



Issue 90 – February 28, 2018

The Naz Prayer Ministry



Becoming a House of Prayer

Part 4: Uncovering the Grace Note

Musicians often encounter grace notes. More importantly they understand why they are there.

Some define a grace note as simply an extra note, not necessary to the flow of the music. But I doubt that composers would agree with that perspective. A choice to alter the music, however small the notation, is deliberate. Something, in the view of the composer, was needed, and in fact, without it, something would be missing. The intention is to embellish the music in a way that may seem incidental on the surface, but – again in the composer’s mind – the grace note is necessary to more adequately complete the impact of the music.

To the expression “house of prayer,” as impactful as it is in and of itself, we now uncover a grace note.

Both Matthew 21:13 and Mark 11:17 give us a record of Jesus’ use of these words. Matthew spoke only of “the house of prayer.” But Mark’s version provides a distinctive note revealing the added tone of God’s grace by reflecting Solomon’s dedication of the Temple in 1 Kings 8 with the full expression “house of prayer *for all nations*” (emphasis added).

Solomon’s remarks were indeed extraordinary. The Temple was the place to which God’s people were to turn in their desire to recognize and affirm His presence and authority. But Solomon reveals that the Temple was to serve the same purpose even for those outside of Jewishness.

Such an idea was a reach far beyond the Jewish perspective of the covenant relationship. The Law was abundantly clear. All who were not Jewish could participate in the covenant relationship only by stepping away from their own cultures and formally/ceremonially becoming Jewish by adoption.

But where the Law was exclusive, Solomon’s dedication address was inclusive. In truth, the words of this wise king disclosed the heart of the King of Kings. After all, it was He who declared long before the Law existed that through Abraham *every nation* on earth would be blessed. But steeped in the Law, Israel had lost sight of God’s ultimate purpose for them. Their life of covenant was not merely to provide them with the security of His presence and blessing, but to call others to encounter life in relationship with God. By living out the blessing of being His people, Israel was to serve as witnesses of God’s greatness and grace to all people.

So, the evidence mounts that the expression “house of prayer” is about more, much more, than simply an abundance of prayer groups or prayer events. Those words have far-reaching implications for the life of God’s people. To be a house of prayer is a calling that fully understood will lift our gaze beyond the tendency to be preoccupied with taking our own spiritual pulse and measuring our progress.

A church that has become a house of prayer certainly assigns the practice of prayer to a place of priority. But far more importantly, it has embraced the longing of the Lord of the Church for His people to shine with the Light of His glory and grace, to be a beacon to which those in the world will instinctively turn with the expectation of encountering the presence of the God who longs to live in covenant with all those created in His image.

Taking Our Next Step Together

Lord God, Fill us with an astonishing reverence of Your presence, Your glory and grace. Allow us to toss aside anything that distracts us from such awe and wonder. Change us, O Lord, so that Your countenance can shine through us as exhibits of Your passion for a world adrift without hope and meaning. Anoint us as Your vessels of honor. Let our lives shine so clearly that those looking on will see Your glory and grace.