

God is With Us
Exodus 25:1-22 & 26:1-6
March 25, 2017 Cornerstone
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When Pastor Jonathan asked me to preach on this section of scripture, I said, “no.” This section of scripture is where when I first decided to read through the Bible that I stopped reading. I knew that in order to preach on this I would have to start in the garden of Eden, forward to the tabernacle, then to the temple and then forward to Jesus and then point to the end of time.

I would also have to study each of the things in the tabernacle.

But, Jonathan asked me 3 times and so I agreed.

But, I had no idea how I would preach on these verses.

So, I did like I usually do and I prayed.

I have learned that if I ask God for direction that I can depend on Him to guide me.

I know that God is with me and that God is also with you.

As I began to pray God brought to my mind: I grew up on a small chicken farm in Dracut and at the age of eight my parents separated and we had to move to the city. I was lost there and so when I was old enough I bought a house in Chelmsford and I set out to recreate my home in Dracut. I planted apple and pear trees, grape vines and from time to time we had chickens. Many times I thought of putting in a well even though we have town water.

When I agreed to preach on this section of scripture Pastor Jonathan let me borrow a book on Exodus that he has been using.

The chapter on the tabernacle began like this.

Are you a wonderer or a nester? Everyone is either looking for home or trying to create a home.

Knowing that God is with me makes my work so much easier.

My hope today is that you will begin to understand that God is with you too.

My hope is that you will learn to trust God for everything!

Let's pray; God I thank you that you are a God who desires to dwell with your people; a God that loves us and a God who is close by to guide us and direct us. I pray that you would open our minds and our hearts to you this evening. Amen.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth and He placed Adam and his new bride in a perfect place.

It will be important in the sermon later on to remember that this place was perfect.

This was a place of peace and a place where God walked with His people and dwelt close to them.

When man sinned he was kicked out of the garden and life became hard.

Adam was lost and there was a divide between him and God.

But God had a plan.

He would begin to recreate this perfect place and would find a way to bring man back.

God watched man from a distance and never stopped loving him.

When God saw his people in slavery in Egypt and when they cried out to Him, He sent Moses to rescue them.

God spoke to Moses and through Moses.

And, God led the people out of Egypt to the promise land.

This promise land was to be a taste of the new Eden.

The tabernacle is one stop along the way back home for God's people.

All of the tabernacle and its furnishings were little symbols of what was lost in Eden and what was come in the new Eden at the end of time.

Remember that in the beginning God created everything.

But now man receives the instructions to build the tabernacle.

Tabernacle means dwelling.

God is going to dwell with man again; kinda.

It wouldn't be the same but God would be present with them.

Everything had to be made from the finest materials and everything had to be precise.

The tabernacle was mostly like a tent as the people of God were on the move.

God would go where ever they went.

(Show pics of the Tabernacle here)

Let's look at a few of the articles in the tabernacle.

There was to be a lamp stand with buds and blossoms giving light and being a reminder of the tree of life in the garden.

There would be a table for bread; a table is a place of fellowship with God.

And bread is God's provision.

Then there would be the ark which was to be God's footstool.

Isaiah 66:1 says that Heaven is God throne and the earth is His footstool.

God would still be in Heaven but his feet would be resting on earth with us.

Later on in Jeremiah 3:16-17 we see that the city of Jerusalem would become God's throne.

God's people were to place the tablets of testimony into the ark.

We call these tablets the 10 commandments but they were more than that.

They were God's treaty with His people.

There were two tablets and most people think that each had five commandments on them.

But all of the commandments were on each tablet.

This was a contract and there were two copies.

This is important to know because God kept His copy in the ark right next to man's copy.

God kept His copy where He was dwelling with man.

On top of the ark was to be a cover, a place of atonement.

This cover was to be made of pure gold.

It would show the people that God's mercy was above His law.

This cover was a sign that pointed to Jesus.

As good as all of this was it was not home.

God and man still had a problem; that problem was sin.

God was near and close to us but we the people were still on the outside.

The cherubim on each side of the cover may have been there as a sign saying don't come in.

Just like the angel standing outside of Eden.

But, there was an altar right out front for all to see.

Man would have to make sacrifices for his sin.

Man would be reminded over and over of his sin.

Man would live with God in his midst but he would have the law as a constant reminder of how sinful he was.

Man would live in shame as the law would condemn him every day.

As time went on God's people would get to the promise land and at some point they would build a temple.

This temple would be much like the tabernacle but more permanent.

In the same way the people and the priest would have to make sacrifices daily for their sins.

None of this was perfect in any way but it all pointed to the time when God would take the next step.

God would send His Son Jesus to dwell among us.

He would be Immanuel, God with us.

He would be the one who would sit at the table and eat with sinners.

He would be the one who would be the light of the world.

He would be the one who would become the final sacrifice.

He would cover our sins.

He would make a new treaty with man.

This would be a treaty of mercy and grace.

A treaty that would save man and take away man's shame.

This treaty would be written on the hearts of man.

And at Pentecost God's holy spirit would be sent to dwell in us.

So, we would have our copy of the law on our hearts and God's copy living in us.

For us as believers today God's dwelling place is not in the tabernacle or in the temple; it is in us.

1 Cor. 6:19 says, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?"

God is with us; not kinda, but fully.

Do you realize that God can only dwell in a perfect place?

For God to put His law in our hearts and to put His Holy Spirit in us we have to be perfect.

This is possible because our sins are gone.

Through the blood of Jesus we are made clean.

You may not feel clean but if you are a believer God says that you are clean!

You are the new tabernacle; you are where God dwells.

And yet even with that we are not back home.

Looking forward, we need to read the words of Jesus from John 14: 1-3

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so I would not have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you; I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

When Jesus spoke these words the people fully understood what He was saying.

In the time when a man got engaged, he would go back to his father's house and build a new room for him and his bride to dwell. When he finished building the addition he would then go and get his bride and bring her home.

God has a plan and His plan is to dwell with us for eternity.

He was there with man in the Garden of Eden.

He was there with man in Egypt and in the desert.

He was there with man in the time of Jesus.

And He is here with us now and will be with us forever.

So, what is the message for us today?

Some of you may feel lost like I felt when I left the farm and had to move to the city.

Some of you may be going through a time when you feel like a slave.

Work is hard and little pay.

You can't see your way forward.

Some of you may know that God is for you but you can't see Him in your day by day affairs.

You may feel alone.

Some of you may even feel the weight of your sin.

You know how bad you are and you may feel like God doesn't want anything to do with you.

Satan would like for you to believe that God is against you.

He would like you to feel lost, alone, ashamed and condemned.

I like what one preacher says, "When Satan reminds you of your past, remind him of his future."

The message of the tabernacle is that God loves you!

He desires to dwell with you every day and all the way.

Just as God speaks to me and guides me, He will speak to you too.

Learn to hear His voice.

Learn to trust Him.

He has a covering for your sin.

And He has a place prepared for you to dwell with Him for eternity.