

There's No Place Like Home

An old and familiar idiom says **“Home is where the heart is.”** The expression implies that *home* doesn't necessarily have to be a building or even a place, but can be a person or even a relationship. *Home* simply feels right and invites a person to return and remain. There is no more wonderful place to be!

The Scriptures indicate, “home” is the presence of the Lord - to be with Him. In the Old Testament, Israel understood the Tabernacle and the Temple to be where God visibly resided with His people. The importance of rebuilding the Temple after the exile in Babylon was not a fanciful building project to stay busy and show off Israel's architectural creativity. It was a place to which they hoped God's glory would return and around which He would again invite His people to gather, worship, find comfort, and safety. The presence of a holy God would be among His people as they returned to Him.

According to Deuteronomy 7, God's desire has always been to have a people of His choosing, a holy people, a people to treasure, a people that would glorify Him among the nations. In 2 Corinthians 6:16, the Apostle Paul draws from several Old Testament statements (see Lev 26:12; Jer 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27) to remind his readers that practical holiness is necessary for experiencing God's presence:

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Practically, this requires us to repent and then remain. God beckons us to “draw near ... Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:8). Ideally, our return should result in remaining at home, in His presence, never to leave again.

However, if we are honest with ourselves and with God, we will admit that every one of us is directionally challenged. We consistently lose our way. We regularly find ourselves away from home, needing to come to our senses like the prodigals we are (Lk 15:11-32). When we come to our senses, may our response echo the words of one great hymn: “Let Thy grace, Lord, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee.”

Zechariah 1:1-3 (ESV) - “... the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, “The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts: **Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.**”