***The Living Temple***

**Worship Series – Week 6**

***Living Stones***

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**SEach worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. It is recommended that the headings of each section of the service be included in the bulletin. |

**Announcements**

**Call to Worship:**

According to the Christian Stewardship Association, in 1899, 500 stewardship titles were available. Today, with thousands of new Christian books published annually, very few deal with money-related subjects—and even fewer take a close look at the scriptural teaching on this subject. The more America has gained wealth, the less the Church has addressed the subject of giving. In fact, dollar for dollar, the average American gave more during the Great Depression than today.

(*Money, Possessions and Eternity*, pages 173-174)

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| **HC#277 – We have caught the vision splendid** | HC-277 | HCD26-T17 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#111 – Cry of My Heart** | HC-111 | HCD10-T11 |
| **HC#103 – Blessed Assurance** | HC-103 | HCD9-T13 |
| **HC#113 – You’re Worthy of My Praise** | HC-113 | HCD10-T13 |

***Grace Giving***

**Responsive Scripture:**

**Leader:** Although Christian giving goes far beyond tithing, the principle of tithing was ingrained in the beliefs and lifestyles of the early Christians, most of who grew up in Jewish homes.

**All:** *A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.* (Leviticus 27:30, NIV)

**Leader:** The tithe “belongs to the Lord,” not to the people. It applied to “everything,” not some things. It was “holy,” to be set apart and given to God, not used for any other purpose. The Israelites were warned that to present to their Creator anything less than the full 10 percent was to “rob God,” since the first 10 percent belonged to him, not them:

**All:** *Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you? In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.’* (Malachi 3:8-10)

**Leader:** The tithe was never a ceiling for giving, only a floor. It was a beginning point. Beyond it, God’s children gave more, sometimes much more, as needs and opportunities arose. The tithe was a demonstration of obedience. Voluntary offerings were a demonstration of love, joy, and worship.

**All:** *Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything; you may have an abundance for every good deed.*

 (2 Corinthians 9:6-15, NASB)

**Leader:** The tithe is God’s historical method to get people on the path of giving. In that sense, it can serve as a gateway to the joy of true “grace giving” today, just as it gave rise to the spontaneous, joyous, freewill giving we see in various Old Testament passages. Does God expect his new covenant children to give less, the same, or more? Consider Christ’s words:

**All:** *Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.* (Luke 6:38, NIV)

**Leader:** Whether or not you’re a giver, you have considerable material blessings from God. Have you ever asked yourself, “*Why* has he provided so much? God tells us e*xactly* why he provides us with more money than we need:

**All:** *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that…* (2 Corinthians 9:10-11, NIV)

**Leader:** So that *what*? How will he finish this sentence? How *you* finish the sentence is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Prosperity theology would finish it like this:

**All:** “…so that we might live in wealth, showing the world how much God blesses those who love him.”

**Leader:** That isn’t how the Apostle Paul finishes it. He says.

**All:** *You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion.”*

**Leader:** When God provides more money we often think, *“This is a blessing”.* Yes, but it would be just as scriptural to say, *“This is a test.”*

**All:** God entrusts me with his money not to build my kingdom on earth, but to build his kingdom in heaven.

(*Money, Possessions and Eternity*, pages 190-213)

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| **Drama: Can’t Afford It** |

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| **HC#160 – I Surrender** | HC-160  | HCD14-T20 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **SB#12 – Eternal God, unchanging** | TB-245 – AlfordTB-246 – Aurelia | No CDHTD3-T3 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#361 – Fill thou my life, O Lord my God** | TB-147 – Ellacombe | HTD1-T9 (3 vs. – band ending) |
| **SB#632 – What shall I render to my God** | TB-70 – Amazing Grace! | HTD3-T2 (4 vs.) |

***A Willing Heart***

**Reading:**

Christ’s words were direct and profound: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). What we do with our possessions is a sure indicator of what’s in our hearts. Jesus is saying, “Show me your checkbook, your credit card statement, and your receipts for cash expenditures, and I’ll show you where your heart is.” What we do with our money doesn’t lie. It is a bold statement to God of what we truly value.

But what we do with our money doesn’t simply indicate where our heart is. According to Jesus, it determines where our heart goes. This is an amazing and exciting truth. People say, “I want more of a heart for missions.” Jesus tells you exactly how to get it. Put your money in missions, and your heart will follow.

Do you wish you had a greater heart for the poor and lost? Then give your money to help the poor and reach the lost. Do you want your heart to be in your church? Put your money there and your heart will follow. If most of your money is in mutual funds, retirement, your house, or your hobby, that’ where your heart’s going to be.

(*Money, Possessions and Eternity*, page 101)

**Tithes and Offerings**

 ***Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary***

**Prayer:**

What a glorious promise You gave to Your people. But we see the promise of an even greater and more glorious temple, a temple made without hands, which is built out of living stones upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, Who is indeed the One “desired of all nations.” We, Your people, are the temple of the Lord, more glorious than any building made with human hands, for we have been fashioned by Your own hands, purchased with Your own blood, and set apart to be Your residence on the earth. Come, Prince of Peace, and fill this temple with Your glory! Amen.

(*The NIV Worship Bible*, page 1270)

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| **Chorus - Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary** |  | No CD |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#199 – I Stand in Awe** | HC-199 | HCD18-T19 |
| **HC#186 – When I Look into Your Holiness** | HC-186 | HCD17-T16 |
| **HC#110 – He is Here** | HC-110 | HCD9-T20 |
| **HC#49 – Be Still, for the Presence of the Lord** | HC-49 | HC3-T19 |
| **HC#156 – Enter In** | HC-156 | HCD14-T16 |

**Family Prayer Time** [*Congregation moves to unite with family members to pray in small groups*]

**Message – Saved for a Purpose**

[*Distribute* Financial Covenant *below, ask congregation to prayerfully sign it.*]

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| **SB#? – Dear Lord, I do surrender** | TB-246 – AureliaTB-249 – EwingTB-259 – Penlan | HTD3-T3 (3 vs.)HTD9-T3 (4 vs.)HTD2-T11 (3 vs.) |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **SB#342 – O God of love eternal** | TB-246 – Aurelia | HTD3-T3 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#881 – Not my own** | TB-389 – same | No CD |
| **SB#623 – Take my life, and let it be** | TB-282 – HendonTB-279 – Consecration Hymn | HTD8-T6 (4 vs.)No CD |
| **HC#156 – Enter In** | HC-156 | HCD14-T16 |
| **HC#173 – In This Quiet Moment** | HC-173 | HCD16-T13 |
| **HC#179 – Come to Jesus** | HC-179 | HCD16-T19 |

**Benediction: (Congregation in unison)**

*As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.* (1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10, NIV)

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| **HC#198 – In Jesus’ Name** | HC-198 | HCD18-T18 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#76 – Shout to the Lord** | HC-76 | HCD6-T16 |
| **HC#112 – The Potter’s Hand** | HC-112 | HCD10-T12 |
| **HC#109 – Total Praise** | HC-109 | HCD9-T19 |

***A financial covenant with God***

I submit to the Lord God Almighty. I affirm his ownership of me and every aspect of my life. I declare that “my” money and possessions are actually his. I recognize that God is the owner of everything and I am his steward, a money manager for the assets he has entrusted to me.

As a symbol of my total submission to God, and as a beginning point for my commitment to giving, I set aside the tithe, the first 10 percent of everything, as holy and belonging exclusively to the Lord, I will return to him the whole tithe, being careful not to rob him and incur his curse. I will give back to him, through his church, the first fruits of all he provides. I do this in obedience to him and in desire of his blessing. By faith, I take God up on his challenge: “Test me in this…and see” (Malachi 3:10). I ask him to show me it is far better to live on 90 percent with his blessing than 100 percent without it.

Having been set on the right course by the tithe, I embark on a lifelong adventure of Christian giving. Beyond the tithe, out of the 90 percent that God has entrusted to me, I will seek to give generous freewill gifts as I sense his leading. I recognize that God has entrusted wealth to me not so I can live like a king, but so I can be “generous on every occasion” (2 Corinthians 9:11). I recognize that I can rob God not only by withholding the tithe but by failing to give whatever offering he may call upon me to give.

I pray that God will teach me to give sacrificially to feed the hungry, to reach the lost, to invest in worthy causes and ministries that submit themselves to Christ, and to use his funds wisely and biblically (2 Corinthians 8-9).

I commit myself to stay out of financial bondage, so I can be free to serve God single-mindedly. I acknowledge that I can’t take earthly treasure with me when I leave this world, and I purpose to store it up instead as heavenly treasure—for Christ’s glory and the eternal good of others and myself. Recognizing that heaven is my home and Chris is my Lord, I commit myself to seek his guidance and to do as he directs with his assets.

 Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Witness: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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(*Money, Possessions and Eternity*, page 423)

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| **Week #6** |
| **DRAMA****Can’t Afford It****By Joe Caddy**© Copyright 2011 by Joe Caddy. All rights reserved. Used by permission. |
| **Topic:** | Stewardship; Tithing |
| **Scripture:** | Malachi 3:9-10; 2 Cor. 9:6-15 |
| **Synopsis:** | A series of monologues in which six Christians describe their thoughts about giving financial support to the church.NOTE: Monologues may be omitted or re-ordered to suit time & cast constraints. |
| **Characters:** | Donna – A wishful giverBob – Devoted father; poor financial managerGina – Giver of timeJoan – Poor college studentPhil – Feel-good giverChris– Grateful giver |
| **Props/Costumes:** | Modern day |
| **Setting:** | Bare stage |
| **Running time:** | 7-8 minutes |

[*All actors address the audience directly. All six can begin in place on the stage or individual entrances and exits can be made but transition time between them should be minimal*.]

**Donna:** Do we tithe? Well, that’s a little bit of a touchy subject. *[Quieter, as if confiding*] We really want to be able to give to the church but money’s kind of tight right now. Ok, really tight. When we got married we decided that we would give God 100% of whatever we had left at the end of the month...but lately, it seems like there’s always too much month left at the end of our money. I mean Bill has been able to hold down steady work and all but after the mortgage, the car and the other bills are taken care of we barely have anything left to sock away in our “rainy day” fund. We want to give, we really do. And we feel really bad that we can’t…but what can we do? There’s just not anything left!

**Bob:** For years, Elaine and I have frittered away our income on all kinds of luxuries. Now, we’re only twelve years from retirement and don’t have anything saved. On top of that, we’ve still got two kids in college. Believe me, we’d like to give to the church, but Scripture says we’ve got to provide for our family first. After we get our kids through school and get a nest egg started, then we’ll start giving.

**Gina:** There’s a lot more to stewardship than just money, right? In these hard economic times, we can’t all afford to give but we can always do our part by, I don’t know, volunteering to help with potluck fundraisers or keeping the building clean…or even teaching a Sunday School class. Me, I do all of that stuff. I’m literally at the corps two or three nights per week so I guess I would consider that to be my way of giving. After all, they say that time is money. The way I see it, I’m giving way more than my 10 percent.

**Phil:** Oh, yeah. I give all the time. I’d say that others would describe me as pretty generous, actually. Ask my wife how she likes the new Lexus that I got her for her birthday or my kids how they like their new laptops. Sure, that stuff’s expensive but it makes them happy and, to be honest, giving it to them makes you feel pretty good yourself. In fact this church that we went to when we were in Hawaii last month was taking up a collection to start a homeless ministry in their neighborhood. All I had in my wallet was a hundred dollar bill but I thought, “You know? These people are trying to do something good to give back to someone else. They deserve this.” So I dropped it in the plate. I wish I could do stuff like that more often… I mean, our church back at home asks us for money for stuff like that all the time…but the family budget’s kind of tight so, you know. Next year, though. Next year I’ve got a big promotion coming. Once that comes through, then…then we’ll start giving.

**Joan:** Puh-lease! Can you say “poor college student”? 10 percent of nothing is still nothing. Seriously, though, I don’t know it would even be possible for me to give right now. I’m working 30 hours a week for just over minimum wage which nets me a grand total of about $800 per month. That might sound like a lot for someone who still lives at home but after tuition and books and stuff I’m just barely making it. If I gave a tithe, it would be $80 a month and I’d probably have to drop out of school. Seriously. I trust that God has provided me with a job and an opportunity to earn almost exactly how much need. I’d like to give something back to Him, but I just can’t right now. I wouldn’t have enough.

**Chris:** You know what I’ve discovered about money? No matter how much I make, it’s not ever going to be enough. I’m making a lot more of it now than I did when I was a kid struggling to work my way through school…but yet somehow it still seems just as difficult to make ends meet. Yes, I’ve got a family now…and a house…and a car…and other demands on my time and money. But I have grown to understand that God is the one who has provided all of these things for me. I’m so grateful to Him for the blessings He’s brought to my life. He’s always taken care of me and I have every reason to believe that He will continue. If I am to believe that He is the primary reason I live then I also need to believe that He always deserves my first and my best. Yes, sometimes money is tight and tithing is hard. My head tries to tell my heart that I don’t have enough to give..that I can’t afford it. But…God has always been so faithful. How can I afford not to?

[*Blackout*]

***The Living Temple***

**Worship Series Sermon – Week 6**

***Saved for a Purpose***

**Text:** Ephesians 2:4-10

In the 1800s, Charles Francis Adams kept a journal of his life. One day’s entry read, “Went fishing with my son today – a day wasted.” His son also kept a journal over that same period of time. His entry on the same day read, “Went fishing with my father – the most wonderful day of my life!” During small moments in our lives, we can make an extraordinary difference in those around us. Sometimes we just need to open our eyes to see the possibilities.

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to some friends of his who seemed to be losing their focus. The Ephesians needed to be reminded about what God’s grace provided them, and the purpose of their lives now that they belonged to God. Paul said that God gave them new life, saved them and told them their lives had purpose.

Have you ever missed an opportunity? Like that father-and-son fishing trip, there was an opportunity to build a relationship and you missed out? Have you ever heard God’s voice, wanting you to talk to a stranger or call a friend with a word of encouragement, and ignored it? It is a pretty empty feeling, knowing that you missed out on your purpose.

What is our purpose in life? Why did God create us? For what purpose did God save us? These are all questions that we ask from time to time. Especially when we think about our own mortality, we wonder what kind of difference we are really making in the world.

Sometimes we have to pause and think about our purpose in life. It’s like that bumper sticker that says, “For Heaven’s Sake, What on Earth are you Doing?” In other words, we have an eternal purpose. Sometimes it’s easy to get distracted with the cares of this world and lose sight of what God has called us to do.

Over the last few weeks, we have been talking about God’s Temple. Let’s review what we learned so far:

God wants us to build a sanctuary so that he can dwell among his people.

God provides the materials necessary to build the Temple.

God wants us to give from a willing heart.

God gave us specialized skills that we can use to build his Temple.

Don’t use God’s gold to build an idol.

The Temple can be a tent, a building or a person.

Jesus is the perfect example of the Temple

You are part of the living Temple – the Church.

Don’t stop building the Temple.

Today, we are going to take a closer look at our purpose in life. Could there be something God is calling you and me to? Do you and I have a responsibility for each other? Do we have a call to make a difference in the Temple?

Let’s take a closer look at what Paul tells the Ephesians.

In Ephesians 2, Paul reminds us that God’s grace is wonderful. He gives us good things we don’t deserve. Let’s look at the things that God has done for us.

First, God made us alive. In verses 4 and 5, Paul says this:

4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions. (Ephesians 2:4-5)

Even when we were dead, God made us alive. In the summer, sometimes the grass goes weeks without rain. And it looks dead. But the next rainfall comes, and the blades of grass start to wake up. And pretty soon, it is alive and green again.

And part of that revival process is explained in verses 6 and 7:

6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

We are raised with Christ and seated with him. And all this is so that God’s riches of grace might be shown.

The new life God gives is not for us alone. This life is for those around us as well. But many of us, once we receive God’s forgiveness, we stop right there as if that’s the end of the story. Receiving God’s new life is the most crucial step, but it’s the first one. Once we become alive in Christ, it isn’t time to sit down and relax. If you are getting comfortable just sitting in your seat on a Sunday morning and you don’t do much else, people around you might wonder if you are really alive at all.

The second thing God did for us was to save us. Paul tells us in verse 8,

8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8)

He took us out of a helpless situation and saved us. He saved us from punishment, saved us from sin, and saved us from our own selves, twisted by sin and selfishness. Sometimes we forget that God did all the work providing for our salvation. Sometimes we get the impression that it’s our own works that saved us. After all, I’m a good person, right? I have done a lot of good things, and I haven’t murdered anyone. And I’m certainly not as bad as that person over there.

Paul wanted the Ephesians to remember that God saved us – not ourselves. God did all the work – all we did was accept God’s gift of forgiveness. But out of gratitude, we feel inspired to action as a result of God’s love. We want to get involved in this kingdom-building, this temple-building, as an act of gratitude. After all, there is no way we can work for our salvation, and there is no way we can pay God back for what he did.

But we act out of love and gratitude. We have a greater purpose. God wants to partner with us to make a difference in the world. He wants us to build his Temple so that he can dwell with his people. He wants us to work together to be the Body of Christ to the world. Is there any greater calling than that?

Paul pointed out to the Ephesians that God gave them new life and that he saved them. And all for what? God’s grace provided a third thing.

God made us for a purpose. Have you ever seen the look in the eye of a carpenter when he has finished making an ornate wooden dresser? Have you seen a woman who cooked her family’s favorite meal and just served it to them? Have you seen a father who assembled a toy and has just given it to his child? They are excited about the next step. They have created something that is intended to be used in a certain way.

Each of these creations is meant for a certain purpose. If the dresser is empty and put in storage, it isn’t used for its purpose. If the food grows cold on the table and the people are hungry, it is just wasted, and it loses its purpose. If the child runs off to play with another toy and the one his father made him is left to gather dust in a closet, it misses its purpose.

In the same way, you and I have been made for a purpose. You and I were made to build a sanctuary, to contribute to God’s house, to keep his Temple up and to help his family to grow.

What are you doing with your life? Are you living according to God’s purpose? Are you like that father on the fishing trip, wondering what it’s all about and suspecting that it was all a waste of time? Maybe you feel frustrated at life, when just under your nose is the most exciting purpose that a person could have.

A recent Salvation Army group visited Eleuthera Island in the Bahamas. During their stay, a four-year-old girl named Liana fell and bumped her head. She was taken to the clinic on the small island, which was not much more than a first aid station. They treated what they could, but did not have the capability to perform a CT scan to determine if she suffered a concussion. At first everything looked OK until after she fell asleep. She woke up vomiting and showed other classic signs of a brain concussion. Time was running short and the nearest help was in Nassau, 60 miles away across the ocean. The medical helicopter was available to bring her to the Nassau hospital, but they needed a commitment of $500 before they would consider making the flight.

The Corps Officer gathered everyone who was close by. This was a life-and-death decision for little Liana. If they could collect $500, she could be transported to the help she needed. If they couldn’t, Liana might die. So the appeal was made.

Suddenly, both locals and mission team members opened their wallets and handed money to the Corps Officer. In a short amount of time, the $500 was raised, and the little girl was transported to the hospital.

Some people gave, others did not. Some gave $20, others gave $100. With Liana’s life on the line, money didn’t seem to matter anymore. The only thing that really mattered was this little girl and her survival.

When we talk about building God’s Temple, our thoughts immediately turn to money. You may ask questions like, “How much is enough,” or “Why do they need my money?” But when we see a world that is dying without God, the money doesn’t matter as much anymore, does it?

The only thing that matters is building God’s kingdom. Peter talks about building a living Temple, using you and me for the building blocks. He talks about a Temple that should be growing. A Temple that we can meet with God, and he can dwell with us. It’s a place where people can be introduced to God and be saved from eternal death.

We each have people we live with, work with and go to school with who are dying. They need attention that they can’t get without a living Temple that is able and willing to reach out to them and invite them to become a part of it.

When you realize that there is an opportunity to be a part of God’s ministry in this world, how do you react? Just like someone in that gathering in the Bahamas, maybe you look at what you have and you’ve already decided that you can’t afford to give. You’ve already considered your schedule and you don’t have time to get involved in building the Temple.

But rest assured, God will build his Temple. And lost people will be reached. He will do all this whether you help or not. But when there is so much on the line, why not get involved? Maybe you have the resources you have because God provided them so you could give them to build his Temple.

It’s not about primarily about money or time. It is about people you and I know who are hanging in the balance between life and death. We have an opportunity to get involved. How will you answer God today?

Yes, God made us alive when we were dead in our sins. Yes, God saved us from sin and death. But he also created us for a purpose. We have a higher calling – one that comes directly from heaven.

We are each called to contribute to God’s sanctuary. We have the inspiration and the mandate from God to make a difference in the world. Will you live out that purpose?