

Sunday 23rd August - Let us be in Tents

Part 1 - The Tent of Meeting

Talking about camping today
What your experiences of camping?
in the garden?
hot weather, rainy?

Bible - camping is very important
When they left Egypt - went into the desert
they built a tent
but not for them - for God - for his presence
Tent of meeting or congregation
10 commandments - ark - went in it
exciting - on a journey to promised land

not a stationary campsite - but a moving one
because they were still running from Egypt - and they were in the desert for 40 years!!
So they were looking back
they wanted to the food and soft beds
when we're camping its easy to think of home

we're on this journey with the virus
its easy to look back and say - bring back 2019, or Feb.
we could travel and fly, we could party and socialise,
school was normal
but..
we're not there - we're camping, somewhere temporary

*when I camp, I'm very reminded of my comfy bed!
this time of virus - what do you miss the most?
what have you left behind..*

but God was with them - they had the fiery cloudy pillar, they had the 10 commandments of the law.

so in their tent - the flame burnt
the candle-stand lit - to remind them of God's presence
and God is with us...
put your torch on, to remind you - God is with you

Part 2 - The Festival of Booths

After they got to the promised land of Canaan
the place they worshipped was still a tent and then King Solomon built a temple
and God said - have a festival - a harvest festival
"You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. 23:42-43).
to remember to look back,
to remind them, that whatever we face, we know that God helped us in the past and will help us again

we don't know where we're going - but God was with us, and so he will be with us

he has a plan and a future
gives us hope
we are going to something - not going back (not "when this is over" - but learning to live with it)
new future, new hope - scary for some, don't like change, frightening, but God is with us..

where would you like to be going to...
either physically - to travel to a place, abroad or wherever
or metaphorically - a place where there's no worry about this or that
what "new world" would you like - what would it be like?

Psalm 23 - God comforts us with his rod and staff
Or you can take a blanket - wrap it round you, like God wraps us up in His love.

Matthew 17:1 - 8

17 Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James and went up on a high mountain. They were all alone there. 2 While these followers watched him, Jesus was changed. His face became bright like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 Then two men were there, talking with him. They were Moses and Elijah.

4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you want, I will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While Peter was talking, a bright cloud came over them. A voice came from the cloud and said, "This is my Son, the one I love. I am very pleased with him. Obey him!"

6 The followers with Jesus heard this voice. They were very afraid, so they fell to the ground. 7 But Jesus came to them and touched them. He said, "Stand up. Don't be afraid." 8 The followers looked up, and they saw that Jesus was now alone.

Part 3 - Transfiguration

On the mountain top - a cloud comes down - quick put up the tents!
Journey's are about leaving stuff, and going somewhere,
but we all know what really matters is who you're with..

so think about who's with you -
we're not on our own in this journey
the world has changed, but its changed for us all

God has given us pets, plants, neighbours, friends families
who are you in lockdown with?
and with you, who gets you, understands -
we are the church, we are doing this together - whoever else you're with, you're who I've got
God has given us each other...
God's people

one of the ways you can be closest to people is to eat together
it makes you part of the family,
in church, we have a meal or a snack - when we remember Jesus -
so lets take our snack and share it now.

Biblical Notes

According to the Hebrew Bible the tabernacle (Hebrew: מִשְׁכָּן, mishkān, meaning "residence" or "dwelling place"), also known as the Tent of the Congregation (אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, 'ōhel mō'ēd, also Tent of Meeting, etc.), was the portable earthly dwelling place of Yahweh (the God of Israel) used by the

children of Israel from the Exodus until the conquest of Canaan.

Exodus 33:7–10 refers to "the tabernacle of the congregation" (in some translations, such as the King James Version) or "the tent of meeting" (in most modern translations),^[9] which was set up outside of camp with the "cloudy pillar" visible at its door. The people directed their worship toward this centre.

The more detailed description of a tabernacle, located in Exodus chapters 25–27 and Exodus chapters 35–40, refers to an inner shrine (the most holy place) housing the ark and an outer chamber (holy place), with a six-branch seven-lamp menorah (lamp-stand), table for showbread, and altar of incense. An enclosure containing the sacrificial altar and bronze laver for the priests to wash surrounded these chambers

Sukkot, or the Feast of the Tabernacles, is one of the more joyous holidays celebrated during the Jewish year. Many Israelis, both religious and secular, build a sukkah or hut of materials ranging from wood and palm branches to prefab metal and plastic.

During the existence of the Jerusalem Temple, it was one of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals (Hebrew: שלוש רגלים, *shalosh regalim*) on which the Israelites were commanded to perform a pilgrimage to the Temple.

The names used in the Torah are Chag HaAsif, translated to "Festival of Ingathering" or "Harvest Festival", and Chag HaSukkot, translated to "Festival of Booths". This corresponds to the double significance of Sukkot. The one mentioned in the Book of Exodus is agricultural in nature—"Festival of Ingathering at the year's end" (Exodus 34:22)—and marks the end of the harvest time and thus of the agricultural year in the Land of Israel. The more elaborate religious significance from the Book of Leviticus is that of commemorating the Exodus and the dependence of the People of Israel on the will of God (Leviticus 23:42–43).

The holiday lasts seven days in the Land of Israel and eight in the diaspora. The first day (and second day in the diaspora) is a Shabbat-like holiday when work is forbidden. This is followed by intermediate days called Chol Hamoed, when certain work is permitted. The festival is closed with another Shabbat-like holiday called Shemini Atzeret (one day in the Land of Israel, two days in the diaspora, where the second day is called Simchat Torah). Shemini Atzeret coincides with the eighth day of Sukkot outside the Land of Israel.

The Hebrew word *sukkōt* is the plural of *sukkah*, "booth" or "tabernacle", which is a walled structure covered with *s'chach* (plant material, such as overgrowth or palm leaves). A *sukkah* is the name of the temporary dwelling in which farmers would live during harvesting, a fact connecting to the agricultural significance of the holiday stressed by the Book of Exodus. As stated in Leviticus, it is also intended as a reminiscence of the type of fragile dwellings in which the Israelites dwelt during their 40 years of travel in the desert after the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. Throughout the holiday, meals are eaten inside the *sukkah* and many people sleep there as well.

In the Book of Leviticus, God told Moses to command the people: "On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook" (Lev. 23:40), and "You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. 23:42–43).