1 Kings 8:22-23 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven and said: “O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way.”

Do you recognize the circumstances and history of this section of God’s Word. Our text is actually a portion of the prayer of dedication that King Solomon offered up on the Day of Dedication for the Temple of God. It was an awesome celebration. Do you know that on this day there were fellowship offerings made? 22,000 cattle and 20,000 sheep and goats were given in fellowship offerings to the Lord and the people. You see, in a fellowship offering the priests and people all share in the offering with the Lord. It helps us to understand the grandeur, the marvel and the excitement of all that took place on that day.

You can also grasp the grandeur and marvel of the day just by listening to the words of Solomon. What a great prayer. What a tribute and what glory is given to the Lord God. Let’s you and I take a closer look at what is said in our text and in these words give deeper thought and consideration to the Lord our God and his ways. Our theme will be: **THERE IS NO GOD LIKE YOU. 1ST. You keep your promises. 2nd. You want all to know your Name.**

Can you imagine the celebration this day was for the people of God? The idea of building a Temple goes all the way back to the time of David, Solomon’s father and previous king. The Lord had told David that he should not be the one to build this Temple but that his successor and son would be given this privilege. But what is even more wonderful is that when God speaks to David on this issue, the Lord also makes it clear that this Temple would only be a shadow of things. This temple would be temporary, but the true Temple, the one to be built by the special Son of David, the son who would also be God’s Son, that Temple would be the eternal and lasting one. Because of all of these wonderful promises, that his successor would build the Temple and that his successor the Savior would build the true Temple David was filled with joy. From that point on David collected offerings, put aside what amounted to millions of shekels of gold and silver for the time when the Temple would be built.

And then came King Solomon. Solomon’s wisdom was world renowned. It was that wisdom God gave him when he became king. You remember that. When Solomon became king, God appeared to him and told him to ask for whatever he wanted. Solomon asked for wisdom to guide God’s people. God told him he would get wisdom, wealth and many other blessings because his request was so pleasing to the Lord. Here is wise Solomon and when the time was right, Solomon began the planning and building of this Temple to the glory of God.

Now the day is here. The day of Dedication. A day to acknowledge that this Temple was built for the purpose of serving the Lord God and his truth. But do you want to know what really makes this day absolutely awesome? On this day, the Jewish people move the Ark of the Covenant from the Tabernacle, the tent structure that served as their temple, into this Temple. When that ark was placed into the Holy of Holies of the Temple here’s what happened: **“When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. And the priests could not perform their services because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple.”**

God appeared in the form of His Glory of the Lord. The best I can tell you is that this Glory of the Lord was a cloud but a cloud that glowed brightly. This visible presence of the Lord appeared on this day of Dedication. Talk about awesome! It is possible that this generation of Israelites had never seen the Glory of the Lord. The last reported incident of this appearance of God’s glory to the people of God was still back in the time of Moses and Aaron. It has been perhaps 500 years since the Glory was seen. Can you imagine the impact this has? People got that this Temple was special and that surely God approved of what was going to happen at that Temple and the message that would be sent out for and by His people.

Is it any wonder then that Solomon begins his prayer in the way he does! He offers up words of absolute praise and glory to God for this great day. Solomon doesn’t take credit. He gives all credit to God. And he states rather clearly: **“O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way.”**

How true these words concerning God are. There is no one like Him. This God who created all things, who has wisdom and power beyond what we could even comprehend, this God cares for man and it is clear he does, in just how God deals with man. He deals in grace and love. He deals clearly and precisely for our good and salvation.

By the way, I have told you time and time again just how unique and wonderful our God is. With but one flicker of his eye lash God could cause this whole world of ours to cease to be and yet He doesn’t do that. Even when Adam and Eve brought sin into his perfect world, God does not act to destroy but rather acts to bring His grace and mercy to bear. God promises a Savior. God promises to take care of our sins and faults, to love us and be there for us for no other reason than that He cares. It is clear that God keeps his promises. Solomon was aware of the fact that his getting to build this Temple to God was only because of God’s promises, promises that God keeps, promises made in love to his people. These words clearly remind us of the uniqueness and wonder of the Lord our God.

And where better to see the wonders of the Lord than in all the facts that surround Jesus and what He has done. Because, you see, Jesus came to establish the true Temple of God. A temple composed of those who hear and believe his Word. How did Paul express this truth? He wrote: **“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rise to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”** There is the promise of God’s Temple completed in us through Jesus. It is again a reminder to us of just how great our God is.

Now I realize that it would be nice to have some sort of visible evidence of the existence and power of the Lord, but that is not how God choses to work. He chooses today to work through His Holy Spirit who in turn works in us through the Gospel in word and sacrament. He chooses to share his Word with us and as we get it, as we understand the awesome message of our salvation in Jesus God then wants us to share his Word with others. I know it doesn’t seem to us the best way but that is what God has chosen. Chosen the wonder of Jesus on the cross. Of Jesus rising from the dead and ascending into heaven. He chooses to make us His by His love and His call to believe.

By the way, and I think that is why the second portion of Solomon’s dedication prayer was picked, notice that Solomon did indeed understand our need to share the wonder of God. Our second portion of this text says, **“As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name—for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earthy may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.”** There are some awesome truths revealed in these words.

First, the name of God, the truth and wonder of God is something that is to go out to all the world. It is to go out so that the foreigner can know the truth and wonder of God and in turn that foreigner can become a part of that wonderful temple of God in Jesus. People will come because they hear of God’s greatness. Because they know God’s mighty hand. Because God’s outstretched arm is before them. Give those phrases some thought. God’s greatness is in the fact that He keeps his promises, that He cares and loves us in total grace and mercy. God’s greatness is displayed in His Law and what it teaches, especially how it points to the Savior. God’s greatness is grasped as we tell people of Jesus and how Jesus came to do the Father’s will in bringing eternal life and salvation to us. God’s greatness is in the fact that God turns his power to us, for us, in Christ.

And if you want to explore the idea of God’s mighty hand you are going to have to think of Jesus. The idea of the “mighty hand” and Jesus at the “right hand” of God are pretty much the same thing. Jesus is God’s mighty hand, the Son who came to do the Father’s bidding and offer himself in payment for our sins. If you want to grasp the love of God the Father then first grasp what Jesus has done for each of us. And if you know the wonder of Jesus, then why wouldn’t you share that message with others for the sake of their souls? Could you honestly know the salvation of Jesus and not tell others the glory of his name? I hope not. For it is the mighty Jesus at the right hand of God that brings all of this together for us.

Finally there is the outstretched arm of God. I believe that a reference to the work the Holy Spirit is going to do. The Holy Spirit calls people to faith, helps them grasp the truth of the Word and the foundation that Jesus is. The Holy Spirit motivates and moves us to proclaim Jesus and his salvation to all the world. Not moralism. Not work righteousness. But the clarion call that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior from sin. Here is God reaching out to the world to bring souls into his eternal care and well-being. Here is God continuing to change hearts and minds, to wake up the spiritually dead and to give sight to the spiritually blind. God wants people, all the world to know and rejoice in his Holy Name.

What that does mean is that we need to proclaim His name. Solomon in his dedication prayer clearly does that and even asks that God answers the prayers of foreigners so that his might and name be known. This prayer is a wonderful proclamation of God’s Name. May we so proclaim that name in our lives that people see in us the wonder of God and the power of our salvation! It is why we are a church to the Lord Jesus. Amen.