

## **Dedication Meditation**

Tabernacle Presbyterian Church

*January 10, 2010*

For many years and in many venues (seminaries, denominations, churches) people have debated the essential nature of the Church. For instance, is the Church fundamentally an army or a hospital? Is the Church primarily called to advance God's Kingdom or to bind up the broken? Or what about the Church being fundamentally considered a household? Isn't it supposed to be a place for the family of faith?

Maybe we would do better to consider the Church more like a gem with many facets, each of which show a unique beauty as it is turned in the light of God's truth. From this perspective, the Church is all of the above: a household, a hospital, and a headquarters (and then some). Tonight we come together to dedicate this building to be a place where the Church can exist as it is called to be.

### **Dedicating a House**

- for fellowship with our Father, for worship, and for hearing His Word
- for fellowship with our family of faith

#### **Eph 2:19**

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household...

#### **1 Tim 3:15**

...if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

### **Dedicating a Hospital**

- for healing (emotionally, spiritually, relationally, psychologically, and yes, physically)
- for alleviating suffering

#### **Acts 10:37-38**

You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached--how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

#### **Rev 22:1-2**

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

### **Dedicating a Headquarters**

- for God's army, and army of goodness

#### **Matt 16:18**

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

#### **Rev 11:15**

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

### **Dedicating Ourselves**

**1King 8:54-61**

- 54 When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven.
- 55 He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying:
- 56 "Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.
- 57 May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us.
- 58 May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep the commands, decrees and regulations he gave our fathers.
- 60 ...so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other.
- 61 But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time."

This is the real dedication this evening. Of course we dedicate this building to God. What else would a congregation do with its new facilities? But all of our prayers and declarations and affirmations this evening will be pointless unless the Church comes to employ this building for its purposes. This building is merely a tool. But a tool needs someone to wield it or else nothing happens. A tool needs someone dedicated to a task getting done. And it seems to me that Jesus has left us on earth with a few tasks to get done while we wait for His glorious return. He is calling dedicated men and women (and children) to serve Him in this temporary dwelling while we wait for our eternal dwellings.

Will you dedicate yourself to dwelling in this house? Will you dedicate yourself to the God who has dedicated Himself to you, who (quite literally) "gave Himself up" for you to be your Father and brother? And will you dedicate yourself to one another in fellowship as brothers and sisters, carrying one another's burdens and forgiving one another just as Christ forgave you?

Will you dedicate yourself to providing and seeking healing in this hospital? Will you assist the One who came to bind up broken hearts and to comfort those who mourn? Will you go in the name of the One who cares about the orphan and widow, the sick and the addicted, the hungry and the homeless? And will you have humility enough to recognize the places where you need healing as well as the courage it takes to seek that healing?

Lastly, will you dedicate yourself to going in the name of the King to put feet on our prayer that His Kingdom would come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

"We have too many people who have plenty of medals but no scars."

**Rev 14:6-7**

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Let us not judge how useful this building is based on how many people come in, rather, let's judge its usefulness based on how many people are sent out—sent out to proclaim, in word and deed, the eternal Gospel to every nation, tribe, language and people.

May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our fathers;  
may he never leave us nor forsake us.  
May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways...

**1Kings 8:57-58**