

Altars

THE PLACE OF BLESSING & SACRIFICE

Altars Part 3—Restore the Altar, Restore the Conversation

Pastor Dave Patterson

2-9-2020

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to facilitate a discussion.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is not to get through the questions, but to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

- **The Altar is the place where the Divine meets with humanity**
- **The Altar is the place of covenant and promise**
- **The Altar is the place where the activity of heaven touches earth**
- **The Altar is the place where the fire of God can be found**
- **The Altar is the entry point to the presence and purpose of God for our lives**

[1 Corinthians 10:11]

These things happened to them (the Israelites) as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.

When you neglect the altar of God, you set yourself up for captivity.

[2 Chronicles 28:1-5]

Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. He did not do what was pleasing in the sight of the LORD, as his ancestor David had done. ² Instead, he followed the example of the kings of Israel. He cast metal images for the worship of Baal. ³ He offered sacrifices in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, even sacrificing his own sons in the fire. In this way, he followed the detestable practices of the pagan nations the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. ⁴ He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the pagan shrines and on the hills and under every green tree.

[2 Chronicles 28:1-5]

Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him, carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought them to Damascus.

[2 Chronicles 28:22, 24-25]

Even during his time of trouble, King Ahaz continued to reject the LORD.

The king took the various articles from the Temple of God and broke them into pieces. He shut the doors of the LORD's Temple so that no one could worship there, and he set up altars to pagan gods in every corner of Jerusalem. He made pagan shrines in all the towns of Judah for offering sacrifices to other gods. In this way, he aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of his ancestors.

There is a new bloodline waiting for you in the name of Jesus.

[2 Chronicles 29:1-2]

Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became the king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. ² He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, just as his ancestor David had done.

[2 Chronicles 29: 3-7]

In the very first month of the first year of his reign, Hezekiah reopened the doors of the Temple of the LORD and repaired them. He summoned the priests and Levites to meet him at the courtyard east of the Temple. He said to them, "Listen to me, you Levites! Purify yourselves, and purify the Temple of the LORD, the God of your ancestors. Remove all the defiled things from the sanctuary. Our ancestors were unfaithful and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD our God. They abandoned the LORD and his dwelling place; they turned their backs on him. They also shut the doors to the Temple's entry room, and they snuffed out the lamps. They stopped burning incense and presenting burnt offerings at the sanctuary of the God of Israel.

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now! In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there 'is' such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency"

Martin Luther King Jr.

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NLT]

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

He saves you and gives you the power, but you have to “take out the trash.” Deal with some things before they deal with you.

[2 Timothy 2:21]

Those who cleanse themselves from the latter (all that corrupts and contaminates) will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

[2 Chronicles 30:26-27, NIV]

There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. ²⁷ The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.

[Isaiah 59:1-2, NIV]

***Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.
But your iniquities have separated
you from your God;
your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear.***

***On your worst day, your prayers are reaching heaven; Live with
an active altar in your life.***

[2 Kings 19:14-16, 19-20]

***After Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it, he went up to the LORD’s Temple and spread it out before the LORD
And Hezekiah prayed this prayer before the LORD: “O LORD, God of Israel, you are enthroned between the mighty cherubim! You***

alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You alone created the heavens and the earth. ¹⁶ Bend down, O LORD, and listen! Open your eyes, O LORD, and see! Listen to Sennacherib's words of defiance against the living God.

Now, O LORD our God, rescue us from his power; then all the kingdoms of the earth will know that you alone, O LORD, are God.”

[2 Kings 19:14-16, 19-20]

²⁰ Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer...”

FOR MONDAY—

1. Make your own list of things that could be removed to make a greater place for Him.
2. Pray and ask God for a quick work of grace and redemption of lost time.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. Why do you think we sometimes have to go backward in order to move forward in our lives?
2. What would happen to our communities if the doors of the church were closed for 16 years? What might result?
3. Read 2 Timothy 2:21. What type of habits or past hurts does God want to heal and cleanse you from? How does this process tie in with His purpose for your life?
4. How did Hezekiah become a godly man, despite a wicked dad? What actions can we take to start a new legacy?

5. What would it look like to reopen some doors in your life to find the altar again? What is required of us? (sense of urgency, attention to the fire of the altar, etc.)
6. Have you ever been in a season where you couldn't hear God? How were you able to restore your conversation?
7. What ongoing sacrifice does it take to keep an active altar in your life?
8. What do you think the heart of the Lord is for you personally?