

Lessons from the Gospel of John (12): Life's Purpose—To Build the House of God

Bible reading

You may find it helpful to also read John 2:12-22.

John 2:13-16, 19-21

13 And the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

14 And He found in the temple those selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers sitting there.

15 And having made a whip out of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, as well as the sheep and the oxen, and He poured out the money of the moneychangers and overturned their tables.

16 And to those who were selling the doves He said, Take these things away from here; do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise.

19 Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then the Jews said, This temple was built in forty-six years, and You will raise it up in three days?

21 But He spoke of the temple of His body.

Introduction

After an introduction to life and building in chapter 1, the Gospel of John then shows the principle of life and the purpose of life in chapter 2. When Jesus changed the water into wine, He unveiled the principle of life, which is to change death into life. But there is a second half to chapter 2. Here we find an account, chosen by the apostle John from among a multitude of events, which shows the purpose of life. This purpose is to build the house of God. Life is for building. Life is the content and procedure, and the building is the corporate expression and the goal.

Bible study reading

Please prayerfully read through the following portions of ministry related to this lesson.

When Christ became flesh, He took on a physical body. In John 1:14 we are told clearly that His physical body was a tabernacle. According to chapter two of John, His physical body was also the temple. I wish to point out that throughout the New Testament, the temple of God does not denote a place; it denotes a Person. When Jesus was in the flesh, His body was the tabernacle and temple of God. Both the tabernacle and the temple are God's dwelling place. Satan knew this. Since Satan realized that the physical body of Jesus was God's dwelling place on earth, he did his best to destroy that body. And he did destroy it on the cross through the Jews. In a sense, Satan destroyed the Lord's physical body; in another sense, the Lord Jesus gave up His body to death. The Lord seemed to be saying to Satan, "Satan, do your best. Let Me see what you can do. Whatever you do will just give Me an opportunity to do something further."

After Satan destroyed the Lord's physical body on the cross, His body was put into a tomb and rested there. The Lord Jesus then went into death, took a tour of the Black House, and came out

in resurrection. When Jesus arose, He Himself raised up His dead and buried body. The body of Jesus that was destroyed on the cross was small and weak; the Body of Christ in resurrection is vast and powerful. Which do you prefer to have—the body of Jesus or the Body of Christ? After the Lord's resurrection, His Body, that is, the temple, was reared up on a much larger scale. The body the enemy destroyed by crucifixion was merely the body of Jesus; what was raised by the Lord in resurrection was not only His own body, but everyone who is joined to Him by faith (1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:6). After the Lord's resurrection, Satan would have had to say, "I lost my case. I was stupid. I shouldn't have destroyed Him." Nevertheless, it was too late for Satan to repent. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 7, section 3)

Since the day of His physical resurrection, the Lord Jesus has been enlarging His Body in resurrection life. What an immense Body Christ has today in His resurrection! Can you measure the size of the Body of Christ? Although it once was possible to measure the size of the physical body of Jesus, it is impossible to measure the immensity of the Body of Christ. The Lord continues to build His Body in resurrection, and Satan keeps on helping this. The house of God is still increasing in resurrection with the Body of Christ (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:21-22). Today, we are still within "the three days," because the Lord is still working for the building of His Body under the process of resurrection. A great part of the Lord's Body has already been raised, but there are still some members of His Body who are not yet raised. Therefore, the Lord's Body is still in the process of resurrection. Even with yourself, only a part has been transformed, which means that only a part has been resurrected. The Lord continues to work on you through the process of transformation. You are still in the process of resurrection. The church today is still in the three days' process of resurrection. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 7, section 4)

Going deeper

Please read or listen to these materials for an in-depth study of this lesson.

Further reading:

[*Life-study of John*, msg. 7](#)

Radio broadcast link:

Broadcast 12, [*Life's Purpose*](#)

Footnotes from Recovery Version of the New Testament:

John 2:15, footnote 1

Questions for personal or corporate study:

References in brackets indicate readings or broadcasts that may be helpful in answering the questions.

- Discuss how Christ as God's individual temple was crucified to produce God's corporate temple in resurrection. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 7, sections 2-4)
- Explain the revelation of God's temple as God's dwelling place being a person and not a physical place, and how this thought is developed throughout the New Testament. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 7, section 4)
- How does the book of Acts develop the matter of enlargement in resurrection? (Broadcast 12)

Next week

Life's Issue and Multiplication

In John chapters 2 through 11, we repeatedly saw the principle of life, which is to change death into life. Then, returning to chapters 1 and 2, we saw that the Gospel of John is not only a book of life but a book of life and building. The purpose of life is to build the house of God. It is for the building of the church, His Body, and God's house, that the Lord has come to be our life. These two points govern the entire Gospel of John. In the next lesson we will return to John chapter 12 and begin to follow these two lines through the remainder of the book. In John chapter 12 we find the house of Bethany, a miniature of this building. This miniature needs to be enlarged, not by a political campaign or by being welcomed and honoured, but by the way of a seed falling into the ground and dying to bear much fruit, the multiplication of life.

Works Cited

Lee, Witness. *Life-study of John*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1985. www.ministrybooks.org

*All verses and excerpts © 2020 Living Stream Ministry.
Used by permission. Reproduction is prohibited.*

Copyright © 2020 Amana Trust
Registered in England and Wales
Charity number 1093401, Company number 4366897
Bower House, Orange Tree Hill, Romford, Essex, RM4 1PB