

Empathy for the Wicked – Saul

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MAIN VERSES

[1 Samuel 13](#) • [2 Samuel 6:3](#) • [1 Chronicles 3:16](#) • [2 Chronicles 7:1](#) • [Ecclesiastes 5:1](#) • [Zechariah 2](#) • [Ephesians 2:19](#) • [1 Peter 2:5](#) • [1 Corinthians 3:16](#) • [1 Corinthians 6](#)

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home.

Welcome and Excitement for Passover

So, everybody excited for Passover? I'm excited for Passover. I am totally stoked about Passover. Passover is and was the feast of the Bible. And I know we have seven of them plus Shabbat. And I know everyone deep down inside looks forward to Sukkot more than anything else, right? You get to hang out and just fellowship for eight days. But not for the early believers. The early believers, it was Passover. Why Passover? Why Passover? Why Passover? When it comes to Yeshua, why Passover? Why not Yom Kippur? I mean, that's the day when your sins and your iniquities, even your transgressions, are wiped away from God's sight in His holy temple. Why not Yom Kippur? Why didn't Yeshua die on Yom Kippur?

The True Purpose of the Gospel

Because the goal of the gospel was not simply to forgive sins. Forgiveness of sins was a big part of it, but forgiveness of sins was not the end goal. The end goal was the complete redemptive love manifest through victory over the thing that enslaved us in the first place so that God's kingdom would be manifest fully and known fully throughout all of his creation. See, sometimes we start to read the story of the Bible in [Genesis 3](#) where there's a serpent in a garden instead of in [Genesis 1](#) when God rules over all of his creation and he impacts his creation through his image bearers. It's a totally different story depending on where you start, right?

In other words, you are forgiven because of the mighty work of our God. Israel was forgiven too. What happened? Sin continued to manifest. Something different needed to take place. Something bigger needed to happen. It was not simply enough for your sins to be pardoned again and again and again. God's aim was to defeat sin with a capital S itself. God needed to defeat the powers that had oppressed Israel and enslaved humans from the beginning. That is why Yeshua was the Lamb. He was the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world. Why? Because that is what enslaved us. That was our Pharaoh. That is what separated us.

Passover as Our Experience

And when we as believers celebrate Passover, we celebrate the coming of a greater Moses. We celebrate a greater Passover taking place. We celebrate a greater Exodus and victory over all of the things that have exiled us and separated us from God. For believers, we don't simply memorialize Passover once a year. As believers, we live out the Passover every day. That's the calling. So many times we as believers yearn to partake in the Passover as some type of really cool Jewish experience. And it is. As believers, though, we celebrate Passover to have a Yeshua experience. That's what it is for us.

We don't look back on a lamb that died in Egypt thousands of years ago. We know the lamb. And he knows us. That's my passion. Passover is coming up, and I'm so excited about it. Because Passover is the festival of freedom. It's the day that commemorates our walk, that we live out, that the one truth that we know, Paul puts it so, you are no longer slaves to sin. It has been defeated. And sometimes we need to revisit the passion and the weight of the holy and the sacred things that God has given to us. Too many times we neglect them, we minimize them. Too many times we find ourselves going through the motions of the lives that we live out apart from God's guidance, wisdom, and sense of sacredness.

When the Holy Becomes Routine

And I know we can all admit that. Sometimes life just gets redundant. Life gets into a pattern. Sometimes the holy things, they're not sacred anymore. I mean, we'll say they're sacred and we'll say they're holy because the Bible says they're holy and God says they're holy, but are they really in our lives?

Today we're going to take a look at someone who is considered a type of villain, at least for a good chunk of his career throughout the scriptures. Someone who could not shake his own pride and selfish pursuits—who overall embodied the character and role of a wicked person.

King Saul, the first king of Israel. The king the people chose so that they could be like other nations. The king who truly wanted to be righteous, truly wanted to serve God, but did not want to sacrifice the will of his own flesh. A king that wanted to be known for serving God, but didn't want to make the sacrifices to do so. The king that thought it not a priority to repent and fall on his face when he messed up.

Saul's Place in Scripture

This is the character who, at least in the narrative, because of his fruitless life, likely wouldn't even be mentioned in Scripture if it wasn't for someone else in the Bible. I was talking to Pete about this. Pete's the David-Saul guru in my life. And we were having a discussion, and it seems that Saul is only included in the story of the Bible to contrast David because of David's story. And if that's true, man, there's a message in that. Are you only known for being the shadow of a righteous person?

So just like the rest of the series that we've been going through, and I hope the series has been edifying for you, it's been edifying for me, it's been an adventure because it's something new to develop a narrative about the narrative in order to find a way that we can take a look at the wicked in the biblical story and see if we can relate to them. Because the reason why that's so important is that if we simply gloss over the wicked ones in the scriptures and we never take a look at why they became, why they made those choices, why they fell in the first place, are we not bound to fall into the same pitfalls that they have?

Traveling Back in Time

So King Saul, I want you to imagine and I want you to try to time travel back with me, if you will. Close your eyes. Let's do an experiment. Close your eyes. And I want you to picture yourself right now in 2019, but we're going to go back. We're going to start time traveling backwards in time down to the teens, to the 2000s, to the 90s, the 80s, the 70s, maybe some of you, the 60s, 50s, 40s, 30s, 20s, 10s, 1800s, 1700s. You're flying back 1500s, 1200s, 800s, all the way back to 700s, 300s, 100s. Zero A.D. This is the time that Yeshua has walked. You're in the Galilee. You can feel the grass in your hands. We're going to keep going back another thousand years, same spot, standing there. Open your eyes. We're now in the time period of the first king of Israel.

The Anointing of Saul

And so if you want to follow along with my pseudo-narrative, you can do so in 1 Samuel chapter 13. 1 Samuel chapter 13. And I want you to imagine King Saul standing there. The messenger is running around. There's a lot of commotion going on. There's a lot of chaos. The Philistines are assembling, your majesty. They are more numerous than the sands of the sea. Reports say that they have 3,000 chariots with riders. What are we to do? Your majesty, the men have not seen the offering take place. They have not seen the favor of the Lord. We need to know God's will and that we will have his victory with us in battle. Your Majesty, when will Samuel arrive? When will Samuel the prophet arrive to offer the sacrifice?

Imagine Saul standing there, a new king, looking at the messenger, flashing back, how did he get here? As if it was just a week before. Then he had only known Samuel as the seer of the Lord, flashing back when Samuel had stopped him in the path and the road, told him to kneel, bow before him. The moment that Samuel looked down on him, uncorking a large ram's horn. Today I give you a message from the Lord. Embracing the ram's horn with both hands, pouring the oil over Saul's head, the cold oil dripping off his ears, down his face, off his nose and chin. Why am I being anointed? He thinks to himself. What is this seer doing? What message from God does he speak of? All these thoughts rushing through his young mind of a 30-year-old.

In that moment, Samuel speaks to him, over him. Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance? This was how Saul was anointed. Saul is now king, ruler of Israel, the first king to rule the monarchy, if you will. It was only the day before when he had divided the men, overtaken the Ammonites and rescuing the village of Jabesh. Saul was a warrior. He was very big, smart, intelligent. Saul was a leader. Now he was king.

Waiting for Samuel

After the anointing, after Saul now having the status of Mashiach, how will God equip him to move forward? What will God do to equip him to move forward? "Your Majesty! Your Majesty!" Imagine Saul snapping out of his trance. King Saul, the men have lost heart. They're leaving. Some are even crossing over the Jordan. Saul, looking out, "Why are they crossing the Jordan? Where are they going?" "Sir, they're retreating to the land of Gad and even Gilead."

Samuel said he would come. He will make an offering to the Lord. He will advise us. "Sir, it's been seven days. How long do we wait?" The men feel as if they're waiting to die. Samuel said he would be here. Have faith. Have faith. Imagine Saul showing confidence as he commands his soldiers to stay loyal to what the seer told them. As a young, strong king, but inside—maybe some doubt creeping in, fear, insecurity. Everyone is staring at him. Everyone is counting on

him. He is king. He is in charge. What will he do? What can he do? He begins to pace the encampment, passing soldiers attempting to stand up and show honor, standing at attention, but he can see through their false demeanor.

The False Alarm

They're so scared. Just then, someone yells out: a horse, a horse is coming. A horse and a rider is coming. Finally, Samuel has arrived. Finally, Samuel will show us the favor of the Lord. Saul rushes to the east side of the encampment. A black horse is rushing towards the camp. On top was a figure with a long tunic, loose fabric covering his face, flying in the wind, trailing up dust behind him. Make way for the seer. Make way for Samuel. He has come.

Imagine all of the soldiers gathering around the entrance, anxiously waiting to be encouraged, anxious to receive word on how they will overcome the battle with the Philistines that awaits them. The horse rushes in. Imagine it stopping short of the wall of fearsome soldiers. The dust settles. The rider dismounts. Saul steps forward, ready to greet the prophet of God. They meet eyes, and the rider removes the veil from his head. It was not Samuel. It was the scout from the other side of the village, the valet. He kneels before Saul.

Imagine the attention overwhelming him. His face flushes red. He feels a heat wave cover his body. His chest tightens. He feels perspiration bubbling up on his skin, being cooled by the air. "What will you do?" said the voice inside of his head. He looks up at the altar, this sacred altar for the sacred offering, the altar that the flesh should be burning on right now, the altar where the fire will burn, showing God's will, God's favor, God's blessing. The altar that only Samuel could approach. But Samuel is not here.

Saul's Sacrifice

"Bring me the burnt offerings and the Shalemim offerings," never taking his eyes off the holy altar. The fire roared on the stone altar, surrounded by what was left of the army. Saul slid the blade across the throat of the bull. It slowly knelt, closing its eyes. The goat was brought forward. He stuck his hand on the head of the goat, the same with the bull, performing the sacrifice with one quick motion. Not even the crickets could be heard in the field. The soldiers were breathing so slowly. No words were spoken. This was truly a service of silence. All that could be heard was the fat boiling on top of the stone altar.

Saul speaks. Imagine the soldiers feeling this boost of confidence in who they serve. They're standing up straighter. Their king has spoken. Their king is standing up. Their king is leading.

It's encouraging them. All of them together assertively respond, amen. Saul, in that moment—such a young king—realizing he had stepped up. He had moved forward into the unknown. He was scared. He didn't know what to do. He was not sure where to go. But what kind of an example of a king is he? Here, before his own men, soldiers who have pledged to give their lives to king and country, being overwhelmed with pride and assurance and strength, he thinks to himself, I was meant to be king. This is what God called me to be.

His mind flashing to maybe some future state of Israel with him leading it. He would lead the armies to be victorious over the Philistines, wiping them from the history books. There would be no more fear among his people. There would be no more anxiety. Even the earth would respond to his leadership, producing even in times of famine. His lineage would continue the royal line. His grandsons and great-grandsons would be royalty, leading this kingdom, his kingdom, into eternal prosperity.

The Reckoning

What have you done? A cryptic voice shatters his dream. What have you done? Saul turns, refocusing. Just imagine being among one of the soldiers as Saul swings around, refocusing, trying to make out where am I again? Trying to figure out Samuel standing there. The soldiers back away from him as if his aura was too powerful to even be in close proximity.

I say, imagine Saul shuddering, his shoulders dropping, his eyes falling as if a small child caught with his hand in the honey. Saul begins to ramble, not even stopping to articulate his excuse. The men were scared and we were about to go into battle and we needed the Lord's favor and I felt compelled to and the sacrifices and the men were leaving. The rambling continuing, Samuel staring at him with a motionless, resting, brazen face as if Saul himself was a Philistine invader. Saul, nervous, panicked. His lips let loose words he could never take back.

You were not here when you said you would be. You were supposed to be here. Where were you? I did this because you were absent when we needed you. I had to do this. I had to do your job. Knowing that he had just overstepped both in action and deed, he braced for the weight of what Samuel would say next.

Samuel's stare penetrated Saul's soul as he spoke. You have done a foolish thing. You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. If you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time, for all eternity. But now your kingdom will not endure. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people because you have not kept the Lord's command. Samuel, still with a look of not contempt or anger, but

just a look of unmistakable disappointment. He turns his back and slowly walks outside the camp. Saul, still in shock, standing there surrounded by men, silence and shame.

Why Obedience Matters

This is the moment in [1 Samuel 13](#). This was the moment that Saul was informed that his kingdom would not endure. That God was now on the move to establish a king over the people who sought him with their hearts, not himself. A king that would become the model of what it means to pursue God. Why? Because Saul had not kept the commandment of the Lord.

Now, if you read through [1 Samuel 13](#), I've conflated the story a little bit for dramatic sake, but Saul was under pressure in the text. It wouldn't have been that big of a deal even for a king in the ancient Near East to offer sacrifice. But that wasn't the issue. Saul was told to wait on Samuel. Wait on God's appointed seer, his prophet. Wait. What is about to happen, what I've established the prophet to do is sacred. God has a specific way he wants to do this and you do not encroach on that.

The Cost of Rushing

We live in a world where people carelessly rush into things. And if we don't rush in, we pass up opportunities, right? We pass up the opportunity to strike the Philistines before they grow stronger. We pass up the opportunity before maybe losing any more men. We pass up the opportunity to be the one that performs the act where everybody looks to us under pressure. Jason always talks about: if you put pressure on a bottle of water and uncap it, what comes out? Whatever's inside. We see what comes out with Saul.

Here, in this day and age, we've been taught to idolize productivity. Myself guilty, so much so. Faster, harder, work longer, make more sacrifices to be productive. You will miss out on XYZ if you don't pursue it with everything you have right now. We sometimes forget that some things have an order, and if we skip that order, we botch the job.

When it comes to things like this, the things that are sacred, the things that are holy, do we ever stop and consider that God has called us to act differently? I know the Bible says be holy for I'm holy. We're supposed to be holy. That means set apart. But do we actually meditate on how God has called us to act differently? Productivity has value and it's not evil. But when it comes to sacred things of God, we need to proceed cautiously.

Living with Reverence

When others are questioning God's actions and commandments, we're the ones that are told to stop and refocus and fall to our knees and not approach God in such a way that makes it about us pursuing productivity, but in a way that makes us acknowledge that, oh, holy is your name. When others come before God with pleas and complaints and demands, we're called to come before God with a sense of just how inappropriate it is for us to be in his presence and that he allows us to be there.

[Ecclesiastes 5](#), verse 1, it says, "...keep thy foot when you goest to the house of the Lord, and be more ready to hear than to give sacrifice of fools. For they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with your mouth, and let not thine ear be hasty to utter anything before God. For God is in heaven and you are upon the earth, so let your words be few." It's a good old worship song that talks about that.

Sometimes we forget that God is sacred. Sometimes we forget that the things of God are sacred. We discussed it earlier during the Torah portion review. Have you ever thought about the story of Uzzah and the ark? You know the story, right? Have you ever been a little bothered by it? Because you know you'd be the one that would reach out and be like, I don't want this to fall off the ark. Right? We're going to review it. I know you reviewed it. We're going to read it again because I love reading God's Word. And so we're going to read some of God's Word today.

The Story of Uzzah

[2 Samuel 6](#), verse 3. It's important. And Uzzah and Achish, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart with the Ark of God on it. And Achish was walking in front of it. And David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, cymbals, and cymbals. Just a band. And when they came to the threshing floor of Necon, Uzzah reached out, took hold of the Ark of God because the oxen stumbled. And the Lord's anger burned against Uzzah. Because of his irreverence, therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark.

So the scenario here is that David was bringing the ark to Jerusalem. It had been located elsewhere, and now it's kind of being brought to its new home. Kind of a big deal. And everybody's dancing, and everybody's cheering, and everybody's celebrating, and everybody's partying, because it's a party.

The Sacredness of God's Domain

And they're traveling with the ark, and the ark hits a bump or the ox stumbles or it shifts or something happens, right? And so the environment is lax. The environment is kind of casual. It's fun. And Uzzah reaches out to steady the ark. Like, I don't want this to fall off. That would be, that would just be bad. No one's going to write that down that that happened. We just, just, just stop this from happening. You don't really want it wallowing around. And he dies. He died. He dead. He did not have the credentials to be able to handle the ark. It was sacred. It was sacred. It doesn't matter how many people are dancing or getting jiggy with it or clapping or cheering. It does not devalue the sacredness of God's holy presence. Some things will always remain sacred despite the environment that they find themselves in.

Saul comes under pressure and he lifts his hand to the altar, something that he was told he needed to wait on Samuel for. Moses sitting there on the mountain looking over at the promised land that he was destined to lead all of Israel into. Old man, every time he stubbed his toe in the desert, every time he got stung by a scorpion or a snake, every time he sprained his ankle walking around with those shoes that never wore out because they'd never get worn in so he's always had blisters, every single time, every single time, he would think to himself, but it'll be worth it in the end because I'll get to go into the land. And he finds himself sitting on top of a mountain looking into the land because he hit the rock. He did not obey the sacred command of God. He encroached.

What has been minimized? What sacred things, what sacred domains, what holy items of God's dominion have we taken, manipulating, and used to increase our own? In most Messianic fellowships, now would be the greatest opportunity to talk about the Sabbath. Because the Sabbath is holy. The Bible says that. It's set apart. The Sabbath, the Holy Sabbath represents the climax of God's sovereignty over creation. When we set this day apart, like Friday night, we formally come into this day, either with some of us with candles or blessings or wine or prayer or even with just a simple, humble moment of stopping everything and acknowledging the power of God's kingdom and what this day represents, setting apart the day. Saturday night, we do the same. We formally stop everything and we do a little ceremony, the Havdalah ceremony. And a lot of it has to do with teaching Benjamin that the past 24 hours were sacred and different from the rest of the week. I enjoy doing Havdalah because you have that big funky candle and you get to put it out in the wine and that's just cool. But regardless, it represents a point in time that this day has ceased—for you to reflect on the past 24 hours. This day in the week is set apart. The Sabbath is holy.

But as we see with the Pharisees, sometimes we can take God's holy things to make our own life puffed up. Now today I want to talk about another holy thing. I want to talk about his temple.

Let's talk about God's temple.

When God's Fire Falls

So, man, can you imagine? Scripture talks about how David... got the plans. In the Hebrew it says from the Ruach. Translate that as you wish. But he gives the plans to Solomon, his son. Not Saul. Solomon. And Solomon not only builds a temple, but in order to do that, he establishes a time of peace where all nations are under covenants of peace with each other. There's no more wars. The borders are secure. And not only that, Israel wasn't the only one building the temple to the God of Israel. Everybody was sending wood in. Everybody was coming in. Queen of Sheba coming in, being like, this is awesome. Like, your God's awesome. That was the message, that the temple of God would invoke a sense of awe to all nations and gravitate them back towards Yahweh, the God of all creation. That's what it was supposed to be doing.

But I want you to imagine being there when they cut the ribbon and they opened the doors and they have this thing, this temple, this huge temple that they're fixing to hit the button on, start the engine on. And you can find that in [2 Chronicles 7:1](#) is one of the areas. So [2 Chronicles 7:1](#). Just... imagine standing there in the courts and watching this happen. Imagine the fire coming down and you having to take a step back because of the heat wave when it hits the stone altar, the brazen altar. The priests could not enter the temple, verse 2, of the Lord. The people that were established to walk in and drive this thing, they could not enter the temple because the glory of the Lord filled it. It was so intense. Mr. Ghostbombs, this is, whoa! Could you the only thing you can do is bump your head on the ground and everybody, gosh, he is good! His love endures forever. It's our second old school worship song that we just totally need to bring back. This is where it comes from. This is it. Can you imagine being in the presence of the dedication of the temple, standing there? The fire falls from heaven like a dove and fills the temple with God's spirit and his glory. He is good.

God's Temple Built in Us

The New Testament describes something even greater happening, though. The New Testament describes something even greater. And the fact that some of us, with our emotions broken, are so prone to cover the reality of seeing the temple fire come down in the Old Testament should be an indicator that we may have truly neglected something even more sacred in our own lives here and now.

Paul says something very, very interesting through all of his letters in Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 2, we're going to jump into verse 19. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers. But you are fellow citizens with God's people and also the members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. So Paul's starting to talk about a building where there's a cornerstone. In him, the whole building is joined together, and it rises and it expands to become a holy temple in the Lord. So Paul's saying that there's a temple that's being built and all these materials are flying together and it's rising up and it's expanding out and it's growing and it's all coming from this one cornerstone that is directing everything from itself. It's a temple. And in him you too are being built together to become the dwelling place in which God lives by his spirit.

So Yeshua is the cornerstone, is the foundation, is the blueprint, that invokes the evolution of this building of this temple. And then Paul flips it on us and says, by the way, you know what the temple is—that place that God's Spirit dwells, makes His resident in? That's what y'all are when y'all come together. When y'all put your heads together for the single mission of expanding God's kingdom and making God's kingdom of heaven known on earth now. Y'all are the place that God resides, lives. So standing in the court of the temple when the fire comes down, that would be incredible, indescribable. I'm not even going to lie. I got goosebumps thinking about it. It would be really cool. You can't even make a movie that way. Oh, man.

You Are Living Stones

But somehow, through some divine mystery, we get to actually be a part of that temple. Not like a priest that's inside. No, we get to, in this weird kind of, you're one of the stones. Yes. Peter actually calls us to, he says that you are living stones in [1 Peter 2:5](#).

Which scenario should ignite a passion within us that would redefine our very mission in our existence here and now? Shouldn't we be just a little excited about knowing that the blood of Yeshua has transformed us? Not as an outsider looking into the temple, but has transformed us as a part of the dwelling place of the same glory. You're part of the same structure. So if you're a living stone and we're all stones that build this temple, you are part of the same structure that Peter, James, and John were, are, depending on how you want to look at it. You're a stone that's bumped up right next to Paul in the walls of this expanding temple. And all of it is expanding and overtaking the world because of this cornerstone that is directing everything. You have been put into a place where you are a piece of that. You should be excited, if not just in awe. You should be filled, hopefully, with some sort of passion because that's kind of what this is for. Maybe you should be just a little bit overwhelmed at the thought that his home is among us.

God's Temple Among Us

Let's kick it again. 1 Chronicles. Getting excited now when the whole book merges together. [1 Corinthians 3:16](#). Don't you know, it's Paul speaking, don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in your midst among y'all? It's a y'all. If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is sacred and you together, y'all, are sacred. Y'all are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Now, usually when we quote this verse, we quote the other version in [1 Corinthians 6](#), where Paul repeats himself and he says something along the lines of, your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, right? And too many times this verse gets stripped of its context. I know because I've done it. It's sacred context. The chapter is more or less speaking of people who, because of their culture and the cultural influence, were going to temples and making sacrifices and sleeping with temple prostitutes. So if you want a historical context of that verse, so Paul's talking to the fellowships, your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Why do you think that you can mix with that? So that's the context of that verse. Yeah, that verse is not talking about eating donuts. It's not. It's not talking about diet soda. It's talking about you and what you represent as a community.

The Sanctity of God's Temple

What you're doing because you are a stone of the temple of God, okay? Donuts may not be a good thing to eat all the time, but we have some great ones today for one egg. This verse is not talking about you looking inwardly. It's talking about what you look like outwardly and what the things that are stopping you from doing the mission that you're called to do. Go into the temple—temple prostitutes not totally kosher with the mission of God, hindering you from completing the mission of God.

Think back to [2 Chronicles 7](#), the fire coming down. That's tons of fire. The holy temple. Would you ever drive your car around the courts of that temple doing donuts, hanging out the window, going yee-haw? I love. It's fun to act stupid and act irreverent when the atmosphere is right. Out in the field with a four-wheeler, whatever, car—maybe if you're a teenager and you're just going around. Anyway, would you ever do that in God's temple? Leaving rubber on the pavement, doing a donut around the brazen altar? It's unfathomable. No. This is the most outlandish example you can come up with, Matthew. I wanted to drive the point home.

Would you for fun light some firecrackers and throw them in the pens of the animals that are about to go before the altar and become the fragrant aroma before the Lord? Would you do

that? Why? A. It's a jerk thing to do, but B. The sacred animals. You don't do that. It's sacred. This is a sacred place. Would you go into the holy place and pop a Budweiser and lounge out beside the incense altar? Would you? No. That's irreverent. It's sacred.

The Body of Christ Is Sacred

No one was allowed to sit in God's temple. Why are we so quick to slander and gossip among one another? Why are we so quick to talk bad about each other or about leadership and tear each other down? Why are we so quick to divide the body and divide the fellowships? As if it's any different. If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy them because it's sacred. You are in a sacred assembly right now. You are in a place where holiness has a heartbeat. And it's not these walls, and it's not the lights or the sound system. It's the presence of yourself in unity with that person beside you right now. You're in the temple where the presence of God manifests itself.

When we speak evil of another member of the fellowship, of the church, of the body of Christ, it is as if we are hanging out the window of our pickup truck and backing in to the brazen altar. Yeehaw. The temple is the location where God chose to live on earth. It was the place where heaven intersected earth. We've been called to fill that role as believers so that God can be seen, so that God can be felt. Every one of us is called to be a piece of heaven on earth, sacred in your words, in your actions, in your deeds.

Living Stones in Ministry

Heaven, the domain of God made manifest. That's why I'm so excited today. Because as a fellowship in a community, we have officially launched our FitFam, our foster care ministry, where we not only have multiple foster families under one roof—something that is actually really unique among the churches in the U.S.—but we have 10 to 20, maybe even more people that are committed to opening their hearts and jumping into the direct needs of foster children and foster families in this county. There are more needs. There are more needs than simply opening up your homes.

And we have a huge chunk of people, stones, living stones, right here that have recognized that. And that gets me so excited. So excited. Because I can't wait to see the ministry that you guys have birthed start serving the children currently finding themselves engulfed in hell. And believers here walking up to them, seeing their hurt, seeing their pain, seeing their needs, and showing them, if not just a little, of what heaven feels like.

You're Called to Be So Much More

Don't be a Saul. Don't neglect or warp the holy things, the sacred things of God for your own agenda. You're called to be so much more than that. If you're a believer, you are more than that. If you are a believer, you are more than that. There's no middle ground. I mean, you are. You are. Book of Acts, you are. You are at home. You are at work. You are at fellowship. You are at the park. You are when you're driving. Everywhere you go. Someone somewhere should have the opportunity to experience what God's glory and what God's temple feels like when it touches them.

You have been called an ambassador, a representative, an emissary of Christ for a reason. Because our calling to be an image bearer of God is that when we engage with people around us, they don't walk away thinking, what a great experience I had with Brad or I had with Jason. As an ambassador, you represent someone else. And they should walk away feeling as if, through some divine mystery, they felt God move through you. Are you? Because that's the command in Scripture.

Pray for Them

Pray for that person. Pray for that person. Oh, you don't like them? I hate it when I get to the part of the messages where I talk to myself. So, you don't like them. What fertile ground for God's temple to expand just a little bit more when you would humbly put away your own pride and make room to exalt them in God's throne room. Pray for them.

That family in despair, that maybe there's nothing you can actually do to help them except for sit with them. Fertile ground. That person who is an outcast. No one wants to be around. They're a little weird. Always good to find like-minded believers, individuals. Excuse that phrase. Keep them from being outcasts in their life. You have that power. Fertile ground. Expand the temple. Keep it sacred. Keep it holy. It's not yours to do what you wish with. Serve, give, and suffer.

These Are Sacred Things

When we look at our finances and our time and our energy, when we look at these things as our things—these are ours. They're not. These are sacred things. These are sacred because you're a living stone of an expanding building, right? Treat your money as sacred. When was the last time you viewed your bank account as holy? Why not? Oh, Matt's talking about money. What

do you want me to say? Keep everything sacred except for your finances? The result of your time and your energy? Would that make you feel more comfortable?

If you are not currently uncomfortable thinking about your role and expectation to be a resident of God, this conversation will not affect you. You can continue living out your life as Saul, maybe manipulating the sacred things for your own sense of pride, maybe tricking yourself into some fulfilling righteous life, living out who God meant for you, who you think God meant you to be.

The Mission of the Bible

Maybe you feel righteous because you keep Sabbath. It's good. It's a good thing. It's a good thing. Maybe you feel righteous because you don't eat some meat, pork or something. That's good. Maybe you feel righteous because you're learning Hebrew and you can speak the original language. That's pretty cool. If your reading of the Bible is only edifying you, you're not reading the Bible. There's a mission in the Bible that is constant, and that is God's presence will manifest and overtake the world.

[Zechariah 2](#) talks about a new Jerusalem coming down. I love this verse. [Zechariah 2](#)—new Jerusalem comes down, and it doesn't have any walls. Man, I thought that new Jerusalem had walls and gates and everything. That's Revelation, and gates stay open 24-7. It's a different conversation. [Zechariah 2](#), there are no walls. Why? Because it engulfs all nations. It continues to expand. That's you! That's so exciting.

We can choose to come to a place in our lives where we humble ourselves, where we're in awe of the divine mystery that we've been called into through Yeshua. And we can stop trying to exalt ourselves as holy, but instead be the place where God is exalted as holy.

Will You Take the Step?

And so I'd like to go—we can conclude, worship team, you guys can get set up. We always conclude the same way that we come into services. I don't know where you're at today. Maybe you're right where God wants you to be. Maybe you've committed yourself to not only the words of the Bible, but the mission of the Bible. Living stone, serving, suffering, and filled with joy because of it. Maybe you're not. Maybe you've been saying no to the situations that God has been opening the doors for you to walk through to be His hands and feet.

One principle in the Bible is that God works in His creation through His created beings. That's [Genesis 1:1](#). Will you choose to pursue being a vessel where heaven is felt in a world so accustomed to hell or not? That's the calling. Why do you think so many people left Yeshua? It was hard for Saul to sit there and wait. The pressure, the anxiety, the flesh overtaking him. He could not obey the command of the Lord and he was irreverent because of it. He lost access to the kingdom. The pressure, the anxiety, the flesh fighting against us—that's part of the transformation. And the more you claim victory over it, the more you can be used to do what you're called to do, slowly but surely. Will you take the step out in that direction?

Please stand as we conclude worship. Conclude with worship. We conclude services. We always like to conclude services praising God and with an atmosphere that His love endures forever. We have a committed prayer team on both sides, off to the side. At the very least, these individuals will stand with you. They will hold you and they will walk boldly beside you into God's presence. Despite where you find yourself today, what situations you find yourself in, take advantage of that.

Alvina Malkinu, our Father, our King. Father, we thank you for this time together. We thank you for this opportunity to come before you once again.

Closing Prayer

We thank you for your word today. We thank you for your mission that you have instilled in us. And we thank you for your glory and your spirit that came down as tongues of fire, that came down to fill us. The same spirit that raised Yeshua from the dead has raised us into life. Father, I ask that everyone here, you would instill in them a sense of where they are in this mission, where they are as a stone, and what their next step is so that we can keep expanding this based off the cornerstone. We thank you Father in the name of Yeshua we pray, Amen.

About Founded in Truth

Shalom, I'm Matthew Vandrells and I hope you enjoyed this message. Founded in Truth exists to cultivate a fellowship of image bearers that live the redeemed life only Yeshua can give. If this ministry has been a blessing to you we would love to hear from you. Send us an email through the contact form on our website and tell us how God has used this ministry to edify your faith and relationship with Him.

If you'd like to see more messages like this one, subscribe to our YouTube channel by clicking [here](#). If you'd like to donate to this ministry and be a part of what God is doing through it, you

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We thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to next time. Shalom.

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