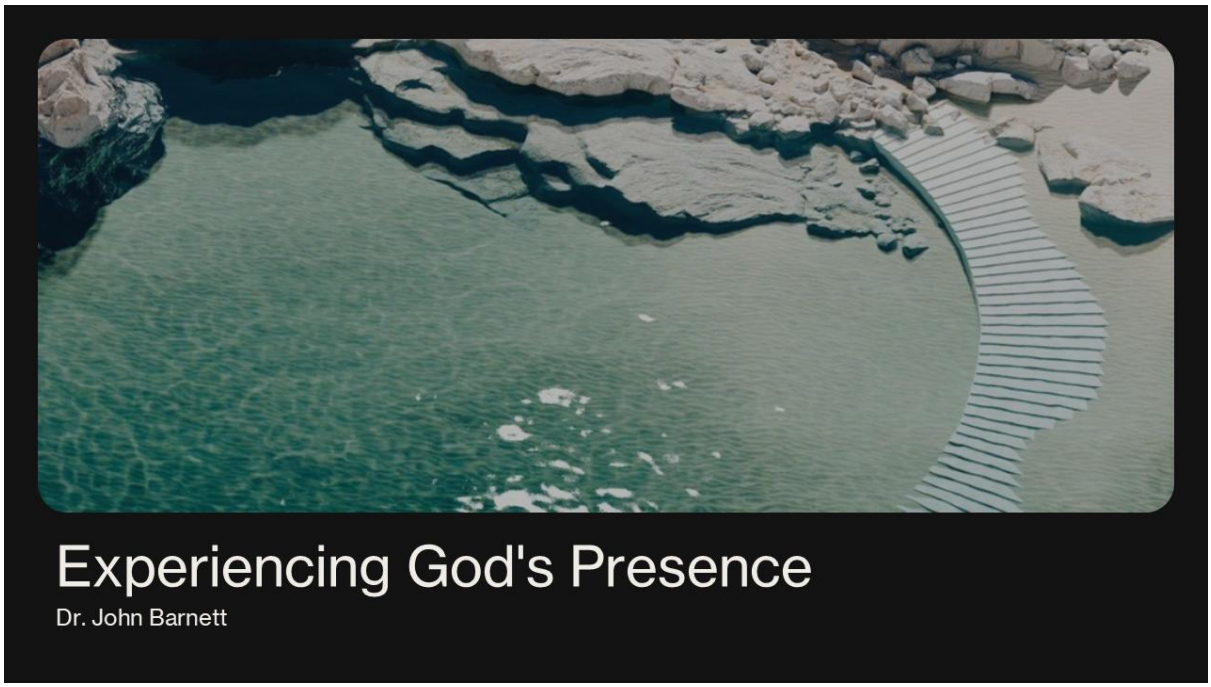
TAB-01 - Experiencing God's Presence



This morning, we are finishing something we started six months ago. Someone came to me so sweetly this morning, they'd already read their bulletin, and they said, wait a minute. The sermon note says, Experiencing God, Tape Five. Where is one through four? I said it was in March. It was a long time ago, but we began. Let me just sketch this in your mind, and I will introduce this conclusion this morning. We began many months ago, looking at how God dealt with taking a group of people out of the world.

Do you remember Exodus? The Exodus out of Egypt? God took a whole group of people out of the world, out of Egypt, out of false worship, out of all those false gods, out of all the materialism and paganism. But the problem that the Lord had was that you can get people out of the world, but how do you get the world out of them? And that's always a problem. There are many people who tell me I'm a Christian now, but there are so many old things that I deal with. God wrote a whole book about how to experience His presence, and how to get the world out of us, and get us so heavenly-minded that we are experiencing His presence all the time.

The way the Lord did that was by building a tent. God, in fact, built two tents. 3,500 years ago, He built a tent in the wilderness called the Tabernacle. The second tent we celebrate as a holiday in America every year, the second tent that God built. That's to show you how critical this study is because Jesus, when He was born, told us that He came to tabernacle on the Earth. The second tent God built was the body of Jesus Christ, when God invaded humanity as a man. That was the second Tabernacle. That's the second tent, Jesus. The first tent showed us how to enter God's presence and how to stay in God's presence. But the ultimate expression of that was when Jesus came, who took us into God's presence. This morning, we're going to be experiencing the presence of God, and I hope that you are.



The Two Tents Of God

The tabernacle which God instructed Moses to construct is a powerful lesson for us this morning. This morning, we can learn an enormous amount about how God wants us to enter His presence.

If you want to follow along in your notes, in just a moment, we'll read our text. I think it's so wonderful in our tradition that we've started over the last five months, we'll continue that in just a moment but follow along as we learn about experiencing God's presence. The Tabernacle, which God instructed Moses to construct, is a powerful lesson for us this morning. This morning, we can learn an enormous amount about how God wants us to enter His presence. Then tonight we'll learn how to stay in the presence of God. So, entering the presence of God.

Entering The Presence of God



This morning, we are going on a journey into the presence of God. We enter God's presence by way of His Tabernacle, God's tent of Meeting. As we examine this incredible structure, we will see how every point of the God's Tabernacle points to Jesus.

Of what possible importance could an old, dusty animal skin tent in the midst of a Nomadic, wandering migration of people camping across the Sinai's trackless desert have in this ultra modern 21st century life in which we live? Can a tent constructed 35 dim centuries ago give any light to the dark, sin-stained path we often must tread?

Join me as we look at the tent and its meaning and find strength in Christ for our lives today.

This morning, we're going on a journey into God's presence. We enter His presence by way of His Tabernacle, God's tent of meeting. As we examine this incredible structure, we will see how every point of God's Tabernacle points to Jesus Christ. Of what possible importance could an old dusty animal skin tent in the midst of a nomadic wandering migration of people camping across the Sinai's

trackless desert have to us who live in this ultramodern 21st-century life? How can a tent constructed 35 dim centuries ago give any light to us in this dark sin sin-stained path we often must tread? Join me as we look at the tent and its meaning and find strength in Christ for our lives.

Camp of Israel was at least 81 square miles just for 600,000 fighting men and their families! The Exodus march at 5 people wide would have stretched 225 miles long. If they traveled 50 wide they would have been 22.5 miles. For a missions note, our world of 6 billion would be @ 100 wide 45,000 miles long! To feed three million people would take 1300 box cars of food each day or a train 9 1/2 miles long!

If we were to top a hill in the Wilderness of the Sinai peninsula 3,400 years ago we would first see one of the largest encampments of people ever on the planet. There were 600,000 families who came out of Egypt. With 5 per family that is 3 million folks. With just a normal camp site it would take 81 square miles of territory for this many people. So, on a lookout spot we would see a huge encampment.



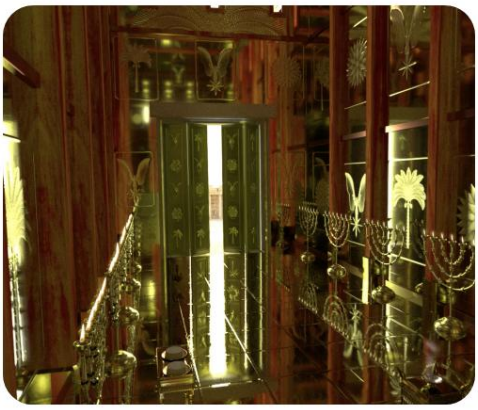
Now, to find the tent. The camp of Israel was at least 81 square miles large. Now, some of you just think of this for a minute. It really boggled me. Have you ever thought how big 3 million people camping in tents would be? That was just for the 600,000 fighting families, the men and their families that the Exodus mentions. The Exodus march, the people leaving Egypt, if they marched five people wide, they would've stretched 225 miles long. That's how many 3 million people are. If they were 50 abreast, marching out of Egypt, they would've been a line 22 1/2 miles long. Wow.

Just for those of you who have a mission's heart, our world of 6 billion people, if they came by our doorstep at a hundred people wide, and we were passing out tracts, that line would be 45,000 miles long. That's how many people are on this planet. Astounding to think about reaching them. But if we were on top of a high mountain in the wilderness of Sinai about 35 centuries ago, we would first see, as we looked out into the desert, one of the largest encampments of people ever together on this planet. The Bible says 600,000 families left Egypt following Moses. If each family just had five individuals, there were 3 million people God called out of Egypt. With just a normal campsite that you would have down at the KOA, there would be an equivalent territory of 81 square miles for that many people.

You say 81 square miles; how much is that? Elm Street in Broken Arrow, you know, the main drag down there? If you went from Elm to Lewis, that's nine miles. If you went from 31st Street to 121st, that's nine miles. So, that square, that's Tulsa, that's a lot of Tulsa, would be all camps and fires and cows. All of that is 81 square miles. An amazing thought to think about.

Then, if we got our binoculars out and looked off from that high mountain, we would see that right in the center...the reason I picked those dimensions is that we're kind of in the middle right here in our church.

The Tabernacle



Then we would see it, the Tabernacle. In the center of the Camp, with smoke slowly rising from the altar, and with the 12 Tribes in an ordered arrangement around it around. Looking intently, we would note a long, black, unattractive tent of porpoise skins. But when we traveled through the loud, smelly, and busy camp and made it to the Tabernacle we would find a much different sight.

When we came inside, we would find ourselves surrounded by shining gold:

Looking up to the curtained roof, we see the wings of the cherubim woven in; blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen.

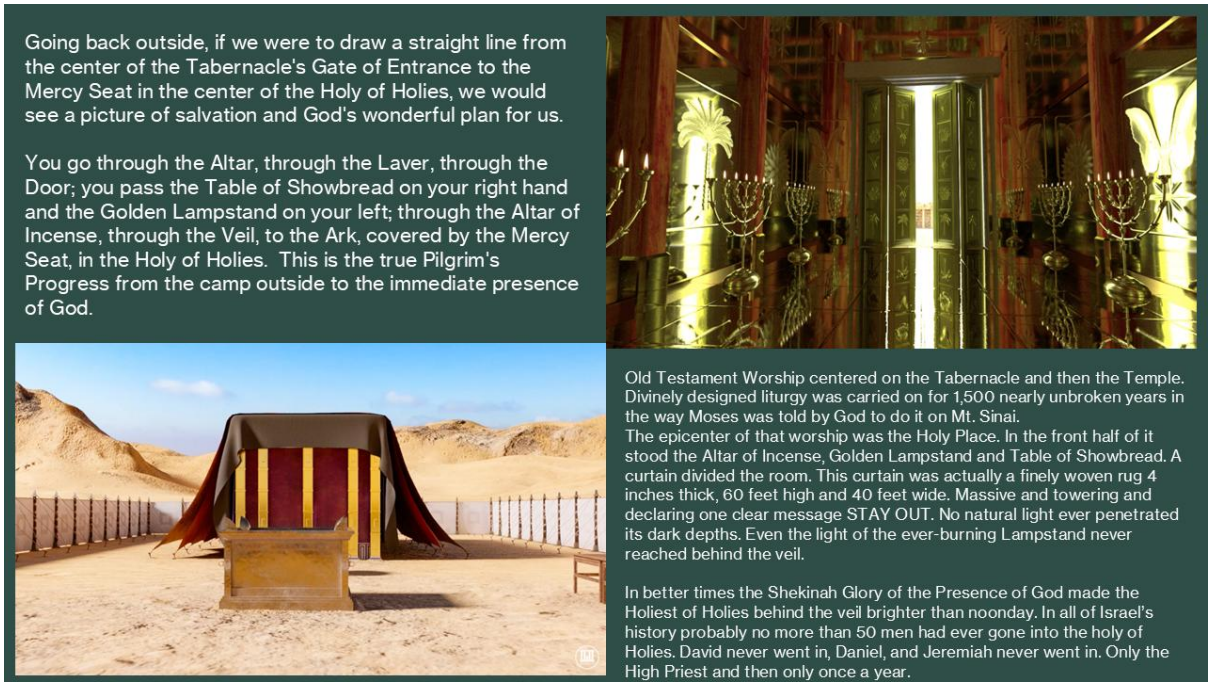
The light of the golden candlestick would softly shine and reveal all the beauty within.

So it is with Christ Himself. The natural man, beholding Him, sees no beauty that he should desire Him. But to those who know the Lord Jesus Christ, His beauty satisfieth their souls.

Right in the center of that camp would be the Tabernacle. And right there at the center of the camp, with the tribes orderly, three tribes to the north, three tribes to the south, three tribes to the west, three tribes to the east. If you were on a helicopter, do you know how God laid out the camp of Israel? It says that they stretched directly to the west, they stretched directly to the east, and they were to be behind one another like that. They were not to go off into the fringes. They went directly to the north, and they were to stay in straight lines. If you were looking down at the camp of Israel in the time of Moses, you would see a perfectly shaped cross of people. Right at the heart of that cross would be a smoking tent, which was the most vivid picture of Jesus Christ that God ever built.

There, you would notice a long, black, unattractive tent made of porpoise skins. A badger, it says in the King James. Actually, that word, they didn't even know what it was until they dug in Egypt, and they found out it was a porpoise, an aquatic creature they made leather out of. There, in the midst of a loud and smelly and very busy camp, you would make your way to the Tabernacle. But if you and I were allowed to go in today, we would find those dark and ugly on the outside. Inside, we would find ourselves in a world surrounded by shining gold. Looking up at the roof of this tent, we would see that it was inlaid with beautifully embroidered pictures of cherubim with their wings outstretched. And there with blue and purple and scarlet and fine twine linen, with the light of golden candlesticks softly shining, it would reveal all the beauty of this entrance to God's presence that God very specifically detailed for them to build.

That's amazing because that's just how it is with Christ Jesus Himself. The natural person, unsaved, beholding Him doesn't see anything beautiful, nothing they desire. But to those who know the Lord Jesus, those who enter into Christ, those who experience Him personally, His beauty satisfies our souls.



Going back outside, if we were to draw a straight line from the center of the Tabernacle's entrance gate straight through to the Mercy Seat in the center of the Holy of Holies, we would see by walking on that straight line a picture of salvation and God's wonderful plan for us. And that's what we're going to do this morning and this evening.

First, we would walk through the altar, then we would go through the laver, then we would go through the door, passing the table of showbread on our right, the golden lampstand on our left. We would hit the altar of incense in front of us. We'd go through the second veil to the Ark, covered by the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. This is truly the pilgrim's progress from being outside through the sacrifice of Christ, through His cleansing into His presence. Into the holiest presence of God.

Old Testament worship centered on the Tabernacle and then on the Temple, and this is in your notes, by the way, if you're following along. Divinely designed liturgy was carried on for nearly 1,500 unbroken years, the way Moses was told by God to do it on Mount Sinai. The epicenter of that worship was the holy place. Then, in the front half of it stood the altar of incense, the golden lampstand, and the table of showbread. A curtain divided the room. That curtain in the Temple was actually a finely woven rug four inches thick, 60 feet high in Christ's day, 40 feet wide. It was massive, it was towering, and it declared one message: stay out. That was the message of that curtain. No natural light would ever penetrate the dark depths. The light of the constantly burning lampstand, even that, never would reach beyond the veil. It was totally dark except for the glow of God's presence. In better times, the Shekinah glory, the presence of God, made this Holy of Holies behind the veil brighter than noonday. But in all of Israel's history, probably no more than 50 men had ever gone into the Holy of Holies.

David was never allowed in. Daniel was never allowed in. Jeremiah never went in. Only the high priest, and then he only got to go in once a year.



Inside that room was a box covered with gold, containing the stone tablets of the Law, a pot of manna and Aaron's Rod that budded. Above that Ark of the Covenant stood two golden cherubim with wings shielding the mercy seat. Their faces gazing downward forever focusing upon the blood.

When that day came for the High Priest to pass behind that veil. He was wearing bells on the hem of his garment to let the other priests know he was still alive as he was inside; garbed carefully in the God directed robes and priestly garments. With trembling hands cradling a basin of blood, veiled by a cloud of smoking incense burning in a pot he carried - the High Priest would enter. Sprinkling the blood on that mercy seat on behalf of all the people of God and hastening out. Why? The only purpose of the Veil was to keep people out of the Holy Presence of God. God was saying I AM HOLY. YOU ARE NOT. STAY OUT!

Inside that room, the Holy of Holies, was a box overlaid with gold containing and holding inside the stone tablets of the Law, holding a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that had budded. Above that box, the Ark of the Covenant, it was called, stood the two golden cherubim with their wings outstretched, shielding and looking down at the Mercy Seat. Their faces gazing downward forever, focusing upon the blood.

Then that day came for the high priest to pass behind the veil. He was wearing bells on the hem of his garment to let the other priests know he was still alive as he went inside. He was garbed carefully in the God directed robes and the priestly garments. With trembling hands, cradling a basin of blood veiled by the cloud of smoking incense as he carried in perhaps with him the smoking incense pot, the high priest would enter. There, he would sprinkle the blood on that Mercy Seat on behalf of all the people of God, and then he would hasten out. Why? The only purpose of the veil was to keep people out of the holy presence of God. God was saying, I am holy and you're not holy and you stay out of here.

On the day Christ died can you imagine the scene those officiating priests must have beheld? They came in to trim the lamps, pour a handful of incense over the fire on the altar and change the bread on the Table. Then perhaps at that very moment Christ touched the Veil.

With an unearthly sound that massive curtain was violently torn from top to bottom. Aghast, as for the first time in nearly 1,500 years common people looked upon the ark and the mercy seat and God's throne of grace and mercy. As God said ANYONE WHO WISHES MAY COME IN NOW. YOU ARE WELCOME ANYTIME. Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (KJV) Aren't you glad we live on this side of Calvary?

How can we enter boldly? Because of Jesus!



But I want you to think as we look this morning at the Tabernacle, as we look in just a moment at John chapter 1, and see the purpose of the Tabernacle. On that day when Christ died, can you imagine the scene of those who were officiating as priests? What did they behold? They came in to trim the lamps in front of that big veil. They came to pour a handful of incense over the fire on the altar. They came to switch out the bread on the table. And perhaps at the very moment as Christ touched the veil from the cross, and with an unearthly sound, that massive curtain was violently torn from top to bottom, and those priests were aghast. For the first time in nearly 1,500 years, common people looked upon the Ark, the Mercy Seat, and God's throne of grace and mercy. As God said, through the work of Christ on the cross, anyone who wishes may come now. You're welcome to come boldly to the throne of grace. You're welcome to obtain mercy. You're welcome to find My grace to help you in times of need. Aren't you glad we live on this side of Calvary? For the way is open to us.

Let's open our Bibles to John's Gospel, chapter 1. We can enter boldly because of Jesus. I would like to read to you this morning from John 1 and have you follow along starting in verse 14, as we learn about the one who was God's living and walking, and talking tabernacle, Jesus Christ. John's Gospel, chapter 1. If you will stand with me, I'm going to read verses 14 through 18, and then we're going to have a time of prayer as we enter into the presence of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' "

16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. **17** For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him.*

(John 1:14-18, NKJV)



John 1:14, and the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. That's the word tabernacle right there. Dwelt means to dwell in a tent, tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory. The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, this was He of whom I said, He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me. Of His fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Let's bow together for prayer. Father in Heaven, I thank You for tabernacle-keeping among the Jews in the wilderness. What a wonderful, what an encouraging, what a thrilling portrait that was pointing to Jesus. But we're so glad that You didn't stop with that tent. We're so glad that the promised Lamb of God came to tabernacle among us here on Earth, and that You lived the perfect life, You died the perfect death, You sacrificed your own blood as the once and for all final lamb of God to take away our sin. Hallelujah, what a Savior who can take this poor, vile sinner, lift him from the mirey clay and set him free. I will ever tell the story shouting glory, hallelujah, Jesus ransomed me. That's what we celebrate this morning as we enter into Your presence. Bless us in our study of Your Tabernacle in the Old Testament. May we see Jesus, who came as our tabernacle in the New Testament. And we'll thank You as You illumine our hearts, as You convict sinners, as You draw Your people ever closer to Your presence. In Your mighty and matchless name, we pray, Lord Jesus, Amen. You may be seated.

The Tabernacle teaches us so much about the wonders of our Matchless God. Here are just a few of the lessons about the Lord.

The Tabernacle is God's Portrait of Christ "tenting" John 1:14 Among Us

1. **The Tabernacle**: God wants us LIVING IN His Presence.
2. **The Brazen Altar**: God wants us APPROACHING HIS HOLINESS (The Doctrine of Satisfaction)
3. **The Laver of Brass**: God wants us CLEANSING OUR SINS (The Doctrine of Sanctification) The Three Entrances (McGee)
4. **The Golden Lampstand**: God wants us WALKING IN HIS LIGHT
5. **The Table of Showbread**: God wants us NOURISHED BY OUR SAVIOR
6. **The Altar Of Incense** (30:1-10, 34-38) : God wants us PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT
7. **The Veil Which Was Rent**: God wants us ENTERING HIS PRESENCE WITH BOLDNESS
8. **The Ark of the Covenant**: TRUSTING HIS PROMISES
9. **The Mercy Seat**: RESTING IN HIS SACRIFICE

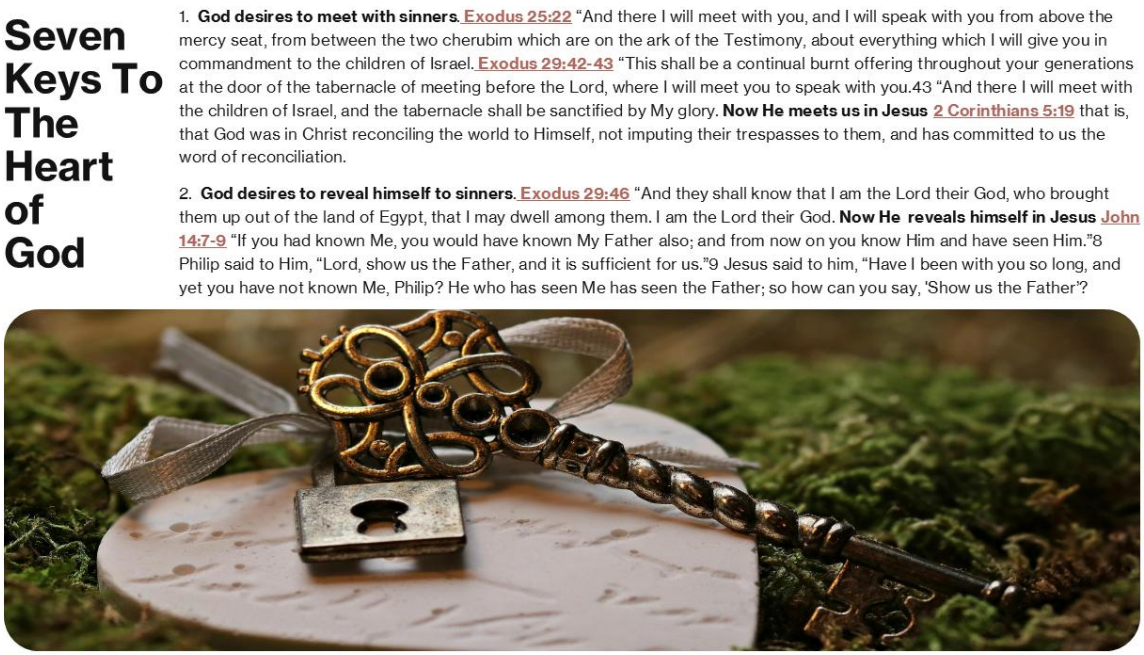


The Tabernacle teaches us so much about the wonders of our matchless God. Here are a few of the lessons that I'm just going to preview for you tonight before I cover what's on the back of your sheet, and that's the seven keys to the heart of God. We're going to actually go back to Exodus, and some of you who don't know the Bible very well can start moving back toward Exodus. It's the second book of the Bible, Genesis and Exodus. But I want to share with you what the lessons are that we're going to learn about this tent in the Old Testament that points to Jesus, because the Tabernacle is God's portrait of Jesus' tenting among us. And what's amazing is the more you understand about what He said in the Old Testament, the more beautiful Jesus becomes in the New Testament. The more we see that everything he did was just following God's perfect itinerary.

When He went to the Temple, when He went and stood up in the Temple, when He cried out at specific moments in the Temple in the 1st century, He was fulfilling all those pictures that the Tabernacle had made of Him. And what a wonder it is. We'll see tonight, the Tabernacle was the expression that God wants us to live in His presence. That's why, remember if you were looking down at that 81 square mile encampment, you'd see right in the heart of the cross shape that those three tribes, three tribes, three tribes, three tribes made, right in the center of that was this old smokey tent. And God said I just want to be right in the center of My people. That's a real lesson right there. God wants us to be aware He's living right in our presence, and He wants us to pay attention to Him. He wants us to worship Him.

Secondly, the brazen altar, which would be the first thing you'd bump into, God wants us to approach His holiness. That's the doctrine of satisfaction. Thirdly, the cleaning or the laver of brass, the place of cleansing. God wants us to cleanse away our sins. That's the doctrine of sanctification. Fourthly, the golden lampstand. We'll see tonight that God wants us to walk in His light. He doesn't want us stumbling around. He doesn't want us going off in the dark. He doesn't want us to miss His best for us in our lives. He wants us to walk in the light. We'll see tonight the table of showbread. God wants us to be nourished by our Savior. The altar of incense, God wants us to be praying in the Spirit, the veil, which was rent, God wants us to enter into His presence with boldness. The Ark of the Covenant, God wants us to trust His promises. That's why those objects were in there. The Mercy Seat above it. God wants us to ever rest in the full and final, perfect, and complete sacrifice of Jesus. Those are the nine beautiful facets that we'll see tonight of entering into God's presence.

But now, for a lesson on entering God's presence this morning. I call these, and you see them on the back of your note page there. I call these seven keys to the heart of God. Now, in your Bibles, turn to Exodus 2,5 and we're going to actually go through these wonderful verses, and you stay in Exodus and Leviticus as I read these verses. And I'm going to read to you the New Testament fulfillment of each of these verses. It'll be a real blessing, and you might want to jot those down in your notes. I'll give you the New Testament passage where Jesus fulfills the Old Testament picture in that tent.



But first of all, God desires to meet with sinners. I want you to always remember that God is always the initiator. People get all mixed up in their theology about salvation, about God. God is the initiator. As soon as Adam and Eve fell into sin, did they send a telegram or fax or email, or cell phone to God, and say, ha, what are we going to do now? No, they ran away. Who came looking for them? God. Who walked through the garden saying, where art thou Adam? God. Who initiates salvation? God. Who always initiates salvation? God. God desires to meet with sinners.

Look at Exodus 25:22. It says this, and there, we're talking about the Tabernacle, I will meet with you and I will speak with you from above the Mercy Seat. That's where God's presence was enthroned over the blood because all of God's dealings with us sinners have to do with the covenant of the substitutionary atonement. He says between the two cherubim, which are on the Ark of Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel. He says there, I'll meet with you. Did you know the Tabernacle, first of all, declares to us that God wants to meet with us sinners? He wants to.

Now, listen to this. You might jot this down. Exodus 29:42-43. Those are more verses about God meeting with us that we won't read this morning. But God wants to meet with us, and now He meets with us in Jesus. This is the verse to write down: 2 Corinthians 5:19. Now, I want to read it to you because the God who desired to meet with sinners now meets not in a tent in the dark over a bloodstained altar. He meets us in the person of Jesus Christ, who will respond to all who call on the name of the Lord. That's the wonder. The Bible ends with that. To the very last, God says, if you're thirsting, come. If you want the water of life, come. But such a wonder is that so few will. So, few come.

Listen to 2 Corinthians 5:19. That is that God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation, 2 Corinthians 5:19. Do you know that means that when you and I go out and we tell the Good News of Jesus Christ, that we're ambassadors? We're speaking in the name of Jesus. We're telling people about Christ. We're offering them how to be reconciled to God, saying, you don't have to go off to the Sinai into some tent out there. You can meet Jesus Christ right here, right now, today, wherever we are. I've led people to the Lord on airplanes. I've led people to the Lord in restaurants. I've led people to the Lord in church. I've talked to people on the phone and prayed with them. You can do it anywhere. Be ministers of the word of reconciliation because God desires to meet with sinners.

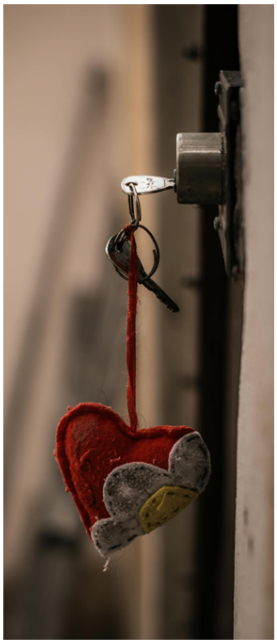
Secondly, God desires to reveal Himself to sinners. Now turn over to Exodus 29, just four chapters over. The seven keys to the heart of God are key number one: God desires to meet with sinners, and now He meets with us in Jesus. Number two is that God desires to reveal Himself to sinners. He doesn't just want us to meet Him. He wants us to understand Him. He wants to open His life to us. He wants to let us experience the inexpressible glories of the creator. Exodus 29:46. They shall know that I am the Lord, their God who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God. God wants to dwell among us. He wants to reveal Himself. He wants to open Himself up to us.

Can you imagine a 225 or 22 1/2 mile long line of people walking out of your country? Do you think you'd notice that? Do you think you would notice that the water split and this 22-mile-long group of people walked across the Red Sea? Wouldn't you wonder how they would be fed? Did you know that to feed those people every day would take a nine-mile-long train of box cars full of food? That's how much food it took to feed 3 million people every day, nine miles of railroad cars. They didn't have any railroad cars in Sinai. So, God says, I'll feed them myself. And He said, on top of that, your shoes will never wear out. Your clothes will never get old. It was wonderful. Why? Because God desires to reveal Himself to sinners.

Now, He reveals Himself in Jesus. You might want to jot down John 14:7-9. That's the New Testament fulfillment of this tabernacle promise of the God who desires to reveal Himself to sinners. It says in John 14:7, if you had known Me, you would've known my Father also, for from now on, you know Him and have seen him. Philip said, Lord, show us the Father, and it's sufficient for us. Jesus said in verse 9 of John 14, have I been with you so long and you haven't known me, Philip? He who has seen Me, has seen the Father. And how can you say, show us the Father? God says, I've revealed Myself in Jesus.

A few of our folks have encountered the Jehovah's Witnesses recently, and they have said, oh, they've changed that verse in John 1, where it says, in the beginning was the Word and the Word is with God and Word was, and they put "a God". I say, that's all right. You can knock them out in all the other verses because it says, whoever this "a God" is, created the whole universe. Paul says in Colossians that the one who did it is Jesus Christ. So, just put two and two together. Without their tampering with the Scriptures, or even with their tampering with the Scriptures, you can see that the One who created all things is Jesus Christ. And He dwelt among us to reveal the Father to us because God desires to reveal Himself to sinners, as the Tabernacle tells us. Now He's revealed Himself to us in Jesus.

Seven Keys To The Heart of God



3. **God desires to dwell with sinners.** Exodus 25:8 "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. Exodus 29:45-46 "I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.46 "And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God. **Now He dwells in us through Jesus** Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

4. **God desires to speak with sinners.** Exodus 29:42 "This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet you to speak with you. Leviticus 1:1 Now the Lord called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, **Now He speaks to us through the word of Jesus** John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 8:43 "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 47 "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God." Hebrews 1:2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

Thirdly, back to Exodus 25:8, back a few pages to chapter 25 of Exodus, verse 8. Look what it says there. And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. God desires to meet with us. He wants to reveal Himself to us, but He doesn't just want to do that. He wants to actually dwell with us. Can you imagine that? In the old times, in the futile era, the kings would live in these big castles on top of hills, and they were far away from their subjects. They were up there. What did God say? Look at verse 8. He says, let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell right with them. I want to have a tent, right with their tent. I want them to get used to having Me around. An exciting thought.

God now dwells with us through Jesus. Listen to this Christmas verse, Matthew 1:23. You might want to write it there by point three. Matthew 1:23 says, behold, a virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is translated God with us. God tenting right among us, God with us. The God who desired to dwell with sinners came now and dwells in us through Jesus Christ.

Here's another verse you might want to write down: John 14:23, right next to Matthew 1:23. It says this: Jesus answered and said unto him, if anybody loves Me, he will keep My Word and My Father will love Him, and We will come to him and We will make Our home with him. See, you don't live alone. I hear people all the time go, I live alone. I say you do? You need to get saved, then you'll never live alone again. Why? Look, John 14:23 says I'm going to make My home with you. Did you know you're never alone? I'm never alone. Some people think they can finally get away from everybody and do what they want to do. You can't get away if you're Christian; you never live alone. He makes His home with us because God desires to dwell with sinners.

Now, to Exodus 29, verse 42. Exodus 29 for the fourth key to the heart of God, the first key God desires to meet with sinners. Now, He meets with us in Jesus. He desires to reveal Himself. Now, He reveals Himself in Jesus. He desires to dwell with us. Now, He dwells in us through Jesus. But fourthly, God desires to speak with sinners. Exodus 29 42. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the Tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet you and to speak with you. Isn't that interesting?

Do you know Leviticus 1:1? If you went to the next book, just 11 chapters over, this is what Leviticus 1:1 says. Now, the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tabernacle of meeting, saying, and the whole book of Leviticus is God talking. It's almost dictated. The whole thing is God talking to Moses, just writing as fast as he could. God desires to speak with sinners, but now He speaks to us through the Word of Jesus.

A couple of verses for you to write down. John 1:1 in the beginning was the Word. Isn't it interesting what His name is? The Word, He wants to speak to us. He wants us to get His message. That's why this is called the Word. It's a message. It's a communication. It's God speaking to us. You say, I don't understand the Bible. Maybe you need ears. You were born with physical ears, but you have to be born a second time to get spiritual ears to understand this book. One of the clearest proofs of salvation is understanding this book. Not being able to explain every nuance and every type, and every prophetic motif. But the message of this book is open to us by the author of this book, and that's one of the assurances of salvation. What does John 1:1 say? In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God.

Here's another one to write down for point four there, John 8:43. Why do you not understand my speech? Because you are not able to listen to My Word. Verse 47, he who is of God hears God's Word. Therefore, you do not hear because you are not of God. Ooh, you know what Jesus said? If you don't understand Me, you're lost. If you want to understand me, you can be saved, and I'll open my Word to you. What a joy.

Here's another one, Hebrews 1:2. This is also for that God desires to speak with sinners, that fourth point. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. God speaks to us through Jesus. This is the Word of Jesus. It says that all the prophets in the Old Testament search what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify. Who was talking in the Old Testament? This one just happens to be one of these red-letter editions of the New Testament. They made a mistake. All of it should be red because Jesus spoke it all. It's not just those nice little New Testament, sweet little words. All of these are the words of Jesus because it was the Spirit of Jesus who inspired every prophet. Every word is the words of Christ, not just the red ones up here in the front. All of them and all of them are equally heavily incumbent upon us from God.

Seven Keys To The Heart of God



5. **God desires to accept sinners.** Leviticus 1:4 'Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. **Now he accepts us in Jesus.** Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

6. **God desires to forgive sinners.** Leviticus 4:20 'And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. 26 'And he shall burn all its fat on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him. 31 'He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the Lord. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. 35 'He shall remove all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering. Then the priest shall burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire to the Lord. So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him. **Now he forgives us through the sacrifice of Jesus.** Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Point number five. God desires to accept sinners. Now, let's go to the next book after Exodus. Go to Leviticus 1 and verse 4. For some of you, this is new ground. You skip over this one. It's a little boring and a little gross with all the cutting of the innards and cleaning out the digestive tracts of animals and cutting them up and draining their blood. We don't like that, but it is a powerful picture of Jesus Christ and about our lives in Christ. Let me share with you that the fifth point is that the Tabernacle teaches us that God desires to accept sinners.

Look at verse 4 of chapter 1. It says, then he, that's the offerer, shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. Did you get the picture? You went out to your flock in your 81 square mile tent or campground, and you walked around and wandered around. Can you imagine how easy it would have been to get lost? All those tents looked alike, and there were just miles of them. You'd find yours, and in your little flock there, you would look for the very best lamb. And if you're a dad, you take that lamb, the best one, the one you could have sold at the market, the one that would taste the best at a feast. You'd bring it and maybe put it over your shoulders or carry it in your arms, and your whole family would come behind you, and you would bring it to the priest, and the priest would take it. That's why lambs were used. A lamb will stand there, and if you lift up its little chin, its little black nose will look right up at you with those clear dark eyes and look at you like this. You can take a razor-sharp knife, and you can cut its throat, and it won't even move.

When Bonnie and I went to New Zealand a few years back, the land of 70 million sheep, the people there that raise sheep say, you know what, they'll have a hundred of them in a row, and they'll slaughter them one at a time, and the next one will just step forward like this and lift its chin. They don't fight. That's why Jesus was a lamb. He doesn't fight. It would lift its little neck, and the priest would slit it, and he would hold a bowl under there, and he would collect its blood as its life drained from its body. Then that priest would have that father who had, look at verse 4, placed his hands on the head of that burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. God desires to accept sinners, and so he said, you cannot save yourself. The heartbeat of salvation.

I just got a letter from someone this week, and they said, I heard what you said about the Roman Catholic Church, and I think you're very critical because as long as you believe in God, God will accept anybody. That's a wonderful opinion, but it's just not true because God says only those who come My way. You know what God's way is? We come to God and say, I'm a sinner and I cannot do anything with my sin. What do I do about it? And He says, I have provided a sacrifice in your place. You can't earn your way to Heaven. You can't please Me by what you do. You have to have a substitutionary sacrifice. That's why Jesus came to die in my place. He took my place on the cross.

You can check this morning if you're truly born-again by, you're trusting in what you've done: being baptized, joining the church, giving money, going out, serving, teaching Sunday school, praying a prayer, or doing something like that. Is your salvation, are you always going back to say, I did something? Or are you always looking up and saying, Christ did something, and I have received it by faith. I have accepted His sacrifice in my place. I put my hands on Jesus, my sacrifice, and I said He died in my place. All who do that live eternally with God. Why? Because now He accepts us in Jesus.

Here's a verse to write down by point five, and the verse is Ephesians 1:6. To the praise of the glory of His grace by which He has made us accepted in the beloved. No longer do we carry around lambs. No longer do we slit them. No longer do we pick one out of our flock, and the family marches behind. Now, we all come and we accept the lamb of God.

Number six, God desires to forgive sinners. Leviticus 4. If you want to turn there, verse 20. He shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering. Thus, shall he do with it, and the priest shall make an atonement, Leviticus 4:20, for them, and it shall be forgiven them. God doesn't say if you go off and do a lot of extra work, I might forgive you someday. Or if you go off and cook for a while down there in that place of fire, I might forgive you someday. Or, oh, if you're really saintly, I might forget. No, He says you're forgiven on the spot.

Look at verse 26 of Leviticus 4. He shall burn all of its fat on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering, so the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin, and what does it say? And it shall be forgiven him. Period. No attachments, no fine print. Forgiven. That's why we sing all those songs we sang this morning with the choir and that sheet because we're forgiven. Leviticus 4:31, the very last few words. Verse 31. It shall be forgiven him. Verse 35. It shall be forgiven him. Can He say it anymore? Do you know your sins are forgiven? Do you know my sins are gone and will not be remembered? God, in mercy, tenderly forgave them.

Now, He forgives us through the sacrifice of Jesus. Here's a verse to write down by point six. Ephesians 1:7. In Him, we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of His grace. The greatest possession I have is the assurance that my sins...oh, the bliss of this glorious thought, my sins, not just a few of them, but all of them were nailed to His cross, and I'll never face them again. I'm forgiven, and I hope you know that you're forgiven this morning.

Point number seven, the last one of the seven keys to the heart of God. God desires to meet with sinners, and now He meets with us in Jesus. God desires to reveal Himself to sinners. Now, He reveals Himself to us in Jesus. God desires to dwell with sinners. Now, He dwells in us through Jesus. Fourthly, God desires to speak with sinners. Now, He speaks to us through the Word of Jesus. God desires to accept us sinners. Now, He accepts us in Jesus. God desires to forgive sinners. Now, He forgives us through the sacrifice of Jesus.

Seven Keys To The Heart of God

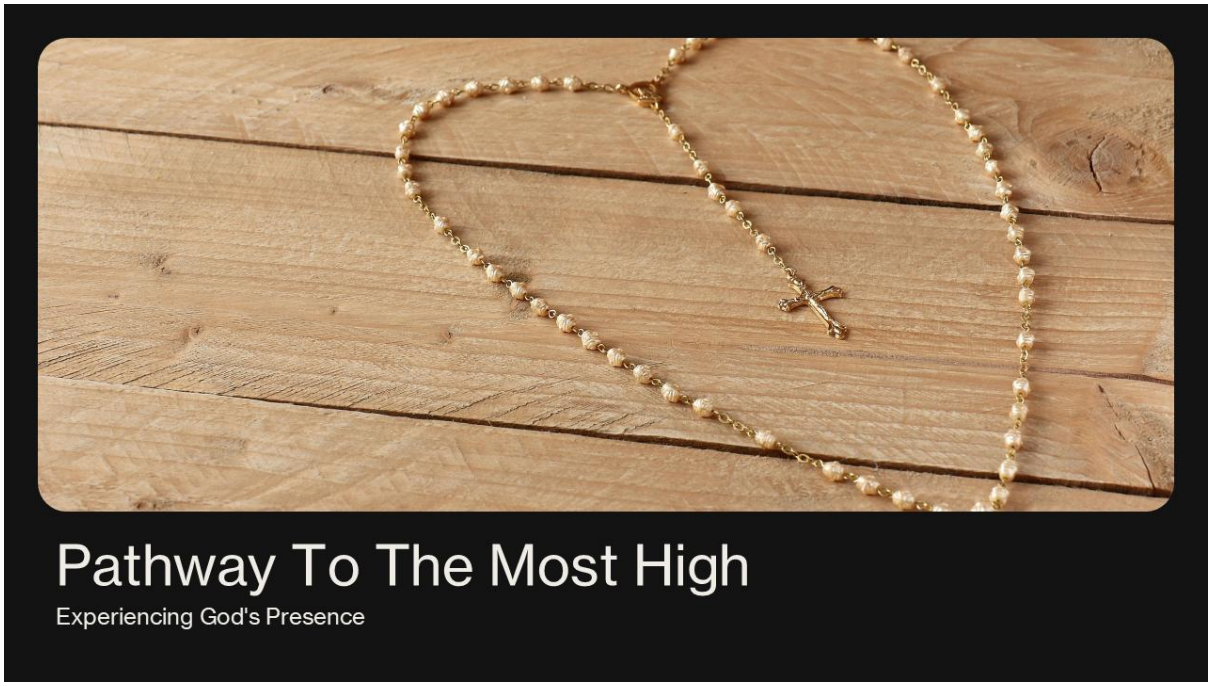
7. **God desires to receive worship from sinners.** Exodus 23:15 "You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); Exodus 28:38 "So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord. **Now he receives our worship in Jesus.** Hebrews 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.



Finally, number seven, back to Exodus 23, and we'll be done. Verse 15 says this: God desires to receive worship from sinners. We're not perfect. I'm a saved sinner. The Apostle Paul, long after he was saved, said God was merciful to me, the chiefest of sinners. He never forgot the fact that he was a saved sinner. You know what God says we can do? We can worship Him. He'll receive worship. Exodus 23 in verse 15, you shall keep the feast of unleavened bread. You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I command you at the time appointed in the month of Habib. For it came out, you came out of Egypt, and none shall appear before me empty.

What is that saying? He lets us bring Him worship. What's the worship? Eating the feast, bringing our obedience to Him. What's the worship this morning? Singing to God, lifting our spirits in raptured worship to God, giving our gifts. God says that even the widow's 10th of a penny was a great gift to Him. Whatever we give, it's proportionate. God accepts that if it costs us something, if it's sacrificial. We worship Him through the words of our mouth, through our gifts.

But now, He receives our worship in Jesus. Here's a verse to write down, Hebrews 13:15: Therefore, by Him, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God. By whom? By Jesus. That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. So, that's what God desires. How did He make a way possible for sinners like us to not only enter His presence, but stay in His presence? That's when we're going to tour the tent tonight, the tent of meeting, and see that God wants us to live in His presence, approach His holiness, cleanse our sins, walk in His light, be nourished by our Savior, pray in the Spirit, enter His presence boldly, trust His promise, and always be resting in His sacrifice. Hallelujah. What a savior.



Let's bow together this morning. I thank You, oh Lord, that there is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God. Thank You for showing us the keys to Your presence. The key is Jesus, and the keys are the manifold characters revealed of our Christ. We want to know You. We want to walk with You. We want to be experiencing You. We want to be staying in Your presence, most holy Savior. I pray this morning that anyone who doesn't know You will come. Your invitation is open. You say he that hath an ear hear what the Spirit says. And the Spirit says this, come and drink the water of life. I pray for Your saints this morning. Some are weary, some are troubled, some are struggling. I pray that if they need strengthening, they would come and let us just bow into Your presence and pray for them and strengthen and encourage them. I pray that You would bless Jim and Eileen as they join us in this special ministry this morning. If anyone has a need, Your Word says, let them come. In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.