



Make it Plain – Part 11

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

This week, Pastor Ron Carpenter, Jr. teaches that we are not merely attendees of a church but living members of God's house — His holy temple. Following Christ is not easy; it requires death, denial, and surrender of our old identity to embrace our new identities as sons (and daughters) of Christ (Eph. 2:19-20; Romans 8:16-17). Oftentimes we approach God with a vague vision of our identities. However, like blind Bartimaeus, we must seize the moment God has appointed rather than staying silent in the crowd. When we understand our identities, we pray differently, act differently, approach challenges in our lives differently, and approach our relationship with Christ afresh. God has already made our identity plain; now is the time to walk in it!

KEY SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 2:19-20 (NKJV) - *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."*

Habakkuk 2:2-3; Mark 10:47-48, Romans 8:16-17; Luke 15:31-32; Philippians 4:6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The House of God, Not a Man-Made Church

- The church is a living organism made up of every born-again believer — not a building or a brand.
- Many congregations have adopted a corporate, consumer model: pastors as coaches, members as customers, and entertainment as the product.
- Jesus' call to "deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me" includes death to self, not just comfort and convenience.
- According to **Ephesians 2**, believers are being built together into a holy temple — a dwelling place for God, not a place He only visits.
- **Question #1:** Where have you seen the "corporate church" model (entertainment, consumerism, avoiding offense) show up in your own expectations of church?
- **Question #2:** What would change in your life if you saw yourself as a living stone in God's house rather than a spectator at a service?



APPLY IT: This week, identify one place you've been a consumer rather than a contributor in the house of God, and take one concrete step to serve instead of simply attend.

2. Gaining Clarity and Seizing the Moment

- **Habakkuk 2:2-3** instructs us to write our visions so that others may “run with it” — People can't run with vague visions.
- Waiting on a vision is like lying in ambush: quiet, prepared, and ready to move in the proper moment.
- God-sized vision always requires three things: people, resources, and God Himself. If it doesn't require all three, it may not be from Him.
- Blind Bartimaeus (**Mark 10:47-48**) refused to stay quiet when Jesus passed by — he separated himself from the crowd to seize the one moment he'd waited for.
- **Question #1:** Is there a vision or promise from God in your life that still feels vague? What would it look like to “make it plain”?
- **Question #2:** Like Bartimaeus, have you ever had to push past the noise of others to pursue what God was doing? What happened?

APPLY IT: Write down one vision God has given you in a single, plain sentence. Post it somewhere you'll see it daily this week.

3. Sons, Not Strangers

- Ephesians 2 declares that in Christ we are no longer strangers or foreigners, but fellow citizens and members of God's household.
- Jesus' first temptation attacked that very identity: “If You are the Son of God...”
- Trouble doesn't test what you can do — it tests **who you believe you are**.
- In the parable of the prodigal son, the older brother stayed in the house but lived like a servant, missing that everything the Father had was already his.
- **Question #1:** In what areas of life do you find yourself living like a “son living as a servant” — physically present but still striving for approval or acceptance?
- **Question #2:** When trouble or temptation comes, what is it usually testing in you — your performance, or your identity?

APPLY IT: Write one sentence declaring your identity as a son or daughter and joint heir with Christ. Say it out loud each morning this week.

4. Praying Like a Son, Not a Beggar

- Philippians 4:6 calls us to bring requests to God “with thanksgiving” — thanking Him as though the answer is already accomplished.
- Strangers pray fearful, begging prayers: “God, if it be Your will...” Sons pray confident, thankful declarations of what is already theirs in Christ.
- Example: instead of begging for protection, a son declares, ‘I thank You that You have commanded Your angels concerning my family.’



- The call is to stop praying like an outsider and start praying like family — with confidence, thanksgiving, and identity rooted in Christ.
- **Question #1:** Would you describe your typical prayers as more “begging” or more “thankful declaration”? Why do you think that is?
- **Question #2:** What is one promise of God you need to start thanking Him for in advance, rather than continuing to ask for it?

APPLY IT: Rewrite one prayer request you've been begging God for into a thankful declaration, and pray it that way every day this week.

CONCLUSION & CHALLENGE

We are not strangers seeking scraps from God's table — we are sons and daughters, fully at home in His house, with full access to everything that belongs to the Father. The challenge is to trade a beggar's posture for a son's confidence: to gain clarity on the vision God has given us, to seize the moment when it comes, and to pray with thanksgiving instead of fear. As you close this week's discussion, reflect together on the following:

- **1.** What needs to change in how you see yourself or your relationship with God?
- **2.** What “keys” (authority, promises, access) have you been seeking that God has already given you?
- **3.** What is already being prayed for in your life that has the keys available right now — you simply need to receive and declare it?
- **4.** How can you move from feeling stuck to feeling empowered this week through a specific promise of Scripture?

