

THE LIVING TABERNACLE

Spirit, Soul, Body, Faith, Healing & the Promise of Glory

A Side Teaching Following Exodus 24–25

BIG IDEA

In Exodus, God commands Israel to build a Tabernacle so that His presence might dwell among His people.

Under the New Covenant, something extraordinary happens:

God moves the dwelling place.

Paul tells believers:

“Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.” — 1 Corinthians 6:19

The Tabernacle therefore gives us a powerful **teaching picture** for thinking about ourselves:

HOLY OF HOLIES → SPIRIT → Communion with God

HOLY PLACE → SOUL → Mind, will, emotions

OUTER COURT → BODY → Physical interaction with the world

Important distinction: **Scripture explicitly distinguishes spirit, soul and body, but it does not explicitly assign those three components to the three regions of the Tabernacle.**

That comparison is our teaching analogy.

1. SPIRIT, SOUL & BODY

One of our foundational passages is:

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Paul prays that God would sanctify believers completely and preserve their:

“spirit, soul, and body.”

So Scripture itself gives us all three categories.

Hebrews makes another distinction:

Hebrews 4:12

The Word of God is powerful enough to penetrate even to the:

“division of soul and spirit.”

Whatever mystery remains concerning exactly how soul and spirit interact, Scripture distinguishes them.

For our teaching picture:

BODY

My physical existence—my earthly tabernacle.

SOUL

My mind, thoughts, emotions, desires, decisions and personality.

SPIRIT

The deepest place of communion with God, made alive through Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

2. THE HOLY OF HOLIES — GOD DWELLS

WITHIN

This is where the Tabernacle comparison becomes beautiful.

The Holy of Holies contained the Ark and represented the unique dwelling place of God's presence.

Paul now says:

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Your **body is the temple of the Holy Spirit**, who is in you.

Therefore:

“glorify God in your body.”

Notice the conclusion.

Paul doesn't say:

“Because your spirit belongs to God, your body doesn't matter.”

He says essentially the opposite.

Because God dwells in you, what you do with your body matters.

Our bodies are not gods.

But neither are they disposable.

They are entrusted to us.

3. CHRIST RECEIVED THE SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE

John says concerning Jesus:

John 3:34

“God does not give the Spirit by measure.”

In context, this speaks uniquely of Christ and His testimony.

So we should make an important distinction:

Christ possesses the Spirit without measure.

Believers genuinely receive the Holy Spirit, but Scripture does not say that every believer possesses the Spirit “without measure” in precisely the same sense as Christ.

Indeed, Paul speaks of:

“the measure of faith” — Romans 12:3

and tells believers:

“be filled with the Spirit” — Ephesians 5:18

while also warning:

“Do not quench the Spirit.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:19

The Spirit Himself is not defective or incomplete.

The question is how fully we yield ourselves to Him.

4. THE SOUL — RENEWING THE MIND

If the spirit is our Holy-of-Holies teaching picture, the **soul** becomes especially important because Scripture repeatedly addresses the mind.

Romans 12:2

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Transformation is connected with renewal in the way we think.

Paul then becomes incredibly practical:

Philippians 4:8

Think upon what is:

True

Noble

Just

Pure

Lovely

Of good report

Virtuous

Praiseworthy

Paul concludes:

“meditate on these things.”

That means what we repeatedly allow into our minds matters.

Fear feeds something.

Bitterness feeds something.

Lust feeds something.

Anxiety feeds something.

But so do:

Scripture.

Prayer.

Truth.
Thanksgiving.
Worship.
Hope.

We aren't pretending problems don't exist.

We are teaching the soul where to look.

5. THE SOUL ITSELF IS BEING SANCTIFIED

Peter writes:

1 Peter 1:22

He speaks of believers having:

“purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.”

David likewise says:

Psalm 23:3

“He restores my soul.”

The soul therefore isn't something we simply surrender to whatever emotion happens to appear today.

The mind can be renewed.

Desires can be disciplined.

Thoughts can be redirected.

The soul can increasingly come into agreement with the truth of God.

6. FAITH — THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD

Now consider one of the most beautiful healing stories in Scripture.

The woman had suffered bleeding for **twelve years**.

Matthew tells us:

Matthew 9:20–22

She came behind Jesus and touched His garment because:

“she said to herself...”

She believed that if she could only touch His garment she would be healed.

Then Jesus tells her:

“your faith has made you well.”

Notice the progression:

She believed.

She spoke within herself.

She acted upon what she believed.

She reached toward Christ.

Her faith was not merely an abstract theological opinion.

Faith moved her.

7. “LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH”

The disciples themselves recognized that faith could grow.

Luke 17:5

“Increase our faith.”

Jesus responds:

Luke 17:6

“If you have faith as a mustard seed...”

and describes speaking to a mulberry tree and commanding it to be uprooted.

Jesus gives similar imagery in:

Matthew 17:20

Faith as a mustard seed can:

“say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there.’”

And Mark gives the dramatic mountain-and-sea imagery:

Mark 11:22–24

Jesus begins:

“Have faith in God.”

Then He describes speaking to a mountain and commanding it to be cast into the sea.

But notice where Jesus begins:

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

Biblical faith isn't faith in **faith**.

It isn't faith in my ability to visualize an outcome.

Its object is God.

8. FAITH CAN BE EXERCISED

Paul gives another important principle:

Romans 10:17

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

So faith can be nourished.

The woman with the issue of blood exercised hers.

The apostles asked for theirs to increase.

Jesus repeatedly challenged people to believe.

This gives us permission to ask:

What am I feeding my faith?

If I continually rehearse only fear, impossibility and defeat, what am I teaching my soul?

That does **not** mean we deny reality.

It means reality does not receive the final word before God does.

9. BUT FAITH DOES NOT OVERRULE THE FATHER

And here we need the guardrail that keeps the entire teaching biblical.

God is sovereign.

Faith does not manipulate God.

Prayer doesn't make us sovereign.

Jesus Himself prayed in Gethsemane:

Luke 22:42

“Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”

That is not weak faith.

That is perfect faith.

Perfect faith ultimately trusts the Father even when the Father's answer is not the answer we wanted.

10. JOB – SOMETIMES SUFFERING IS NOT THE RESULT OF PERSONAL FAILURE

Job destroys the simplistic formula:

“If something bad happened, you must not have had enough faith.”

God Himself describes Job as blameless and upright.

Yet Satan challenges Job.

Job 1:10–12

God permits Satan to touch Job's possessions—but establishes a boundary.

Later:

Job 2:4–6

God permits Satan to afflict Job physically, while again establishing a boundary:

“spare his life.”

Notice:

Satan acts.

God permits.

God establishes the boundary.

Job doesn't understand what is happening behind the scenes.

Sometimes suffering occurs for reasons the person suffering cannot possibly see.

11. PAUL PRAYED FOR HEALING—AND GOD SAID NO

Paul gives us perhaps the most important balance to the healing discussion.

2 Corinthians 12:7–10

Paul had a **“thorn in the flesh.”**

Three times he pleaded with the Lord for it to leave.

God answered:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Paul prayed.

Paul believed.

Paul was an apostle.

Paul had seen miracles.

And God still chose not to remove the thorn.

Therefore we can never tell a suffering believer:

“You would be healed if you simply had more faith.”

Scripture will not allow us to make that accusation.

Sometimes God demonstrates His power by removing the weakness.

Sometimes God demonstrates His power through the weakness.

12. THE RAIN FALLS ON THE JUST AND UNJUST

Jesus says:

Matthew 5:45

God sends rain upon:

“the just and on the unjust.”

In context, Jesus is describing God's generosity even toward His enemies—not primarily explaining disease.

But it contributes to a larger biblical reality:

We still live in a fallen world.

Christians get sick.

Christians experience accidents.

Christians age.

Christians eventually die unless Christ returns first.

Salvation has begun—

but bodily redemption has not yet been completed.

13. SIN, DEATH & THE FALLEN BODY

Paul writes:

Romans 6:23

“The wages of sin is death.”

Humanity presently inhabits a creation under corruption.

Our bodies wear down.

They become injured.

They age.

They die.

But that does not mean every individual sickness is the direct consequence of an individual's particular sin.

Jesus explicitly rejects that simplistic conclusion in **John 9:1–3**, concerning the man born blind.

So we distinguish:

Sin brought death into the human condition.

from

“This particular person is sick because he committed this particular sin.”

Scripture does not allow us automatically to make the second judgment.

14. SOMETIMES, THOUGH, IT REALLY IS OUR OWN FAULT!

And here's where this teaching gets wonderfully practical.

If I spend a week on a cruise eating everything I can get my hands on...

come home heavier...

my joints and back complain...

and I say:

“LORD! WHY HAVE YOU AFFLICTED ME?!”



There may be another explanation.

God has given us stewardship over the outer court.

Paul says:

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether we:

“eat or drink”

we should do everything to God's glory.

And:

1 Timothy 4:8

“bodily exercise profits a little.”

“A little” does not mean **nothing**.

Our choices have consequences.

Sleep matters.

Food matters.

Movement matters.

Stress matters.

Addiction matters.

Rest matters.

Medical care matters.

And spiritual maturity should make us **more responsible** with our bodies, not less.

Faith is not an excuse to neglect the temple.

15. CAN SPIRIT, SOUL & BODY AFFECT ONE ANOTHER?

Absolutely—but we should word this carefully.

Scripture presents us as integrated beings.

Fear can affect the body.

Stress can affect the body.

Joy can affect the body.

Rest can affect the body.

Physical illness can affect our emotions.

Exhaustion can affect our thinking.

Prayer and peace can affect how we experience suffering.

But we should **not** teach:

“If I perfectly align my spirit and soul, my body must heal.”

Scripture doesn't promise that.

Instead:

Spirit, soul and body belong to God, influence one another, and are all being brought under Christ.

16. THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE

There is, however, a remarkable passage:

Romans 8:11

Paul says that if the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, God will give life to our:

“mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

In the larger Romans 8 context, this ultimately points toward resurrection.

And that brings us to the greatest healing promise in the Bible.

17. THE ULTIMATE HEALING IS RESURRECTION

Christian healing doesn't ultimately end with:

“I got better.”

Because even Lazarus eventually died again.

The final promise is much greater:

RESURRECTION.

Paul writes extensively about this in:

1 Corinthians 15:42–44

Our present body is:

Sown in corruption → raised in incorruption

Sown in dishonor → raised in glory

Sown in weakness → raised in power

Natural body → spiritual body

Then:

1 Corinthians 15:53

“this corruptible must put on incorruption.”

That's the body we're heading toward.

18. OUR PRESENT BODY IS A TENT

Paul uses language that connects beautifully to Exodus.

2 Corinthians 5:1

Our present earthly body is described as:

“our earthly house, this tent.”

But Paul anticipates something from God:

“a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

That is an extraordinary connection to the Tabernacle.

Presently: TENT.

Eventually: PERMANENCE.

But one correction is useful here:

John 14's “many mansions” should not be directly identified with our resurrection bodies.

Jesus says:

John 14:2–3

“In My Father's house are many mansions [dwelling places].”

He promises to prepare a place and receive His disciples to Himself.

That complements our hope beautifully, but **2 Corinthians 5** and **1 Corinthians 15** are the stronger texts for teaching specifically about the transformed body.

19. WHAT WILL THE NEW BODY BE LIKE?

Scripture gives us glimpses.

1 John 3:2

This isn't John's Gospel but his first epistle:

“We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

That is one of Scripture's clearest promises concerning our future state.

Paul adds:

Philippians 3:20–21

Christ will:

“transform our lowly body”

so that it conforms to His glorious body.

Therefore the resurrected Christ gives us our best glimpse of glorified embodied existence.

20. JESUS' RESURRECTION BODY

After the resurrection:

John 20:19

The disciples are together with the doors shut.

Suddenly:

Jesus stood in their midst.

Scripture does not explicitly say He “walked through the wall.”

It says the doors were shut and He nevertheless appeared among them.

Then:

Luke 24:39

Jesus tells them to examine Him:

“A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

And in:

Luke 24:41–43

Jesus actually eats fish.

Then, eight days after the first John 20 appearance:

John 20:26–29

Jesus appears again despite the shut doors and invites Thomas to examine His wounds.

So the resurrected Jesus is:

Physical enough to touch.

Physical enough to eat.

Still recognizably Jesus.

Yet operating beyond the limitations we presently experience.

That's quite a body.

21. “LIKE THE ANGELS”

The Sadducees challenge Jesus with the woman who had been married successively to seven brothers.

They ask:

Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?

Jesus answers:

Matthew 22:30

In the resurrection people:

“neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.”

Important distinction:

Jesus does **not** say we **become angels**.

Nor is He giving a complete anatomical description of resurrection bodies.

His immediate point concerns **marriage in the resurrection**.

But it clearly tells us that resurrection life operates according to a different order than our present mortal existence.

22. SO WHAT ABOUT HEALING TODAY?

We should pray boldly.

We should believe boldly.

We should ask boldly.

James even instructs sick believers to call for the elders and pray.

James 5:14–16

Prayer for healing belongs in the normal life of the church.

So:

PRAY.

BELIEVE.

ASK.

SPEAK FAITH.

SEEK GOD.

RECEIVE MEDICAL CARE.

CARE FOR THE BODY.

RENEW THE MIND.

WALK IN THE SPIRIT.

And then:

TRUST THE FATHER WITH THE OUTCOME.

That last statement isn't surrendering faith.

It is the highest expression of faith.

23. DON'T QUENCH THE SPIRIT

Paul commands:

1 Thessalonians 5:19

“Do not quench the Spirit.”

What might interfere with our sensitivity to God?

Scripture repeatedly identifies things such as:

Persistent sin

Bitterness

Unforgiveness

Pride

Fear

Worldliness

Disobedience

Neglect of prayer

Neglect of God's Word

Compare **Ephesians 4:30**, where believers are warned not to **grieve the Holy Spirit**.

We aren't extinguishing God's existence.

Rather, we can resist His work and influence in our lives.

24. THE TABERNACLE PICTURE

Now put everything together.

HOLY OF HOLIES — SPIRIT

God dwells within.

The Holy Spirit is perfect.

Christ is present.

Communion begins here.

↓

HOLY PLACE — SOUL

My mind is renewed.

My will is surrendered.

My emotions are brought under truth.

I meditate upon what is true, pure and lovely.

The Word reshapes my thinking.

↓

OUTER COURT — BODY

I eat.

I sleep.

I exercise.

I work.

I rest.

I receive treatment when needed.

I resist destructive appetites.

I use my physical body to serve others.

I glorify God physically.

The goal is alignment:

Spirit submitted to God.

Soul renewed by truth.

Body stewarded for His glory.

25. BUT GOD REMAINS SOVEREIGN OVER THE WHOLE TABERNACLE

This keeps us away from two opposite errors.

ERROR #1 — FATALISM

“Whatever happens happens, so why pray, exercise faith or care for myself?”

Scripture rejects that.

ERROR #2 — FORMULA

“If I pray correctly, think correctly, eat correctly and have enough faith, God must heal me.”

Scripture rejects that too.

The biblical position is richer:

I pray because God heals.

I believe because Jesus commands faith.

I renew my mind because God commands it.

I care for my body because it belongs to Him.

I resist sin because sin destroys.

I seek healing because God is compassionate.

And I trust Him because He remains sovereign.

26. SOMETIMES HE HEALS THE BODY.

**SOMETIMES HE SUSTAINS US THROUGH
THE THORN.**

**BUT EVENTUALLY HE REDEEMS THE BODY
COMPLETELY.**

That's where Christian hope becomes different from simple wellness philosophy.

Our ultimate hope isn't:

"Maybe I can make this body last forever."

We can't.

Our hope is:

Romans 8:23

We await:

“the redemption of our body.”

God isn't merely repairing the old tabernacle forever.

A resurrection is coming.

FINAL TEACHING PICTURE

Think again about Exodus.

God creates a Tabernacle.

He sanctifies it.

He fills it with His presence.

He gives instructions for how it is to be treated.

It belongs to Him.

And then Paul looks at the believer and says:

YOU ARE NOW THE TEMPLE.

So care for the outer court.

Steward your body.

Renew the Holy Place.

Guard and transform your mind.

And treasure the Holy of Holies.

Walk in communion with the Spirit of God.

Believe God for healing.

Ask Him boldly.

Speak to the mountain.

Exercise the faith He has given you.

But never make faith greater than the One in whom your faith rests.

Because whether He heals me **now**, sustains me **through**, or finally heals me **in resurrection**—

MY BODY BELONGS TO HIM.

And one day:

Corruption will put on incorruption.

Weakness will be raised in power.

Mortality will put on immortality.

The temporary tabernacle will give way to glory.

And then the healing will be complete.