.

"When a foreigner comes and prays toward this house"

▶ 1:30:45

> "Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you."
>
> 1 KINGS 8:41–43 ↗

Solomon is asking God to be inclined to say yes to the outsider. Not every foreigner will come — but the ones who do go back to their own clans as witnesses. The anointed king of Israel interceding for people

outside the covenant is Israel remembering what it was for in the first place: a kingdom of priests, a light to the nations.

▶ 1:32:24

The center of the chapter closes with the hardest case — Israel in exile, in the land of their enemies, and "there is no one who does not sin". If they repent with all their heart and pray toward this land, this city, this house: hear their plea, maintain their cause, and forgive.

God answers the request

▶ 1:33:43

Matt jumped a chapter ahead to settle whether any of this landed. Solomon was not speaking into the void, hoping.

> "I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time."
>
> 1 KINGS 9:3 ↗

That was Solomon's odd, specific, one-of-a-kind request — that God's eyes would stay open toward this place — and God grants it by name. The anointed ruler's intercession was effective. The communication channel is open, not casually and not because they are Israelites, but because of his name.

Twenty-two thousand oxen and nothing to buy

▶ 1:36:26

Back on the day itself, Solomon rises from his knees and tells the people that not one word of all God's good promises has failed. Then the request that is easy to read past: "Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night." He is praying that his own prayer would stay close to God — and then turns to the people: so let your heart be wholly true to him.

▶ 1:37:53

The peace offerings come to 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep — so much that the bronze altar could not hold it and the middle of the court had to be consecrated to take the overflow. "Could you imagine us

taking a giant pile of cash and just setting it on fire?" Matt asked. And then: this is not an exchange and not a purchase. God had already appeared. The house was already standing. The promises were already kept. "The craziest sounding answer is the right one. They're doing it just to do it for him."

▶ 1:39:52

> "On the eighth day he sent the people away, and they blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had shown to David his servant and to Israel his people."
>
> 1 KINGS 8:66 ↗

Nobody went home depleted, thinking they had given a lot and needed to rest. The temple did not exist to please a God who was hard to please. It blessed the people.

The temple was never a vending machine

▶ 1:40:32

Matt named the picture most of us carry without examining it. "Sometimes we think, well, God's really distant ever since the garden — because the wages of sin is passive aggression, apparently — and if there would ever be a truly good offering or sacrifice, then it might entice him back. And that's so foreign to the Bible it may as well be a different religion." Go back and check who was hiding from whom. He did not need a fancy house; he had lived in a tent, the heavens cannot contain him, and he was satisfied to show up in a bush. The temple is a sign of co-laboring: David wanted to do it, and God said all right, let's do this.

▶ 1:45:51

Which is why it was never a machine where you put in a goat and get out grain. The last thing God wanted with his people was a contract — "I know, God, you're hungry, and maybe you're like a T-rex and your arms are too short to prepare your own food, so of course we bring it to you, and you give us rain." The wages of sin is death, Matt noted dryly, not cold shoulders. He wants to be known, which is the most generous thing he could want, because "he is the very best thing you could know and love, period." He is the one pursuing when we are not asking, knocking when we are not listening, talking when we did not ask to hear.

Solomon, and the one he looks like

▶ 1:41:50

Line the two up. Solomon: son of David, anointed king over the people of God, a man of rest whose very name sounds like peace, builder of the house, and the prayer leader whose intercession made the place a house of lay prayer for everyone — including the outsider.

▶ 1:43:50

Jesus: son of David, anointed ruler over the people of God, the true king of peace whose father put his enemies under his feet, and a builder of a temple —
"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He prays using his own position on purpose, exactly as Solomon did, and always lives to make intercession for those who call on his name. God consecrated Solomon's house emphatically, with glory the priests could not stand up in; he consecrated this one emphatically by raising it from the dead.

▶ 1:47:36

So the themes the worship set had already been handing back to God — the courts of the Lord, and God making a way — were never about a building being beautiful enough or a king being good enough. Christ's body is the house, the true courts, the place that holds his name for all time, the reason we can call on it and be heard.

The appeal

▶ 1:49:09

You may well bring something to the table — a song that took real bravery, prayers, yourself and your checkbook, your time and your ministry on the side. Bring it. But these are
crowns we throw at his feet, not currency. He hears us because Christ was, is and always will be sufficient.

And that never graduates. It is not that Christ gets you in and then, as you mature, you begin appealing to a good track record. "I'm not trusting in my trustiness," Matt said. "We're trusting in him alone. No other direct object." If you have not come to Christ, call on his name; he will hear you. If you have, keep doing exactly that — and if you have gotten distracted, renew your trust and refocus. He closed by praying what Solomon prayed: that the foreigner, every tribe and language and people, would come to know him, because God does listen to the Son of David.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- 1 Chronicles 22:8–9
- 1 Kings 8:1–5
- 1 Kings 8:10–11
- 1 Kings 8:15–16
- 1 Kings 8:19–20
- 1 Kings 8:22
- 1 Kings 8:28–30
- 1 Kings 8:31–40
- 1 Kings 8:41–43
- Exodus 19:6
- 1 Kings 8:46–50
- 1 Kings 9:1–3
- 1 Kings 8:54–56
- 1 Kings 8:59–61
- 1 Kings 8:63–64
- 1 Kings 8:66
- Genesis 3:8
- Exodus 3:2–4
- Romans 6:23
- John 2:19
- Hebrews 7:25
- Revelation 4:10

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Solomon dedicates the temple almost entirely to prayer and hardly mentions sacrifice. Why do you think the writer wanted that emphasis at the center of the chapter?
2. Where do you catch yourself treating God as distant and in need of enticing, rather than as the one already pursuing you?
3. Solomon asks that his own words stay near God day and night on the people's behalf. What does it do to your praying to know Christ is doing that for you right now?
4. The people gave 22,000 oxen for nothing they needed to buy. What would it look like for you to give something to God simply to give it?
5. Matt said your appeal never graduates from Christ to your track record. Where are you quietly appealing to your own record, and what changes this week if you stop?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQikzLZQbCY&t=4210s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.