

**Text: Psalm 63:2**

**Title: “Sacred Spaces and Places”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

All through the Bible and throughout Christian history, God has met His people in certain spaces and places. And as a result of those life-changing encounters they became sacred spaces and places. My message is a little different today, but open your Bibles to Psalm 63:2. As you're turning I'll just remind you that a little later we're going to share together in the Lord's Supper. At the end we will receive an offering for our Benevolence Ministry that feeds and clothes thousands of families each year. Ushers will be at the doors to receive your offering. Read text.

**Psalm 63:2 - I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.**

The inscription at the beginning of this psalm says that David wrote this when he was in the Desert of Judah. More than likely it was a time when David was chased by his enemies away from the place of worship where the Ark of the Covenant was located. But he still remembered those life-changing times in that sacred space, the sanctuary, where he saw the power and the glory of the Lord.

As human beings God has created us with the need for spaces and places where we live out our lives. Now in biblical times much of life was lived outdoors.

It was true for Jacob, who was later named Israel. Jacob was on a journey to find a wife. He stopped at a place to spend the night, and God gave Jacob a dream of a stairway reaching up to heaven with angels descending and ascending on it. And at the top of the ladder was God, who renewed the covenant with Jacob that He had made with Isaac and with Abraham. This was such an overwhelming experience for Jacob that ...

**Genesis 28:16 - When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.”**

**Genesis 28:17 - He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”**

## **THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS WHERE GOD'S GLORY DWELLED AMONG HIS PEOPLE**

The two most important rooms inside the Tabernacle were the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Why? Because that is where the priests came into the presence of a Holy God.

## **THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM WHERE THE PEOPLE EXPERIENCED THE GLORY OF THE LORD**

**2 Chronicles 6:20 - May your eyes be open toward this temple day and night, this place of which you said you would put your Name there. May you hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place.**

As human beings God has created us with the need for spaces and places. We live in houses. Most of us work in buildings. We go to school in buildings. We shop or conduct business in buildings. We gather as the church in buildings. And those spaces and places become sacred because God meets us there.

Some will argue, “Well, God doesn’t dwell in buildings anymore; He dwells in people. So what’s the big deal about buildings?” It is true that God doesn’t need buildings ... but we do. God still meets people in sacred spaces and sacred places.

THE UPPER ROOM WHERE THE DISCIPLES HAD GATHERED WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME UPON THEM

**Acts 2:1-2 - When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.**

**Acts 2:4 - All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...**

THE BUILDING WHERE THE DISCIPLES GATHERED FOR THEIR MEETINGS IN THE EARLY PART OF ACTS

**Acts 4:31 - After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.**

HEAVEN IS A VERY SACRED PLACE.

The Bible says that our eternal home will be a place called the New Jerusalem. It is a city with walls and gates and foundations and dwelling places for the redeemed people of God for eternity.

And God still meets us in those sacred spaces and places.

This campus where our church has been located for most of our 100 year history has been a place where people have met God and encountered Him in life-changing ways. Each of our buildings has become holy ground for someone. There are times when people have been moved by God just driving by or walking across the parking lot.

Each building on our campus represents a time in the history of our church when the people who made up the church at that time made sacrifices from which we are reaping benefits today. Young and old alike gave generously to provide facilities that we continue to use to this day as tools for our vast ministries as a church. No doubt many of the saints who have gone on to heaven had no idea that the sacrifices they made to help build a particular building would still be bearing fruit today. Buildings don’t last forever; but souls reached and edified through those buildings do last forever. Watch this:

VIDEO

We stand before yet another opportunity to provide a “Lasting Legacy” for the generations that will follow us as we prepare to build the new West Building, as we are calling it now. When completed it will be one of the most versatile buildings we have, supporting a number of crucial ministries in our church:

- **Discipleship** – The West Building will provide badly needed educational space for our Progressive and Senior Adult Bible Study departments. In those functional, spacious rooms people will be taught the Word of God and experience the multi-faceted ministry of small groups.
- **Fellowship** – A new dining facility will be part of the West Building. Christ-centered relationships are often forged around a meal. The Dining Room will enable us to host large and small ministry functions where we have an opportunity to be together and, yes, to invite our non-believing friends.
- **Worship** – On the second floor of the West Building will be rehearsal space for the various musical groups who lead us in corporate worship each Lord’s Day. The current rehearsal facilities in the Lower Sanctuary will be converted to additional class room and fellowship space for our growing young adult ministry.

The official bids will come in around the first of November, but at this point it looks like the West Building will cost about \$5.5 million. Let me just take you back to how we arrived at this point. It’s an amazing story.

In August of 2010 our church approved a revised Master Plan that envisioned the day when we would be able to locate all of our facilities on the north side of Berry. The South Complex had served us well for over 20 years, but crossing a busy street was not the best arrangement. When the Lord made a way, we knew it would be best for future ministries to have everything together on one side of the street. Surprisingly, just two months after our church adopted that new plan we got a call from a representative of Wal-Mart about the possibility of their purchasing our South Complex to build a new Neighborhood Market. After several months of negotiating on March 7 of this year we received \$2,280,758 for the sale of that property.

That money then became the beginning of the fund called “Lasting Legacy” that would be used to construct a new building on this side of Berry.

Since that time we have received an additional \$404,284 in contributions to the Lasting Legacy fund, bringing us to a total of \$2,685,042 to date.

Now the recommendation adopted by the church on October 12, 2011 was that we would have at least 50% of the construction cost on hand before we began construction. Many of us felt that in these tough economic times it would be wise for us to have more than 50% on hand before beginning construction to insure that we do not incur long-term indebtedness. We’re debt free and we want to remain that way.

Well, I'm happy to report to you today that recently we received a very generous contribution for Lasting Legacy in the amount of \$878,730. Praise the Lord! This brings us to a total in Lasting Legacy of \$3,563,772 . This is about 65% of the anticipated cost of the new West Building.

So with the church's approval of the construction contract at the end of November, we will have the Ground Breaking for the new West Building on Sunday, January 6, just three months from now.

But let me place this challenge before us. Between now and year-end let's set a goal of raising another \$300,000 which would place us at about 70% of the anticipated construction cost of the new building. Then our goal would be to pay off the remaining amount at least by the end next year.

If we begin construction shortly after the first of January, about one year from now we could be moving in to that new building.

Now for us to accomplish this goal here's what we're asking each household in our church to prayerfully consider:

#### HARVEST DAY, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Over the next few weeks you will receive a brochure in the mail that outlines these plans I've talked about this morning and a challenge for each household (single or married adults, as well as children and students) to do two things. First, prepare to make a generous contribution to Lasting Legacy on Harvest Day or by the end of December of this year. Second, prayerfully commit to give generously to Lasting Legacy throughout 2013 so that we can have the building completely paid for at least by the end of 2013.

You'll receive a commitment card in the mail. We're asking you to complete that commitment card with the amount that you feel God leading you to give by faith. Put that card in the envelope and seal it up. On Harvest Day we're going to have a special offering time where we get to joyfully present our offerings to the Lord. And we'll have an opportunity as individuals and families to bring our commitment cards to the altar.

Now what are we going to do with those commitment cards? We're not going to open them. That commitment is between you and the Lord. Sometime later in 2013 we will mail those envelopes back to you unopened as a reminder of the commitment you made to the Lord.

Now we want the whole church to feel they have a part in the Harvest Day Offering. So we are providing special offering banks for our preschoolers and our children. Boys and girls, collect your pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. Then we'll let you dump your offerings into a big tub on Harvest Day. We want that tub to be so heavy that the deacons won't be able to pick it up. Our students will be given an envelope with \$10 inside to work as a team with their Bible study classes to invest and multiply that offering that they can bring on Harvest Day.

The goal of what we are doing is this ... providing sacred spaces and places where people can encounter God in the years to come.

It is our turn now. We have the opportunity to contribute to the “Lasting Legacy” that will impact not just those who are part of us now, but also those who will follow in our footsteps. Today we rejoice that others who went before us made sacrifices to provide the facilities we utilize in ministry each week. It’s our turn now. Perhaps fifty years from now, should Jesus tarry, the people who make up the Travis Avenue Baptist Church in that day will rejoice that we did our part to add to the “Lasting Legacy.”

Sacred spaces and places.

That room where Jesus met with His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion became a sacred space and a sacred place. Remember, Jesus needed a space and a place where He could meet with His disciples for His last supper with them.

He instructed them...

**Luke 22:10 - “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters,**

**Luke 22:11 - and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’**

**Luke 22:12 - He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.”**

LORD’S SUPPER

**Luke 22:19 - And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”**

**Luke 22:20 - In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**

CALVARY WAS A SACRED PLACE. THE EMPTY TOMB WAS A SACRED SPACE.