

## God's Desire to Dwell & Abide With You

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Hey friends, I'm Beth Davis, and what a gift to be with you on this Eucharistic Healing Retreat. Today, it's my joy to share a little bit of God's heart for you, His desire to come and dwell in you, to live with you.

### Never Finding A Place To Live

Speaking of living places to live, I spent a little more than ten years living in this quaint, perfect mountain town in northern Arizona. And for more than a decade, I tried very hard to make this place a home. There was only one problem I could never find anywhere to live. I moved eight times in years, and it seemed like it was always something, right. I would finally get in a place that I loved and, the rent would skyrocket or I would finally live with someone I loved and she would get married. It was always something I could never spend more than two or three years in a place. Once I moved twice in a year, it felt at times like the very town itself was rejecting me.

No matter what I did, no matter how hard I pounded the pavement or reached out for recommendations, no matter how much I prayed, I couldn't seem to find a place to call home. And that really takes a toll, doesn't it? Because as human beings, it's natural, this desire to want to settle down. We're all looking for a sense of belonging, a place to call home. But I would venture to say there's actually something super natural in this desire, that this desire for a home actually reveals a deeper reality, a greater truth about who we are and who God is.

Because you and I were made to be the dwelling place for God. God wants to make His home in you. Indeed, He has already made His home in you by virtue of your baptism, more on that in a moment. But the reality is that's a mutual desire. It's not only that God makes his home in us, but we find our home in God. Yes, it's mutual. The desire for home actually begins in the heart of God. It's His plan. It's His heart's desire to live with you together, to spend your life as one. This oneness is first of all, God's desire.

### Revelation 21:3

Listen to the words of the Lord, in the Book of Revelation, this is chapter twenty one, verse three, *"John says, and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, see, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them. They will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them."* The word dwell here is important. I've learned sometimes I think I know what a word means, and then I do a quick little Google search. And it turns out I actually, I didn't know the half of it, or I didn't quite understand. I had a sense of it, but there was more nuance to it. There was more to it. Now, you and I, think we would agree that our understanding of to dwell means to live right, to live in a specified place, to stay there.

But in the Old Testament, the word dwell is actually a translation of nine words, which by far the most frequent is this word that I'm absolutely going to butcher "Yashabh", Y A S H A B H. It means to sit down or to dwell, and it's used over times. It's all also frequently translated. Sit, sometimes abide, inhabit, or remain another word, often rendered. Dwell is shakan or shaken,

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which means to settle down. Now, in the New Testament, primarily this word for dwell means to abide or to inhabit, to live. And the truth is, the most Holy Trinity, God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comes to dwell in you, to live, to abide, to remain in you. God makes His home in you at your baptism. And that's only the beginning, because every time you receive Him in the most Holy Eucharist, in Holy Communion, He abides in you. He lives within you, He's alive in you, and you in Him always. There's this mutuality to our relationship with the Lord.

### God's Desire To Live In Our Heart

Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity, when she was reflecting on her first holy communion, she wrote these words, *"If he came this morning into your little heart, it was not to pass through it and go away, but to remain there always."* And the catechism, picks up. It echoes this language of the heart, as a dwelling place. This is paragraph , *"The heart is the dwelling place where I am, where I live. According to the Semitic or biblical expression, the heart is the place to which I withdraw. The heart is our hidden center. Beyond the grasp of our reason and of others, only the spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully."* Wow, that makes me want to weep. *"Only the spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully."*

The heart is the place of decision deeper than our psychic drives. Okay, so we're not speaking about reasoning, an intellectual knowing, there's a deeper knowing of the heart. Picking up again in , *"The heart, it's the place of truth where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter because as image of God, we live in relation, it is the place of covenant."*

Whoa, take that paragraph, Okay, that rich, rich wisdom, the catechism Paragraph . Take that into a holy hour, allow the Holy Spirit to just draw out one little phrase. One part of that beautiful paragraph, reflect on all that is our inheritance, the, the beauty, the dimension, the depth of the human heart. And, and God's desire overlay that with God's desire to dwell within our heart. Jesus desires to dwell, to abide, to live, to inhabit, to remain in you, with you, to make His home in your heart. And remember, the heart is the center of the human person.

I'm going to use an analogy here. And analogies always fall short, right? But when a man and a woman get married, they merge lives, right? The two separate people become one. And oftentimes we think about the intangible things, right like their future plans, their dreams. When you meet that person, those future plans and dreams, they begin to change shape a little bit, right. They take on a new direction or trajectory, or maybe they're just fuller. They've been fleshed out because now there's another person involved, another person with gifts and, and hopes and a personality, right? And those things begin to come together, they begin to come into view. But it, along with those intangible things, just very practically, the tangible things of our lives have to come together. Things like bank accounts, things like two different houses coming together to make one home.

And the same is true in our relationship with God. When Jesus comes to take up residence in us, when the most Holy Trinity comes to make their home in us, to make our hearts, His home, His love and His presence, just, just by virtue of, of His love and presence being there, begins to change us.

## He Is Building A Palace

I love the way CS Lewis describes this transformation in mere Christianity. It's a bit of a longer quote, but I would encourage you as I read it, to actually close your eyes and, and listen, prayerfully listen with the Holy Spirit to this transformation of the human heart described as a house, how it's changed through the love and presence and yeah, the redemption, the redeeming love of Jesus when He comes to make His home in us.

*“Imagine yourself as a living house; God comes in to rebuild that house. At first perhaps, you can understand what He's doing. He's getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on. You knew those jobs needed doing. And so you're not surprised. But presently, he starts knocking the house about, in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of, throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage, but He is building a palace.”*

Friends with every reception of Holy Communion, Jesus is building a palace in you. And it only makes sense if the King of the universe has come to make His home in you. That home should be fitting for a King. That home, should be made ready to, welcome to, to give rest to a King. It has to be built out, it has to be upgraded, it has to be changed. We have to, we have to be rid of anything that would offend that King, the lover of our souls, the spouse of our souls. We have to allow ourselves to be transformed, to let Him come in and make all of the necessary changes, design and construction and otherwise, to upgrade this little heart of ours, to make it expansive, to make it generous, to make it radiant, to make it as beautiful as He designed it to be.

St. Teresa Avila, she uses a similar image analogy. She describes it as an interior castle that you and I within our souls are like a, many faceted diamond. And they have to be, all of the, the crystal of this interior castle. We have to move through these rooms and allow the King to, to make them ready for Himself, that they might belong more and more to Him. This is the, the beauty of the conversion that happens in the sacraments.

## The Importance of The Sacrament of Confession

I want to bring up here the sacrament of confession. Can we speak of the Eucharist without speaking of the sacrament of confession, we would, we would never be able to receive Jesus indeed. We're not able or ready to receive Jesus worthily without the sacrament of confession to make way, uh, to make those changes. His mercy, His love, come in and wash out, come in and, and burn away by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Anything that would offend anything that is not fitting for the King, which ultimately means is not good for us. It is not appropriate for our precious heart, which the King of the universe, God Himself, deemed to call and make His home His own. In the room of our souls, the dwelling place of the heart, this is where we meet Jesus. We meet Him, for the first time when He comes to make His home in us at our baptism. We make ready those rooms with every confession. We live more and more with Him, He abides in us. He remains in us, alive in us, with every reception of Holy Communion.

## An Inner Room For Prayer

You know, in Jewish culture, we can understand this language, this truth, even more deeply. In Jewish culture, when a husband and wife needed to be alone, to be intimate, when they needed a place of privacy and security, they would retreat typically all the way to the back of the house, where there were no outside entrances, there was only one way in and one way out to ensure, that intimacy, that is so necessary for, the, the value of the preciousness of that relationship. It protected the preciousness of that committed relationship. They would retreat to the bridal chamber. They would, they would retreat to this place, the inner room of the house that most far away secluded place, a place of privacy, of security, a place where their love could be fruitful. And Jesus uses this same language when He speaks of prayer.

This is in the Gospel of Matthew chapter six, starting at verse five. *"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners so that they may be seen by others. Truly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who is in secret, and your father who sees in secret will reward you."*

Again, that's Matthew chapter six, verses five and six. This is the image that Jesus Himself prefers to use to invite us to this place of privacy, of security, a place where our love with Him can be fruitful into this bridal chamber, the inner room, the human heart, where God has made His home, where our desire to find home, to find security, a sense of belonging, a place to call our own. We find that within, when Jesus comes to make His home in us and in Him, we find our home in the inner room, which is the place of prayer.

And, and I would add to this, most especially, we experience this in His tangible presence, body, blood, soul, and divinity. In Eucharistic adoration, this is a place to develop this intimacy where He's right there with us, truly with us alive in the Eucharist. And, and by receiving Him in Holy Communion, nourishing that intimacy, nourishing that relationship, He comes to make His home in us, we become like Him. This is the call of the Christian life, become like Jesus. And here in the inner room, we become one with Jesus.

This, my friends, this, is better than any, apartment that I could have found in Flagstaff, better than any home that you could build even to your own specifications. God is building a palace in you, and He's inviting you, maybe for the first time, maybe for the thousandth time, to find your home again in Him.

## Closing Prayer

Let's pray. In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Come, Holy Spirit, spirit of the living God, come and breathe on us. Refresh us with your, your breath, your living breath God. Blow away any cobwebs. May the breath of your mouth be like alight and a refreshing in those, darkened or, neglected corners of our souls. Would you fill us now. I pray that your breath would expand this soul that you've called home to make us a palace, fit for yourself.

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Holy Spirit, even now, I ask you to inspire our Christian imagination. We give you permission to sanctify and to use our imagination, to see that sanctuary of our soul, the inner room. Help us to develop that in our, our Holy Imagination. To see and to visit this place where we can see your face, hear your voice become one with you. Even now, look, look around the room, maybe you know it well, maybe this is a new space where you've never been. Maybe you're not even indoors, maybe you find that you're in a field or a garden. Maybe you're beside the ocean or at the foot of a waterfall.

Allow the Holy Spirit to inspire this meditation. Follow Him into your inner room, and there we'll find our rest. Thank you, Jesus, for choosing us, for filling us with Your love and Yourself. We pray all these things in your Holy and precious name, Jesus Christ, Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.