

This week as you go around and look at different places of worship; the shopping mall, Adelaide oval, the stock exchange, the lotto booth. This week as you go around looking at these places of worship ask yourself if the hope they claim to offer will bring about the life you're after. Or will they be like the temple in Ephesus over time; a ruin, and if that's what you've been hoping in, then sadly your life would have become a ruin too.

This week thank Jesus that you worship a God who isn't coming to nothing. He coming to breathe his life into us that we might be raised to new life in him. Our God isn't crumbling, he's alive and well. And we're living in his presence; knowing him personally, able to talk with him daily, about everything.

Not only talk to him daily about our lives, but we are able to talk to him about the lives of the people we meet during the week.

Will God answer those prayers; or has he left the building?

Good News, Jesus hasn't left the building, he still resides in his temple, shaping it, empowering it, defining it. Jesus hasn't left us, we're far too precious to him, we belong. So don't give up talking with Jesus about all the people and situations you encounter this week. They need Jesus, the love and hope he brings, and you are interwoven in his life, you bring his very person with you. What an amazing privilege.

Let's pray.

Jesus we thank you for making us to be part of your temple, the place you live and breathe. Jesus we thank you that in you we belong in Father's heart. Jesus we thank you for shaping our identity so that we don't wander in exile, but live and grow and mature as people in you. Jesus open our hearts and minds to your lead this week so that we might be your living presence in every situation we find ourselves in and to all the people we encounter this week. Jesus you are our God, in you we trust, in you we live. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

22 July 2018 GOD'S TEMPLE Ephesians 2:11-22



This week as we look at Paul's letter to the community of faith in Ephesus, I'd like to share a few facts that I found interesting and for me helps better understand the background for the people Paul was writing to.

"Ephesus was 'the' religious centre of the province of Asia. The great temple of Artemis there drew tourists and worshippers, and served as a giant bank from which cities and nations as well as individuals applied for loans. This highly successful institutionalized religion is the backdrop against which Paul gives us a vision of the church of Jesus Christ. This church is no institution: it is a body, a family, a holy but living temple. It reveals a glory in the living personalities of its members which far

outshines the glory of the stone temple of Ephesus, even though that temple was four times the size of the Parthenon of Athens.

This book is an important one for Christians to study today. It helps us not to think of our own churches in institutional terms – as buildings and programs and activities alone. It helps us to see ourselves, and one another, as living expressions of a Christ who still expresses His glory in human lives" (Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher's commentary* (p. 913). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.)

The temple of Artemis in Ephesus was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Where is it now?

I'm sure when people came they marvelled at the temple; where

impressed by its size and grandeur. Where is it now?

Paul was there proclaiming a message about a living temple. A living temple which you too could be part of. Not just a tourist. Not just an observer. Not just a worshipper, but part of the temple. A living, breathing temple which took its shape and life and purpose from the very God who lived in this temple.

What would you rather be part of; something that is dead, dead as stone. Or something that is alive, alive and expressive in love. What would you rather be part of?

The Good News we hear from Paul through this letter is that God in Jesus has opened the way for us to be part of this living relationship, which gives living

expression to the very love of God. God pulsating through us; infusing life through his life giving presence in us. Good News, in Jesus, we are part of that temple.

We don't have cold hard stone. We have a living, breathing God, who loves us. Loves us enough to give his life for us; executed on a cross that we might live. We have a God who has opened the door into his heart so that we might live, vibrant, intimate lives with him.

For all the grandeur and wealth that Ephesus offered, there is no question for me; I want to be part of Jesus' temple. I want to be sharing life with Jesus, in that wonderful intimate bond of love and trust. Not an outsider looking in, but intimately interwoven as part of the whole story.

I love hearing; "You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of

faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers and outsiders. You *belong* here... God is building a home. He's using us all... He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds

Has Jesus left the building?

all the parts together... a temple in which God is quite at home" (Eph. 2:19-22)

Wow, what an amazing identity I now have in Jesus. I'm not a 'wandering exile'. Have you ever felt as though you don't belong? Have you felt like your life lacked direction, that you were just wandering, without any real purpose or direction? At times I've felt like a 'wandering exile'; and I must admit, I didn't like it. I don't enjoy feeling like I don't

belong, like I'm an exile.

When you've felt on the outer how did that affect what you did? How did that affect the way you treated other people and valued yourself?

Isn't that 'Good News'; in Jesus, you're no longer strangers or outsiders, you belong. In Jesus, you belong in the heavenly Father's family.

What's the difference in the way a person lives in a place where they belong as opposed to where they feel out of place, that they're just visiting?

In Jesus we have a huge difference. We don't have to walk around on egg shells, frightened of being asked to leave. In Jesus, you belong. You don't have to live like someone trying to earn their way in, always striving never arriving. What a life sapping way to exist; have I done

enough, or will I be asked to leave.

No, in Jesus, you belong in Father's heart. You belong as part of the family. In Jesus you are built into the very fabric of God's existence.

The image Paul gives of us as being part of the temple is an amazing image. The temple wasn't just a place of worship, it was the place the god dwelt.

So in the temple of Artemis you found an idol; an idol of Artemis herself. Not just meaning to be a representation but in some way the understanding is that Artemis was there. This is the place you can come into the presence of this god. Is that what comes to your mind when you hear the word 'temple'?

In Jesus, you don't just represent him, but he lives in, with and through you. You are part of his temple; the place where people can

come into his presence. I find that a mind blowing thought, that somehow I don't fully understand, when people encounter us they encounter Jesus, for Jesus has built us into the fabric of his being. We are the body of Christ.

You're not an added extra, you're vital to the

Jesus' temple has grown, is growing.

whole. And because in Jesus you are part of his temple he wonderfully shapes us, shapes our identity in him, shapes our lives so that we live out his meaning and purpose. We live out his very identity, today, tomorrow, forever.

What happened to that wonder of the ancient world that was Artemis' temple? It came to an end. It crumbled. There was no god living there, just a lifeless image, a lie that robbed people

of the life God wanted for them, wants for us.

Has Jesus' temple crumbled and come to nothing?

Not a chance. Jesus temple has grown, is growing, as more and more and more people come to know Jesus, come to share life with him, come to find their identity, their purpose, their hope in Jesus.

Jesus' temple hasn't crumbled it has grown and is growing, for the God we worship isn't made of stone; but is living, breathing, active in our lives. Jesus breathes his life giving presence into us, that we might be his life giving presence everywhere we go.

Jesus is inviting us today to continue bringing more and more people to him that he might weave them intimately into his life so that they too might be part of the very fabric of his identity.