



Sermon Notes

Term – Summer Term

Series – Worship

Gathering & Date – 26th May 2019

Title – Worship and Intimacy

Preacher –Neil Shepherd

Reading – Hebrews 10: 19-22; Exodus 25:8 (Exodus 25-31) and Hebrews 9&10

Main message of this talk in one sentence: An invitation to intimacy with God through an understanding of the Tabernacle

Main points – (see the PowerPoint as well)

Hebrews 10:22 ...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings....

For the Old Testament people, God wanted to give them a physical representation of his presence amongst them and give Moses the plans whilst he was on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 25:8&9 Then let them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly in the pattern I will show you.

The word 'dwell' can also be translated 'tabernacle' and He gave Moses precise plans as He wanted these plans to speak about who God is and about His plans for his relationship with his people and what this will look like at some point in the future (as a consequence of the cross).

Psalm 100 – the people of God would enter the meeting place of God with thanksgiving.

There was only one entrance to the tabernacle which reminds us that there is only one way into the presence of God – Jesus is the gate through which we enter God's presence.

The first object the people would see is the altar of Burnt Offerings – the place of sacrifice - which is the place that brings the people's sin before God to be dealt with. We remember that Jesus' death on the cross is the one and only sacrifice we need to approach God so that the sin that separates can be dealt with.

Behind the altar is a bronze laver which reminds us that, once our sin has been dealt with, we can be washed clean and need to carry no shame. As we approach God, we can remember God's cleansing that enables us to draw near with confidence.

Within the walls of the tabernacle, there was another building which contains the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Only God's people could enter the outer courts and only the priests can enter the Holy Place.

The Holy Place has three objects:

1. Table of Shewbread – reminds us of God's provision for his people. Jesus declares that He is the 'bread of life'
2. Golden Lampstand – reminds us of God's guidance. This would be the only light illuminating this Holy Place and Jesus declares that He is the 'light of the world'
3. Altar of Incense – represents the prayers of the people rising to God. Jesus is our intercessor who stands in the gap for us all and we can partner with him in prayer as we seek God's Kingdom on earth.

The final place is the Holy of Holies – the place that represents God living amongst his people. This place was separated from everyone by a thick curtain and was only entered once a year by the High Priest. They

were so concerned by this that they wore a rope around their waist so that they could be dragged out if they died in God's presence.

The Gospel acts tell us that as Jesus completed his work on the cross the temple curtain was torn in two. (Mark 15:38) This symbolised the access of God's people into the presence of God. Therefore, because of the cross, we can draw near to God. Intimacy with God is possible and we are invited to draw close.

Hebrews 9-10 describes how this earthly tabernacle helps us understand God's desire for intimacy with him and shows us how Jesus has changed everything.

For further thought and prayer –

Connect

1. What has been your highlight of the week – where have you seen God at work in your, or someone else's life?
2. Sing a song of worship together
3. How has your understanding of worship developed over the last few weeks.

Grow

4. How has your understanding of the Tabernacle helped you understand your relationship with God?
5. The tabernacle can be separated into three stages of our development with God:
 - a. Understanding Jesus's work on the cross (outer courts)
 - b. Understanding God's provision and guidance in our lives (Holy Place)
 - c. Understanding God's invitation to intimacy with Him (Holy of Holies)How do these different stages help us understand our journey with God?
6. What does Intimacy with God look like for us personally and corporately. How can we be intentional about pursuing intimacy with God throughout the week?

Influence

7. Pray for each other, asking .the Holy Spirit to help us grow in intimacy with God.
8. Pray for three other people we are in relationship with, that they may know a relationship with God
9. The Table of Shewbread reminds us that God provides for us. Pray for those in our city, nation and world that need God's provision at this time.
10. The Menorah reminds us that God is our light and brings guidance. Pray for our nation at this time as we seek the way ahead in the midst of massive change.