

## FFWPUI: In Our Parent's House - Sunday service in North London, England

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Extracts



*Sanctum to feel the holiness of God to be officially dedicated in April 2025 in South Korea*

We spent a lot of time overseas this summer, first in the United States, and then we went to Korea to celebrate True Father's Seonghwa anniversary. And this year was a particularly meaningful celebration for me because we conducted the pledge service and the prayer service right there at True Father's gravesite. It was a beautiful, sunny day, and I really felt the peace of that place and True Father's presence.

But going to Korea is really quite tough. It's far away, especially when you've flown right around the world from America. So we decided afterward, "Let's take a few days and go to Japan and just unwind. We had a beautiful time on the island of Shikoku. Apart from the fact that a typhoon was bearing down on us, and we had to keep moving, it was great.

It was on the way back, while we were changing plane in Shanghai, that I got the message to come back to Korea. [...] We turned around in 20 hours and went back to Korea. "Why?" you may ask. Well, that's what I want to share with you this morning.

I was called by True Mother in person, "Come back to Korea! I want your opinion. I want your insight." Not from me personally, perhaps, but the insight of someone from the UK or Europe, on the Cheonwon Gung, the peace palace that True Mother has been building these past few years in Korea, and help her make a plan so that when we finally dedicate it and enter it next April, it will be a ceremony that the whole world can enjoy.

So she asked me, "So, what do you think? Is this better than the palaces of Europe?" You have to think quick in a moment like that. The first answer is, "Yes." But why is it better?

And suddenly it occurred to me, no, I've been to many palaces and castles in Europe and I'm sure that all of us have. But one thing I've noticed is that on the whole, they have a shadowed history, right? They've been used for purposes that are not particularly holy. And in some of them, you can still feel an atmosphere of fear, because the castle, the palace, represents the rule of force.

But here at Cheonwon Gung, I felt something very different. And I told Mother, "I feel a different spirit here. This place has been created as a home for God and his family, or her family. It's just a place of love."

And Mother said, "Yes, you're absolutely right. Moreover, once it has been fully dedicated and offered to God, it's yours. It's not mine; it's yours. And you, my children, are the ones who have to make it work and help the building to represent the vision behind it, which is a world of peace and justice."

So, I'd like to say that I was completely united with this and sort of floated down the stairs and thought, "Wow, wonderful! At last, the house of God is ready."

But I didn't, because, honestly speaking, I've been brought up or have thought, "Well, God doesn't really need a house, does he? I mean the whole of heaven and earth is the house of God. The whole creation is the house of God. Buildings are not that important."

But then I thought to myself, "Yeah, but would you really feel that way if you felt that God is your Father, your Mother?"

My mom is 94 years old, and about a year ago she had a stroke and for a while she had to be in hospital and then in a rehabilitation center. But finally, the day came when she could come back to her own house.

However, she couldn't manage to live by herself as she did before. And so each one weekend a month, me and my three sisters, more or less got up there to help her. At the other time, she has carers, but for her, it's so important to be in her own home and not in an institution where maybe physically everything would be more comfortable, but spiritually and mentally it would be so sad.

Maybe it's stretching the point. But I began to think along these lines, "What about our Heavenly Parent who's longing to be with his, with her children all the time?"

But at the moment, could it be that the churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples of the world are a little bit like institutions, like putting God into an institution? It's comfortable; people come to worship, but actually it's not the same as being home with your own family. Maybe something to think about there?

The first reading we had [...], comes from the time when King Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem 3,000 years ago: "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place.

Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive." (1 Kings 8:23-27)

And if you look into it a bit deeper, you'll see that it was a long project. It took seven to ten years, with enormous expenditure, and forced labour as well.

So finally it was done. And you could imagine it would have been possible for Solomon to feel, "I've done it, I'm great. I've built the temple of God that my father promised to."

But it's clear from the scriptures that even at that moment, he was really thinking, "Will, in fact, God live in this temple?" And it says, "You who are bigger than all of heaven and earth."

But the interesting point is what God says in reply, [...] "Yes, I will be in this temple, and I will hear your prayers. And not just your prayers. I'll hear the prayers of anyone who turns their face towards this temple, including and especially the foreigners, the people who are not even from the people of Israel. So, yes, you can count on it."

But there's a condition: "If you keep my statutes, if you keep my law, if you keep close to me, I will definitely hear your prayers, and I'll answer them. If you forget and you start to drift away, then I will leave this place and it will become just a pile of rubble. And people who pass by will be appalled."

That's the word in the Bible: "appalled". They were thinking, "What happened here? How could it be that this great temple, dedicated at such expense and with such a heart, now lies ruined?"

And of course, that's actually what happened. Before too long, the people did lose sight of the promises they'd made. The nation was divided, the temple was destroyed, and God didn't have a home anymore.

The second reading comes from the well-known chapter in 1st Corinthians, "Don't you realize that all of you together are the house of God and that the Spirit of God lives among you in his house? If anyone defiles and spoils God's home, God will destroy him. For God's home is holy and clean, and you are that home." (1. Corinthians 3:16-17 - Bible Gateway)

And we use it a lot in the Divine Principle where Paul says, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (RSV)

I always thought that that meant me personally, and that it was a direction to keep yourself pure and holy because God is living in your body as his temple. Actually, that meaning comes a bit later, but in this chapter, the "you" is plural.

Paul is addressing the whole congregation, just like we are this morning. In other words, do you not know that "North London" is God's temple? This entire congregation and God's spirit dwells in all of you together.

And if anyone is lost or struggling or even - it says in the scripture - quite strongly damaging the temple of God, he will be damaged, even destroyed.

But I feel, as a community, and I certainly speak for myself, I don't often feel that way. I feel, "Well, me, maybe my wife, my family, I can manage that."

But do I really think that our congregation is the temple of God, the dwelling place of God? We sang that this morning.

But we need to up our game, especially as we start preparing for what's going to happen next year. Of course - as well as that temple in Korea that's going to be dedicated - the hope of our Heavenly Parent is that our communities and our homes will likewise become a place where the Heavenly Parent feels completely at home.



Now, I did mention that in 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul is talking about you, the individual, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own;"

Paul is particularly talking about the importance of keeping your family and your life pure, not just sexually pure, but spiritually pure.

So, there's a role for the individual. We ourselves have a duty before God to keep our lives as pure and upright as we can, and as a community, to love each other and care for each other.

Because if we don't, no building is going to change that. Right? It's entirely a matter of relationship.

So, as I said, I started to think over time, "Maybe physical buildings are not so important. It's all about the family, the relationship, myself."

But I think that's an overcorrection. We know that Jesus said things like, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19)

On another occasion he said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36)

But we have to realize that this is already after it had become clear that his original purpose to build the Kingdom of God - starting in Israel and spreading throughout the world - would no longer be possible.

It is a mistake to think that God is only interested in the spiritual, that the Kingdom of Heaven is something that may happen in a distant future or only in the spiritual realm.

No, it has to be created right here on the earth. This is where God would like to see his kingdom. This is where he'd like to see his children living in peace and justice. [...]

Sometimes people ask me, "What does the ideal world look like?"

I say, "It's very simple. All the nations of the world uphold the word of God as the final authority. And the families live in peace. They're blessed. They're generous. They care for each other. They care for the nation. The nation itself welcomes foreigners and is committed to taking care of the planet as the gift of God."

It's very simple, actually. Religion, politics, those sorts of things don't really enter it at all. It's simply the manifestation of the three blessings.

But the world today is not like that, right? In his prayer, William [person in congregation] mentioned Russia and Ukraine, Israel, Gaza, Palestine, Yemen, Syria, and Afghanistan. The list is endless. [...]

So what do we do? Do we throw up our hands and say, "Look, let's face it, this is a moving target. It's a carrot that's always a little bit out of reach. And frankly, we will never live in that kind of world. Let's give it up."

Or we could do what Mother Moon is trying to do, which is to show a model somewhere. For Mother, that model is at the Cheonwon Gung and the HJ Cheonwon campus that we have there.

If you haven't been recently, I strongly recommend you to go again.

But for us that model is right here, isn't it? It's in our community. It's in our families. It's in our homes. That's what we can take responsibility for. And if we give up or don't do it or settle for something less, then, of course, that's a disappointment to our Heavenly Parent.

So what's going to happen next year? [...] What does Mother Moon want to do? [...]

Mother is thinking of this very simple ceremony. She will enter the Cheonwon Gung, the sanctum alone, and she'll offer a prayer to God and then be surrounded by children and people of all different backgrounds and faiths to show God we want you to use this place to be free, to use it as a palace of peace. [...]

The True Parents used to talk about the [...] things that make up a kingdom. [...] But actually, the most important thing is the people, right? If it were not for people, God would have built the Kingdom of Heaven a long time ago. But it's all about the people, and that is us. But it's also everyone.

I don't know if you read the news yesterday of the Pope, who's on tour in the Far East, and what he said, it was very controversial, even in the Catholic Church, but he said that all religions are pathways to God. All religions are like different languages to understand the truth of God. And if we feel that my religion is better than your religion, or my truth is higher than your truth, that only leads to conflict and misery.

Pretty strong words for the Pope. I was very happy to see them, and I think that kind of spirit is in the air.

It's certainly the goal that the True Parents have for this amazing facility in Korea. [...]

Mother emphasized so much recently the need for outreach. [...] And [...] we should care about people [...] because they are the sons and daughters of God.

Sometimes when I really am upset with someone, which happens quite often, I hear the voice of God, and it's always the same message, God says, You are upset with those persons because they're not like you, they're not in your image. They don't correspond to what you think is a good person, a righteous person, a beautiful person. But I want you to remember that they are in my image, each and every one of them, faults, warts, mistakes, and all. And if you want me to look at you with kindness and graciousness, you had better start doing the same."

It seems, from our experience, that this is impossibly idealistic, right?

The world is huge, and it's full of conflict. What can a small group of people do to redress the balance?

But if we feel like that, we're ignoring the fact that God is God, that God is great, and God is on the throne if we let him or her be.

I've asked Mother Moon about this many times, "I kind of feel, Mother, do you know what's going on in Korea? We talk about Korean unification, but meanwhile, in the north, they're destroying the railways, the bridges, all the effort that was made over 40 years, they're wiping it away."

And she said, "Yes, but that's human effort. What's done can be undone very quickly. What you have to realize is how to harness the power and the spirit of God."

As it says, "Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord." (Zechariah 4:6)

"Why doesn't God exercise that spiritual power right away?" I asked myself. It's because he wants us to be part of it. He's always wanted us. It's our kingdom, it's our family, it's our palace.

And if it's just done for us, and no one takes responsibility, it will end up in that pile of rubble where people walk by, because what we need is deep, powerful ownership and feeling this is mine. [...]

What do you need to do? The most important thing that we've been asked to do is to bring ourselves with the best heart and attitude we can have, to have a pure, upright mind. As King David said once, "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord." (Psalm 51:10)

If we're honest, we're not like that all the time. You've probably heard there's going to be an opportunity for devotion and grace. Sometimes people think, "Why do I need grace? I haven't robbed anybody, I haven't committed adultery, I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't do drugs, I don't beat my wife. I'm already perfect."

But for me, it's always more about the things that I didn't do, the sins of omission, the love that I didn't give, the responsibility I didn't take.

Everybody's different, but definitely, we have an opportunity to make a fresh start. So, if you're planning to come, please think about how, as an individual, as a family, we could make such a fresh start. [...]

Please think to yourself, "Can I be there? Shall I be there?"

Of course, not everybody can be in that small sanctuary on the same day, but there will be a very well-organized system of timed admission. So if you come, you will have your moment to be in the temple of God, the dwelling place of God. I think it's worth it.