

Lenten Devotional

2020

Wednesday, March 25, 2020
Day 25, Exodus 25

Putting It Together

Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. (Exodus 25:8)

How thrilled do you get about instructions? I remember reading one of my Dad's car books as a kid. It made no sense to me. I just remember all the parts that were listed. Nothing stirred in me that made me want to study the book or work on a car. A lot of people who read the directions for the building of the Tabernacle have the same kind of reaction.

To fully appreciate what is happening, we have to go back to the beginning of Exodus. Remember how a new Pharaoh came to the throne who did not know Joseph? Remember his fear of Israel's growth rate, and how Israel might turn on Egypt? Remember how he enslaved the Israelites to prevent that from happening? Remember how God was absent? The book of Exodus moves us from God's absence to God's presence with his people.

This is why the Tabernacle is such a big deal, described in such detail. Israel cannot make an idol of her God, but her God will be with her in a very concrete way. Israel cannot choose to make this sanctuary, but God can direct Israel to build the sanctuary that he will dwell in. I will dwell among them! The detailed instructions may not be that thrilling, but the promise that God will dwell with his people is immensely exciting.

In chapter 25 the details tell the story: the Ark of the Covenant will be in the Tabernacle. This is the foundation of Israel's relationship with God. The table for the Bread of the Presence will be in the Tabernacle. Later we will find out that 12 loaves will be on it. This represents the 12 tribes of Israel are in the presence of God. The Tabernacle will be illuminated by the Lampstand. Read the description, it's a tree! The Tabernacle is the new Garden of Eden (the first one was a temple too). All of this is detailed story of God with his people.

What does this mean to us today? God desires to dwell with his people and to be intimately present to his creation. This is fulfill in Jesus who is Emmanuel, God with Us. Or, as the Gospel of John says, "the Word become flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Jesus is the Temple where heaven and earth is joined and all may boldly approach God without fear. Now that's thrilling direction.

Prayer

Way Maker, thank you for coming to us and making a way for us to worship you. Thank you that our sin does not stop your desire to dwell with us. Amen.