

FEBRUARY 14

Exodus 37-38

So, what do you get from this section? God builds furniture! No wonder Jesus was a carpenter. It is interesting that we have so many extremes of ideas. Obviously we worship God in spirit and in truth, and we don't need buildings or lavish surroundings, yet look at how God made the tabernacle and surrounding courtyard. The precious metals that they used weighed tons. We need to observe God, learn of Him and resist our pious opinions. That was the same trap the disciples fell into when Mary broke the ointment to anoint Jesus' feet. They rebuked her, because in their minds, "God is for the poor and this was waste." The real rebuke came from Jesus.

Exodus 37

Vs. 1-9 The building of this furniture went from the inside out, from the Most Holy Place, out to the Holy Place, out to the courtyard. First you have the ark of the covenant, used once a year to make atonement for the sins of the nation, appealing to God for His mercy and presence in Israel, fulfilling the covenant of Abraham through His covenant with them as a nation. That was in the Most Holy Place.

Vs. 10-16 Then, on the other side of the veil, in the Holy Place, you have the table for the bread that had to be tended every Sabbath (Lev. 24:8). The twelve loaves represented Israel and God's gracious, daily provision and sustaining blessing upon them. (Any lessons for us disciples here?)

Vs. 17-24 Then you have the lampstand that had to be filled evening and morning so that it would never go out (Exodus 27:21). The lampstand was made from one solid, 75-pound piece of gold. This represented the leading and guidance that Israel was always to seek. This was the most elaborate and precious thing in the Holy Place and probably would represent His Word. (Any lessons for us disciples here?)

Vs. 25-29 Then came the *altar of incense* that was to be tended morning and evening (Ex. 30:7-8), that also was never to go out. This represented the constant prayers of the people to God. The smoke of the incense rose up the veil before God who symbolically was in the Most Holy Place on the seat of mercy. (Any lessons for us disciples here?)

Exodus 38

Vs. 1-7 Outside the tabernacle (the tent that housed the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place) was the altar of the burnt offering. This was also used twice a day, representing the constant sacrifice of substitution for the ongoing sins of the people. These sacrifices also incorporated all of the elements of God's provision for His people: meat, flour and wine. (Any lessons for us disciples here?)

V. 8 Finally, between the altar and the tabernacle was the *basin of bronze* where the priests washed before they entered the Holy Place of the tabernacle. The mirrors were highly polished bronze. They may also have been brass bowls used for carrying things or for cleaning as they served the needs of Moses and Joshua. The *tent of meeting* was the tent that Moses put up outside the camp where he met with God. Joshua lived in this tent when it wasn't in use by Moses. After this, the tent that made up the courtyard and the tabernacle, the entire complex, would be referred to as the tent of meeting.

It just hit me how God built in constant cycles of reminders, the bread, the prayers, the light, the need for cleansing from sin, morning and evening. God put the entire nation on "two-a-days," that is, symbolic sacrifices morning and evening. I suppose we don't need more ritual; but, as disciples, what do we do to keep the reality of His grace and our need in the center of our hearts, day and night? I read in the morning. I pray in the morning. Maybe I need to go to "two-a-days" too.

Vs. 9-20 This was the courtyard of the tabernacle.

Vs. 21-31 This is a total surprise to me. These were very advanced people who not only had amazing building skills, but they kept great records. Isn't it interesting that God built this into them through slavery, having to learn the skills to build Egypt?

V. 24 This would have been over 2,175 pounds of gold.

Vs. 25-26 You can figure out the weight of silver. A talent was 75 pounds. What surprises me here is that the shekels of silver came from the men who were 20 and older. This means they took a count and a census as they were leaving Egypt, and I'll bet they had this broken down by tribes and families.

All of this building took about 10 months. Tomorrow, God goes into the clothing business.

Matthew 28

What an amazing chapter in the Bible.

Vs. 1-10 The women came early because the preparation of Jesus' body had been done quickly to get Him into the tomb before the Sabbath began.

There is joy in all of this, but notice that the emphasis is to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee. Jesus is risen, but instead of letting the disciples and everyone go ballistic about that, the angels and Jesus kind of go, "yeah, yeah, ok, are you done? Good, now tell them to go to Galilee." Look at vs. 7 & 10. I thought that the resurrection was the huge deal. It obviously was, but huge only when applied. We'll see what the application of the cross and the resurrection are when we look at vs. 16-20.

V. 10 Notice that Jesus calls the disciples, *my brothers*. This sounds like Romans 8:29, *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers*.

The significance of Jesus saying *brothers* is that Jesus was not only fully God, but He is fully human and was now the victorious human king who could rightfully reclaim the authority and dominion of Adam. All mankind should rejoice at this.

Vs. 11-15 When you read this you notice a few things. First, the Jews had political power to pull this off. The guards should have been killed for falling asleep. That they could pay off the guards and placate Pilate showed that they were really in charge. Second, the lie itself made no sense. The thought that the guards fell asleep was silly; and then, if they had fallen asleep, how would they know it was the disciples? The people would have seen through this lie very easily.

Vs. 16-20 The 11 finally get to Galilee. The mention of doubt was probably a reference to Thomas' previous doubts or what is mentioned in John when they met Jesus on the beach. Although He didn't look like Jesus, they knew in their hearts it was He.

What was so important about meeting there? The importance for Jesus was the application of the resurrection and the focus of all that He had now accomplished. They were to go.

Vs. 18-20 ought to be tattooed on every Christian. ***We have no other reason to be on earth.*** What powerful and beautiful verses these are. These are our orders, our mission, our good news, and our strength. These are our weapons to fight to save broken people like ourselves. And we've got the power because we've got HIM. This should cause a disciple's heart to beat faster.

Though saved by grace in His sovereign plan, and beloved despite our disobedience, I will never understand a believer who is not reaching out to the lost, making disciples, who make disciples.

Notice the order of this commission.

Make disciples: This is belief and repentance, entering into a living, growing relationship with Christ. The "lordship" aspect is present immediately upon belief in Christ, for if Christ is God, God must be worshipped by sheer definition of the word "God." To believe that Jesus is God is not "a meritorious work." He cannot be our Savior unless He is God, and if God, He should be worshiped and served.

Baptizing them: This personal devotion is linked to the action of publicly declaring our devotion to Christ. This must come before teaching. Learning without personal devotion and a mission leads to, well, look around.

Teaching them: Teaching them what? What did Jesus command the disciples? When you begin reading Mark and then Luke and then John, take note of what He tells the disciples. Most of what Jesus will command them has to do with following Him as disciples in the harvest, being light and salt. It is assumed that they will live lives worthy of their calling and worthy of Him. Living morally is a given. Following Him and acknowledging His name before men is the command. And remember, the motivation to obey is always love. (John 14:21-23)

And He is with us *always to the end of the age*. Not only is this present confidence in the work of the harvest, but Jesus is showing the finish line. The end of the age is coming. This is motivation to do the work now while there is still time. This is also our blessed hope that He will return in glory and we will see Him.

Psalm 34:11-22

Vs. 11-14 David earned the right to say these words through long years of being hunted and following the Lord in spite of opportunities he had to take short cuts, disobey and not wait on the Lord's deliverance. As we read the story of David's suffering, we'll see how David actually did vs. 13-14.

Actually, vs. 13-14 will be used to define *righteous*, which will be repeated several times in the next few verses. The word *righteous* is basically archaic outside of Christian circles. It would be good to think through what that word means. It means to live according to a standard and to be found "right" according to that standard. In the OT the basic standard was the Ten Commandments. For Christians, it is living according to our Lord, living according to what He stands for and according to His words. Righteousness isn't religious compliance. Religious righteousness means living according to the behavioral standards of rules. Being righteous in Christ means having Jesus' work applied to us so that we can stand forgiven and sinless before God. And then it means living according to the reality of who Jesus is and what His Word says is true about life.

Vs. 15-22 This is David's encouragement for those who are suffering to wait on the Lord. These are great verses God has given to strengthen our hearts. Notice that one is quoted by John when he gives his account of the crucifixion of Jesus. Can you figure out which one?

Proverbs 9:9-10

I feel like I need v. 10 tattooed on my heart. I think of what Paul said:

1 Corinthians 8:1 *Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up.*

I want to know Him and be known only by HIM.

Philippians 3:10-15 *That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and*

straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Amen, and Happy Valentine's Day.