

Lenten Devotional 2020

Wednesday, April 8, 2020
Day 37, [Exodus 37](#)

Handling Precious Things

He cast four gold rings for it and fastened them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. Then he made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. (Exodus 37:3–4)

One of the biggest challenges any couple will face early in their marriage is putting together Ikea furniture. After we were married, Sarah and I bought a china cabinet from Ikea and spent an evening putting it together. We quickly learned how we differed in our thinking. Why do we bother with furniture from Ikea? Well, if you want a home you have to have furniture and Ikea is decent enough furniture at a reasonable price. So, if you have to do some work to put it together, so be it. But, at no point does Ikea furniture become precious—its fairly replaceable.

Well a similar thing is happening with the Tabernacle. Remember, the Tabernacle is not just a temporary building for the purpose of Israel's worship. The Tabernacle is the place where God is going to live among his people. It's his home, therefore it has to have furniture. The astute reader will have noticed that different types of metals: bronze, silver, and gold. In this chapter everything is to be overlaid in gold. This is because gold is the most precious of the three metals, so the closer to God the better the quality—pure gold.

This is also why all of this furniture has to have rings built into them. These items must be transported, so they have rings in their design that poles covered in gold can be inserted into. That way, these holy pieces of furniture can be moved without being directly touched. They are precious. Once again, we have visual cues which remind us of God's holiness and separateness.

Once more, this background makes for a striking contrast for our Christian faith. The New Testament shifts the place of God's dwelling from the Temple (permanent Tabernacle) to the person of Jesus himself. Jesus is the Temple of God. The place where heaven and earth meet. The place where sacrifice is humbly made by humans (Jesus is fully human) and mercifully received by God (Jesus is fully God). So, when Jesus walks among us and he lays hands on lepers and dines with prostitutes and sinners, it is staggering. Even more, Jesus says, as we take the communion meal, this is my body and this is my blood.

We are invited to handle these precious things and live. Even more, we the church, as the body of Christ, are the Temple. The very Spirit of God dwells in us and we dwell in him. Through faith we are caught up into the very life of God. This is the most precious gift that God places right into our hands. All we need to do is to receive these gifts gratefully.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for these great gifts. Thank you that you have not kept yourself aloof, but rather you have come close and made your dwelling with us. Amen.