

WE ARE THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD – PART 2

15 June 2025

Summary:

This Message explores the profound concept of God dwelling within believers, emphasizing the importance of living with a constant awareness of His presence. Bruce Downes' challenges listeners to move beyond theoretical understanding to practical application, encouraging a lifestyle that reflects God's indwelling presence in every aspect of daily life. The message stresses the transformative power of this awareness, urging believers to become living tabernacles of God's presence in the world.

Key Points:

- God inhabits our lives as a home, not just as a visitor
- Developing a personal "monastery" within oneself
- Living as a portable tabernacle, carrying God's presence everywhere
- Leading others by exemplifying the indwelling of God
- Practicing daily stillness and temple awareness
- Ending each day with reflection on God's presence and action
- Forming habitation circles for spiritual growth
- Seeking spiritual direction or mentorship
- Embracing a "Nazareth spirituality" of ordinary life and humble tasks
- Multiplying habitations rather than exporting programs

Scripture Reference:

- John 14:23 - "Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.'"

Stories:

- Bruce shares a personal anecdote about praying for someone at church, illustrating the immediate availability of God's presence within us.
- Reference to St. Teresa of Lisieux's teaching on holiness in little things.
- Mention of St. Francis of Assisi's writing on carrying Christ in our hearts.
- The story of the Sisters of St. Joseph and their lifestyle of utter dependence on God.
- Mary MacKillop's life as an example of being a tabernacle on mission.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(For Individual or Group Reflection)

- How can we cultivate a deeper awareness of God's presence dwelling within us throughout our daily lives?
- What practical steps can we take to live as 'portable tabernacles' carrying God's presence into every environment we enter?
- How might our approach to prayer and service change if we truly embraced the concept of being God's dwelling place?
- In what ways can we help form others, especially our children or those we mentor, in understanding and living out the reality of God's habitation within them?
- How does the idea of being a 'living tabernacle' challenge or expand your current understanding of your identity and purpose as a Christian?
- What might it look like to lead teams or organize ministry efforts with a focus on habitation and God's indwelling presence, rather than just strategy and programs?
- How can we balance the responsibilities of daily life with the practice of interior stillness and awareness of God's presence?
- In what ways does St Mary MacKillop's example of seeing God in every encounter challenge us to live differently in our own contexts?
- How might embracing a 'Nazareth spirituality' of hiddenness and faithfulness in ordinary tasks transform our approach to work, family life, and service?
- What are some potential barriers that prevent us from fully living as 'dwelling places of God's presence in the world,' and how can we overcome them?

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SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Opening Prayer:

Pray the Impacters prayer together as a group. Lord, help us to become more aware of Your presence dwelling within us. Open our hearts and minds to understand how we can live as Your habitation in our daily lives. Amen.

Key Takeaways:

1. God doesn't just visit us; He inhabits our lives as His home.
2. We are called to live with a constant awareness of God's presence within us.
3. Our holiness and the way we carry God's presence can impact the world around us.

Discussion Questions:

1. Bruce emphasizes that God dwells within us. How does this concept challenge or change your view of your relationship with God?
2. Reflect on the idea of being a "portable tabernacle." How might this perspective change the way you approach your daily activities and interactions?
3. The Message mentions "temple awareness." What are some practical ways we can remind ourselves throughout the day that we are God's dwelling place?
4. How does the concept of God's indwelling presence affect our understanding of holiness in everyday life?
5. Bruce talks about "Nazareth spirituality." What does this mean to you, and how can we embrace it in our own lives?
6. Discuss the statement: "Christ has no body now but yours." How does this impact your sense of responsibility as a Christian?

Practical Exercises to Grow in the Awareness of the Habitation of God Within You:

1. Daily Stillness: Commit to spending 5-10 minutes each day in silent prayer, focusing on God's presence within you.
2. Temple Awareness: Write "I'm Your dwelling" on a sticky note and place it somewhere you'll see it often. Use it as a reminder throughout the day.
3. Examination of Indwelling: Before bed, ask yourself: "Where did I let God act through me today?" and "Where did I forget His presence today?"
4. Habitation Circles: Form groups of 2-3 and meet (in person or virtually) to discuss: "What is God saying inside of you?" and "Where is He sending you from that indwelling place?"
5. Presence in Action: Choose one environment you regularly inhabit (workplace, home, etc.) and consciously focus on bringing God's presence into that space this week.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for making us Your dwelling place. Help us to live with constant awareness of Your presence within us. May our lives reflect Your love and holiness to those around us. In Jesus' name, Amen. Father, I ask this in Jesus' name, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.