

January 29, 2023

1 Kings 8 / 2 Chronicle

Almost nobody got to see it. Gold. Gold from the world around. Not just grams or ounces or even pounds, but tons of gold; today, billions of dollars of gold. The inside walls, the floor, the ceiling glistening, covered in gold. A sight to see; a sight to behold. But who got to see it? Almost nobody, but God and a few of his priests.

So why? When David made plans for the temple, when Solomon built the temple, when they gave for the building of the temple, they had in their hearts and minds the goodness and grace, the greatness and glory of God. For David and for Solomon, that's what the God-Lived Life was about - **"Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!"** - soaking in the goodness and grace, the greatness, and glory of God. So for David and Solomon, the God-Lived Life meant nothing but the best for God and his Temple - even if nobody but God saw it.

Today we hear something even better than gold. Even better than the shining glory of God, we get to see the heart of God.

Solomon has the temple built, its main room, the Holy Place, about the size of our nave, a little narrower, a lot taller - 60 feet long, by 30 wide by 45 high; its walls carved with pomegranates, palm trees, and flowers, then covered with gold. Its primary room - the Holy of Holies, the Most Holy Place, a perfect cube 30 feet by 30 by 30, God's perfect golden throne room with the ark of the covenant covered with gold, with two

golden cherubim, their wings spread out touching wall to wall. For David and Solomon, the God-Lived Life meant nothing but the best for God and his Temple - even if almost nobody but God saw it.

So Solomon has the temple built as a home for God among his people. Then Solomon calls the elders of his people together to dedicate the temple; they don't get to enter the main rooms of God's house; they gather outside in the courtyards in front of the temple. Solomon has the ark of the covenant brought into the temple, and then - in a cloud - the LORD enters. And Solomon, kneeling on his knees, hands raised up to heaven, prays a prayer even better than gold.

Solomon shows he knows God doesn't need a house, a temple, here on earth; he's too great and glorious to be confined by a building; he has all of heaven as his home. Solomon shows he knows it's God's people who need a house for God - a place to draw them in and draw them together with God and his people - a place to give them a taste of the greatness of God - a place to center his people with God. Solomon sees God's Temple as a place for God's people to look to God, to gather and be together with God. Read Solomon's prayer and you will see that Solomon sees the God-Lived Life as this - when life is good, when life is hard, God's people look to the temple to look to God, God's people gather at the temple to be with God. Why? When we do that, good things happen! We train ourselves, and we show the world, to leave the life of the world behind, to look to God and to gather with God.

Basking in the glory and worship of God, Solomon wasn't under any illusions that the holiness of the moment would last. He knew his people; he knew himself. He knew the sin of his people, how they were so easily distracted away from the God-Lived Life. I wonder if Solomon recognized how he himself was already being distracted away from the God-Lived Life. So what's a theme running through Solomon's prayer? **“O LORD, forgive.”** Solomon sees us distracted from God, distracted by the evil of the world, distracted by the good life. And we are so easily distracted, so easily filled with excuses to ease up on the God-Lived Life, aren't we? Not just when life is good, but when life is hard, it's so easy to forget God, blame God, turn away and even against God. And then what Solomon sees explains so much in our world today. What does Solomon see God doing? With COVID, with the flu, with the economy, with our broken bodies and broken world, Solomon sees God nudging, squeezing, stopping us up short, so that we heed his call and invitation, that we turn back, come back, and pray with Solomon: **“O LORD, forgive; God, have mercy.”**

As Solomon is on his knees, hands raised to the heavens, praying, God hears more than Solomon; he hears another sound in the air - the sounds of cattle and sheep and goats, cattle and sheep and goats that would be sacrificed, some sacrificed to cover over the sin and guilt of his people, some sacrificed to celebrate with a meal life with God, yes, to celebrate the God-Lived life. Know this, as you pray, God also hears another Lamb sound, the voice of his Son, the Lamb of God. By his sacrifice on the cross, he has taken your sin and covered your guilt. Today as you pray, the Father in heaven hears the voice of his Son at his

side speaking up for you: “He’s forgiven; she’s right by you; they’re with us!” And so the Father and his Son hear you and see you forgiven and right by him. They see you precious, more precious than gold, more precious than all the gold in the world. How so? They see you and hear you as their family to love and care for today and forever.

And that’s not all. You heard what Paul said in Ephesians. It explains why you’re here. God is building for himself a new temple, a new home for himself. This temple that God is building - it’s not a temple built by hands or built out of stones or wood or even gold - it’s built with you. God himself is here gathering you together, joining you together, building you together to be his holy temple with the Holy Spirit living in you. I should say “us.” God isn’t looking to build each of us to be mini, individual temples; God is gathering us together, joining us together, building us together to be his temple together. Why? God sees together as better! Together is better for love. Together is better for strength. Together is better for the work he has for us. Together, together with him and together with each other is better!

This temple that God is building us into isn’t built on a consensus of the people; it’s not joined together by a spiritual feeling. Sometimes we hear people: “I don’t believe in any particular religion; I’m just spiritual.” It’s no wonder, is it? With all the ways we’ve shamed God’s church, it’s no wonder people want to steer clear. Sometimes we hear people say that the church would be stronger if we would just learn to agree with each other and accept each other no matter what we believe and

teach. That can sound so good, and it would sound good to God if we would all learn to agree with him. But Satan can get people to agree to all sorts of nonsense; so, no, God isn't building his church on our agreement with each other. God is building his church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; God is building his church with Jesus as the cornerstone. That's why we keep going back to the Bible, so that we are built together on God's foundation instead of human thinking. It's why - instead of settling for spiritual - we focus on the person, the Word and Work of Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Solomon built a temple lined with golden glory, gold that almost nobody could see. The temple that God is building - building with you - the temple that God is building has a glory better than gold, a glory that God wants to show off for everyone to see. By his Spirit, God is living in you - in us - to show off the glory of Jesus. To show the world how Jesus loves. To show the world the grace, the mercy, the peace that Jesus has for you and for them. That's what the God-Lived Life is about - every day we check and build on the foundation God has for us in the prophets and apostles. Every day we check ourselves and line up with Jesus. Every day we go to the Word and Sacrament to be filled with the Spirit. And what happens? Better than gold, God is building us together to show off the grace and glory of our God - the grace and glory that gathers hearts for heaven. Amen.

January 28 & 29, 2023

THE SERVICE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... the God-Lived Life is expected to fit into our “normal” lives as convenient, not costing too much time, not costing too much money. For sure not costing so much time or money that fitting in with the normal life of the world is inconvenienced.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see the God-Lived Life thinks big and invests big with God - for the glory of God and the good of his people - not just for the church, but as the church with God living in us and through us!

OPENING HYMN

“Christ Is Our Cornerstone”

Hymn 914

Christ is our cornerstone, on him alone we build;
with his true saints alone the courts of heav’n are filled.
On his great love our hopes we place of present grace and joys above.

Here may we gain from heav’n the grace which we implore,
and may that grace, once giv’n, be with us evermore
until that day when all the blest to endless rest are called away.

Oh, then, with hymns of praise these hallowed courts shall ring;
our voices we will raise the Three in One to sing
and thus proclaim in joyful song, both loud and long, that glorious name.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY (SUNG)

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST (SUNG)

CW 176

Refrain: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. *Refrain*

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. *Refrain*

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen. Amen. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O glorious and mighty Lord, you commanded your disciples to proclaim your Word to all nations and have declared those who believe in you children of God through faith. Keep all who believe in you steadfast in your Word and promise, that they too may be your holy dwelling and your lights upon the earth; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 8:22–24, 27–29, 41–43

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven and said:

“LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

“But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place.

"As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name — for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm — when they come and pray toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 27A

Refrain

The LORD is my light, the LORD is my help, the
LORD is my sal - va - tion.

Tone

A grand staff musical notation for the tone, consisting of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a series of chords and melodic lines, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and a bass line.

The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom / shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I / be afraid?
One thing I ask / from the LORD,
this only / do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house / of the LORD
all the days / of my life,
to gaze on the beauty / of the LORD
and to seek him in his / temple. *Refrain*

He will hide me in the shelter of his / sacred tent
and set me high up- / on a rock.
I remain confi- / dent of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land / of the living.
Wait / for the LORD;
be strong and take heart and wait / for the LORD.
**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in / the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:19–22

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION*John 10:27–28*

Alleluia. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. Alleluia.

GOSPEL*John 10:22–30*

Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY*"God Is Here! As We Your People"***Hymn 858**

God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace.
Here are table, font, and pulpit; here the cross has central place.
Here, in honesty of preaching, here, in silence as in speech,
here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
here, as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of Church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt,
keep us faithful to the gospel; help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication, all we have to give, receive;
we who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

SERMON

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Eternal God and Father, we thank you for the blessings we share as members of your holy Church, for your gracious Word and sacraments, for opportunities to worship and to grow in faith and knowledge, for occasions to serve and be served, and for fellowship with believers in our congregation and our synod.

Help us rejoice in these blessings, dear Lord, and use them faithfully.

Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, you give grace to your people by calling us to be your witnesses in the world. Open our eyes to see the great and noble mission that lies before us. In the hurting eyes of the lonely, in the pained eyes of the sick, and in the searching eyes of the lost, help us to see your face, Lord Jesus, and to serve others as we would serve you.

Awaken us to opportunities to proclaim your message of love.

Holy Spirit, giver of life, through Word and sacrament bestow on us the wisdom and power we need to witness clearly and to act boldly. Help us to speak the truth in love, to give the reason for the hope we have, and to conduct ourselves with gentleness and respect.

Set our hearts on fire as we work and witness for Christ.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray for a family member, a neighbor, or a friend who does not believe in you, or whose faith is weak or troubled.

Silent prayer

Keep in your care those who are enduring chronic pain and incessant unhappiness, those enduring rejection and struggling with poverty, those mourning the loss of someone they loved. [Especially bless... *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Bring healing and help and comfort and calm to everyone in distress.

Move us to act alone or join with others to provide help and support.

Bless the Church with men and women who are willing to proclaim your Word in places where we cannot go. Keep them and their loved ones in your care and let nothing hinder their work. By the power of the gospel, restore their spirits each day, so that they do not lose heart as they serve us and others.

Move us to support them with our sincere prayers and generous offerings.

Wherever your Word is proclaimed, O Lord, grant it success. Let your kingdom come to us and others, so that we and many more might join the assembly of saints and angels to sing your praise forever.

Savior of all, hear our prayer and help us in our mission. Amen.

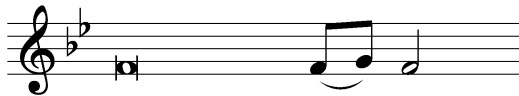
LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)



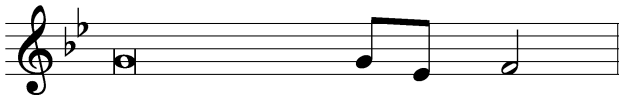
The Lord be with you.



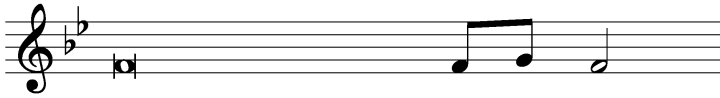
And al - so with you.



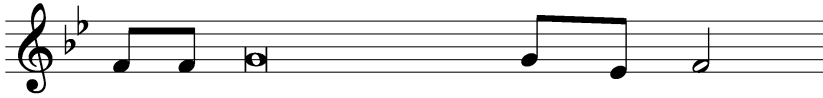
Lift up your hearts.



We lift them up to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (SUNG)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my T blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD (SUNG)

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your
peace.

CHOIR

“Psalm 121”

*I lift my eyes up to the Hills From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Maker of The heavens and the earth
He will not let my foot be moved He keeps my journey safe*

Refrain

*O my soul, praise the Lord most high Strong to save, He upholds my life
Forevermore, He will be my light I lift my eyes up to the Lord most high*

*He is the shade at my right hand My shelter in the storm
No sun by day, nor moon by night Shall ever bring me harm
He will not slumber, will not sleep He watches all my ways*

Refrain

*I lift my eyes up to the hills From where does my help come
My help comes from the Maker of The heavens and the earth
The God of Israel is my guide Wherever I may go
And in His strength I will abide Until He leads me home*

Refrain 2x

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

“Lord Jesus Christ, the Church’s Head”

Hymn 861

Lord Jesus Christ, the Church’s head, you are her one foundation;
in you she trusts, before you bows, and waits for your salvation.
Built on this rock secure, your Church shall endure
though all the world decay and all things pass away.
O hear, O hear us, Jesus!

O Lord, let this your little flock, your name alone confessing,
continue in your loving care, true unity possessing.
Your sacraments, O Lord, and your saving Word
to us e'er pure retain; grant that they may remain
our only strength and comfort.

Help us to serve you evermore with hearts both pure and lowly;
and may your Word, that light divine, shine on in splendor holy
that we repentance show, in faith ever grow;
the pow'r of sin destroy and evils that annoy.
O make us faithful Christians.

And for your gospel let us dare to sacrifice all treasure;
teach us to bear your blessèd cross, to find in you all pleasure.
O grant us steadfastness in joy and distress.
Lord, for your mercy's sake, let us by grace partake
of endless joy and glory.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you
have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith,
nourished our hope, and strengthened our love.

By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you
will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

Hymn 930

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.

Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.

In my love’s baptismal river I have made you mine forever.

Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.

Here you heard my dear Son’s story; here you touched him, saw his glory.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;

grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.

Here my Spirit’s power filled you; here his tender comfort stilled you.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;

I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;

I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.

Go, my children; I will keep you and give you peace.

OFFERING

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