

Advent Midweek 2

Psalms 80; Exodus 40:33-38; 2 Chronicles 6:41--7:4; Hebrews 9:1-14
916; 357; 878 Abide with Me

In the Garden of Eden, God and man had close communion.
In the cool of the evening, they spoke, one to another—no wrath or fear.
But then, another communion and another conversation took place.
The serpent spoke; and mankind listened.
They chose the wisdom of a creature above the wisdom of their creator.
And Eden's bliss was shattered and innocence was no more.
And God's next coming, we hid from Him in fear and shame...and rightly so.
For the Lord is holy—He is totally good and cannot abide with corruption.
He is also all-powerful so that no evil can stand in His presence.
And so He sent cherubim with a whirling flaming sword to guard the east gate.
Not protecting Himself from our corruption. But, protecting us from His holiness.
Yet while this made our continued existence possible, that existence has forever
 been laden with troubles of every kind.
Broken communion with God meant broken communion with one another.
Arguments, contentions, greed, ambition, defensiveness, lusts.
Some lashed out in strength to win the fight—but in the winning, they lost.
For they drove away what they needed most: Companionship. Communion. Love.
Some withdrew deeper into a shell to avoid the fighting and conflict.
But even while succeeding they failed.
For the absence of conflict came at the high price of an absence of relationship.
And the loneliness and emptiness brought about by our sin filled God with sorrow.
For He created you not to be His slave but His companion.
He created you to love you and to commune with you.
The loneliness, alienation and isolation occasioned by sin is also God's sorrow.
And so He made a plan: There will be a new place—a new Eden.
There, God and man can again be together to converse and eat. Companions again.
And in this place of meeting, provision will be made so that corrupt man will not be
 destroyed by the holiness of God.
The pattern for this tabernacle of God with man was first given to Moses on Sinai.
Instructions for a tent with various chambers and areas.
Detailed instructions for its artwork and craftsmanship.
Endless regulations for the sacrifices that would be offered there.
Sacrifices to atone for sin and make possible the meeting of sinners with holiness.
The Ten Commandments took less than an hour.
But these instructions took forty days and forty nights.
When Moses came off the Mountain, they set to work to build the Tabernacle.
And when *Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the
 congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses
 was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud
 abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.* Ex 40:34-35
Thus, God was present with His people throughout their wilderness wanderings.
He stayed with them throughout the conquest of the promised land.
He abode with them through judges and kings: Saul and David.

But even at that, the Tabernacle was temporary.
It was time to replace it with a more solid stone building.
David proposed the project, but was not allowed to build it.
The building was assigned to his son, Solomon, the king of peace.
Work commenced soon after his coronation.
The finest workmen were given the finest materials with which to build it.
The pattern for this temple was virtually the same as the pattern given to Moses.
The dimensions of the rooms and the furniture they must contain were not left to
 choice but were prescribed by God—right down to the carvings on the walls.
By the fourth year of Solomon's reign, the Temple was complete.
A dedication was planned, sacrifices were made and prayers were said
*Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven,
 and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the
 LORD filled the house. 2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the
 LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house."*
God demonstrated before all the people that He took residence in that place.
God dwelt with His people—He sat enthroned between the cherubim.
But time passes and stones crumble. Covenants are made to be broken, it seems.
In time, this temple was destroyed not only once, but twice!
First by the Babylonians. Then, rebuilt under king Darius—improved by king Herod.
Only to be destroyed again by the Romans. And to this day it is no more.
But does this mean that God's desire to be with you is unrealized?
Has God's desire for a temple and a tabernacle with man been thwarted?
Are we now on "Plan B" because "Plan A" didn't work? Heavens No!
For these tents and these buildings were never the reality that God had in mind.
 They were only patterns given on a mountain.
Types and shadows of things to come. Pointers to the new Eden.
The tabernacle in the wilderness was portable—it could be brought anywhere.
 But it was flimsy cloth.
The Temple in Jerusalem was strong as stone and permanent.
 But it could not be anywhere else than Jerusalem.
You had to come to it. It couldn't come to you.
Neither was intended to be the real thing. But both pointed to the real Temple.
Jesus Himself is that Temple. He is the true Tabernacle.
"The word became flesh and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory."
He is the Rock that comes to you--the tent that remains forever.
Jesus Himself is the place where man meets God.
*"Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more
 perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."*
Jesus is where we see the glory of God and hear God's voice and eat with God.
And in Jesus, God's glory is not destructive to you.
But here you are purified and your life is renewed.
All in order that you might now have complete communion with God.
Jesus restores the intent of God in Himself and in Jesus you are back in the Garden
 communing with God and man with no fear, no shame and no doubts.
In Him communion with God is re-established.
And with this healing, so also your broken communion with one another is healed.