



EXPLORING GOD'S LOVE THROUGH THE BIBLE: EXODUS PT 4 – DWELLING IN THEIR MIDST

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EXHORTATION CONCERNING GOD'S LOVE

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.” (Dt 31:6)

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:18–20)

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. (Re 22:20–21)

TODAY'S TEXT: EXODUS 24:15 – 30:38

In our last message, the children of Israel not only saw the mighty hand of God in action (the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea and heavenly provision) but also the loving hand of God as he gave his Law. We learned how God gave his law in part to show his love for us. Our reasonable response is to love the law because of all of its benefits. We saw God's character in his law; the fear and awe that comes from God's law; and even God's perspective of our sin as “sinful beyond measure.” (Rom 7:13) Let's quickly review what took place:

Chapter 19: God reveals himself to the children of Israel:

Chapter 20 – 23: God gives the Ten Commandments and Book of the Covenant

Chapter 24: God creates a plan to draw closer to Israel

- God asks Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and 70 elders to draw closer (24:1-2).
- Moses recounts everything to the people and they respond “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.” (Exodus 24:3, 7)
- The group goes back up. Note the physical order: Moses, closest to the Lord; Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and 70 elders, a distance away; the people, very far away.
- The cloud (glory of the Lord) covers the mountain for 6 days. On the 7th day, God calls Moses inside to obtain the tablets and the instructions for the tabernacle.

The Tabernacle (Tent of Meeting or Sanctuary) is rich with meaning. It is extremely complex in its creation (read Exodus 25 – 30). Time does not permit an exhaustive study. However, there are three main themes that the tabernacle provides: God's desire to be close to his people, God's desire to be worshiped properly and God's desire to be set apart.

GOD'S DESIRE FOR US TO BE CLOSE

In our text (chapter 25 – 30) we see God expressing his desire and plan for allowing Israel to get closer to him:

*The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. **And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.** (Ex 25:1–8)*

*There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, **I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.** (Ex 25:22)*

*And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me **regularly.** (Ex 25:30)*

And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. (Ex 26:33)

And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table, and you shall put the table on the north side. (Ex 26:35)

"You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. (Ex 27:20)

*You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree. And you shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel. **And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders for remembrance.** (Ex 28:9–12)*

- The tabernacle was another step to God restoring what was lost in the Garden and the making of a plan of salvation.
- As Christians, we can easily see this progression:
 1. The Tent of Meeting with only Moses, **outside** the camp
 2. The Tabernacle where God would dwell in the **midst** of the camp
 3. The Christ who was "greater than the temple" and walked with mankind

4. The Holy Spirit, our helper who dwells in us
 5. The return of the King and his kingdom, where we will forever be with him.
- God does not desire a long distance relationship! He desires to be as close to you as possible.

GOD'S REQUIREMENTS FOR WORSHIP

- Altar – used for blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin. It was a form of justification.
- Brazen Laver (bowl) – Used by the priests, this was used to clean, purify and spiritually sanctify the priests.
- Golden Lampstand – This provided the only source of light in the Holy Place.
- Table and Showbread – Often called the Bread of Presence, this bread was unleavened and always in the Holy Place.
- Altar of Incense – This small altar was used to burn incense that was a “sweet aroma” to God. At this altar, the priests would pray for the people.
- The Veil – This curtain separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. It was a physical divide between God and man.
- Ark of the Covenant – This ark primarily contained the two tablets with the Ten Commandments.
- Mercy Seat – This cover sat on top of the ark and was the throne of God. Once per year, the High Priest would atone for sin by sprinkling blood on the Mercy Seat.
- The High Priest – This man was chosen by God and ministered in God’s presence. He alone could enter the Holy of Holies and only once per year.

These pieces of furniture were very detailed and ornate. However, each piece had a purpose and no mistakes were permitted in the worship or approach to God. Aside from the beauty of the tabernacle, we see God giving us a **pattern** for approaching him:

1. We start outside the tabernacle in worship because we’re going to meet God
2. In the outer court, we confess our sins and lay them on the altar (our justification).
3. At the laver, we ask God to cleanse us so we can be used for his service (our sanctification).
4. We enter into the Holy Place and minister to the Lord in prayer and supplication.

CRCC, in our daily walk, we must never forget that God **chose** us to be priests before him. We are “living stones rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious...to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pe 2:4-5)

The priests in the Old Testament were keenly aware of the punishment for ministering to the Lord in a casual, aloof, manner or arbitrarily changing God’s prescribed worship (ex. death of Aaron’s sons, Lev 10; death of Eli and his sons, 1 Sam).

The Lord loves us enough to show sinful people how we should worship him. Are we to be slack in our ministry to the Lord simply because we have the benefit of grace?

GOD'S DESIRE TO BE SET APART

God, in his holiness, desired Israel to set him apart from daily life, existing customs and even the heathen nations that surrounded Israel. The Tabernacle was no exception:

- The location of the Tabernacle was in the middle of all of the tribes when marching and even when encamped. There was no way possible to miss the Tabernacle and the smoke rising from the altar. It was a constant reminder of God's dwelling place. *"The people of Israel shall camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' houses. They shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side. (Nu 2:2)*
- The Tabernacle was only used for the purpose of meeting with God. It was God's house! Even Jesus had issues when the temple was not used as a house of prayer (Mat 21:12).
- The furniture and materials of the Tabernacle were only to be touched by those whom God had chosen (Numbers 1:50-53).
- Even the anointing oil and incense for the altar were to be one of a kind and never to be recreated by anyone: *It shall not be poured on the body of an ordinary person, and you shall make no other like it in composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds any like it or whoever puts any of it on an outsider shall be cut off from his people. (Ex 30:32-33)*

CRCC, if our God required that his dwelling place and priests be set apart for him, how much more should the Christian set himself apart for the Lord? We are priests chosen by God to minister to him and our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit to be his dwelling place (1 Cor 6:19)! Why do we continue to allow worldly, carnal and dark things into his temple?

PREACHING CHRIST IN THE TEXT:

- The altar – Christ: His sacrifice made us righteous.
- The laver – Christ: His blood washes us clean, purifying and sanctifying us.
- The lampstand – Christ: The light only seen in the Holy Place is now available for all.
- The showbread – Christ: He is the bread of life and always in the presence of the Lord.
- The altar of incense – Christ: The sweet aroma of our prayers now carried by Christ, in Jesus name!
- The veil – Christ: Separation between God and man is gone as we now enter through Christ!
- The ark of the Covenant – Christ: The law which we could not keep, was kept perfectly by the law giver!
- The mercy seat – Christ: The imperfect blood of bulls was replaced by the perfect blood of Christ - turning a throne of **judgement** into a throne of **grace**!
- The High Priest – Christ: The sinful, imperfect, mortal High Priest was replaced by a pure, holy, perfect, immortal Savior who takes your name into the Holy of Holies!

CRCC, the modern church rarely talks about the Old Testament Tabernacle and how it was to be used. But, the same pattern and desires in the Old Testament were fulfilled by Christ in the New Testament!

Saints, it's worth thinking about your worship and prayer life. Is there room for improvement? Reconsider your calling and priestly duty before the Lord. Are you prepared to minister before him? Check the condition of your heart—the dwelling place for the Lord. Have you allowed worldly things in God's Holy Place?

Our Lord loved us enough to make a way for us to be near him. Let us all walk with greater reverence for our Lord!