

Dedicated

8.5.18

Dedication month of New Sanctuary and Building

Exodus 25:8–9 (NIV)

⁸ “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. ⁹ Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

Exodus 40:17–38 (NIV)

¹⁷ So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year. ¹⁸ When Moses set up the tabernacle, he put the bases in place, erected the frames, inserted the crossbars and set up the posts. ¹⁹ Then he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering over the tent, as the LORD commanded him.

²⁰ He took the tablets of the covenant law and placed them in the ark, attached the poles to the ark and put the atonement cover over it. ²¹ Then he brought the ark into the tabernacle and hung the shielding curtain and shielded the ark of the covenant law, as the LORD commanded him.

²² Moses placed the table in the tent of meeting on the north side of the tabernacle outside the curtain ²³ and set out the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD commanded him.

²⁴ He placed the lampstand in the tent of meeting opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle ²⁵ and set up the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD commanded him.

²⁶ Moses placed the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the curtain ²⁷ and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD commanded him.

²⁸ Then he put up the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. ²⁹ He set the altar of burnt offering near the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, and offered on it burnt offerings and grain offerings, as the LORD commanded him.

³⁰ He placed the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing, ³¹ and Moses and Aaron and his sons used it to wash

their hands and feet. ³² They washed whenever they entered the tent of meeting or approached the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses.

³³ Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. **And so Moses finished the work.**

The Glory of the LORD

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

³⁶ In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; ³⁷ but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. ³⁸ So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels.

1. For the next 3 weeks, we are preparing ourselves for the finishing of this building.

A. On August the 26th, we are going to formally dedicate this place and entrust it to God.

1. What we are doing has biblical precedence.
2. Today's passage tells of the time when Moses and the Israelites finished the Tabernacle.
 - a. On the day it was finished, the Lord showed up in an incredible way.
 - b. He showed His approval by filling the Tabernacle with His presence.
3. Because this is such a special time for us as a church, I feel led to take the next three Sundays leading up to this time to prepare ourselves for the dedication of this great building.

B. 8 years ago, on August 8th, Julie and I pulled into the parking lot of Licking A/G for the first time.

1. A lot has changed, and I'm happy to report, for the better.
2. We are experiencing a great move of God and the Lord has more for us ahead.
3. I believe this building is being prepared for the express purpose of fostering an environment for the Presence of God to dwell.

C. During this series, I hope to show us examples from God's Word of people who took seriously God's leading to prepare a place for God's presence to be made known.

1. Each of our passages will share several similarities:
2. Preparation, Dedication, and a Move of God.
3. As we will find, **Preparation and Dedication precede a move of God.**

2. Exodus tells the story of God leading Moses to build a tabernacle.

A. The Israelites came from a land full of temples.

1. Egypt had made gods out of everything:
 - a. The Nile, Pharaoh, flies, the sun and moon, and others.
 - b. Many in Moses' congregation had made the bricks used to build the Great Pyramids and palaces where Pharaohs lived and were worshipped.
- b. It would not have been weird for Moses and the Israelites to build a temple or place for God to live and display His power.
 - a. What was different was the role God played.
 - b. God, very specifically, told Moses what to build, how to build it, and how many to build.

B. God took a heavy interest in the building of the Tabernacle because the Atmosphere where God is worshipped is important.

1. Let me qualify that by saying it doesn't matter to God whether he is worshipped in a grand cathedral or a storefront building.

2. But atmosphere matters.

a. Atmosphere is created in the details.

b. God was very specific about what He wanted for His presence.

c. That is why the "boring" parts of Exodus and Leviticus are listed in our Bible.

d. Because God cares about the details.

e. Nothing is too big or too small to escape God's care and concern.

C. Not only do I firmly believe God directed the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, but I also believe that God has directed the building of this Church here in Licking.

1. In August of 2016, we began negotiating for this property.

2. While we waited on paperwork to be filed, Kelly and I began to draw out what we felt the Lord was placing on our hearts to do with this building.

a. This was definitely a faith moment, as one side of this place looked like an auto parts, and the other was an antique village.

b. But by faith, we both began to dream separately about what the Lord was going to do in this space.

c. Shortly thereafter, the Lord added Larissa to the team and the three of us began to design what we believed the Lord was telling us to design.

d. What you are seeing happen here is the fulfillment of a vision the Lord put upon our hearts, even down to the fireplace and color of the walls.

3. Why do I share this?

a. Because I want us to be aware of what God is doing in our midst.

b. He has been preparing us to experience His presence in a very real and powerful way.

4. In the upcoming days, months, and years people do not experience the love, power, and presence of God in and through this building then we have been a failure.

a. Success cannot be measured by budgets or activities.

b. Success will be measured by the presence of God in the lives of people.

c. **Let's talk about preparing for the presence of God for a moment.**

3. Preparation precedes Presence.

A. God instructed Moses on how to prepare for His arrival.

1. God did not allow Moses to go to the local outdoor store and buy a tent.

2. Instead, God instructed Moses for 15 chapters on what and how to build.

a. From the commission in Exodus 25 to the finish in the last chapter of Exodus, God detail what He expected.

b. **God's expectations for His Tabernacle were detailed, intense, and costly.**

B. We cannot adequately prepare for God's presence in a minute or moment.

1. Americans have bought into the idea of quick and easy preparation.

a. We want to believe we can break a lifetime of habits and bad decisions in 30-days or less.

b. We want to believe we can master difficult subjects or hobbies in a few hours instead of a lifetime.

c. We want to believe we are ready for God to speak to us through a 30-second prayer at the beginning of a church service.

2. The truth is, anything worthwhile requires more than a few minutes of preparation.

a. As we will see in our series, the dedication of the Tabernacle, the Temple, and the Believer all involved a period of preparation.

b. Look around us and we can notice the same pattern happening here.

a. From the signed contract to the dedication will be almost exactly 2 years.

b. The preparation has had multiple stages :

1. Transformation of Napa into our current sanctuary. (2-months).

2. Demo of Antique mall was 7-months.

3. Construction of New area was 16 months.

c. The most important preparation, however, has happened in the last year.

1. That preparation has happened in our worship time.

2. There was a day when we rarely had an altar call, and now it is every service and sometimes twice a service.

3. At the old church, services lasted exactly one hour but now they are an hour and a half due to the passion of the worship, preaching, and prayer time.

4. Our Wednesday night ministries average more people than we averaged on a Sunday morning for years.

c. God has been preparing you and me for a day in the near future where we will experience the presence and power of God like never before.

1. If you remember from reading Exodus, the Israelites had experienced God.

a. They had seen the smoke on Mt Sinai.

b. They had even heard the voice of God once.

2. But what God was preparing them for was more than they had ever had before.

a. God was preparing them to experience His presence in their community.

b. No longer would they have to look upon the Mountain to see if God's presence was there.

c. No longer would they have to ask Moses if God's presence was around.

d. Because after the Tabernacle was finished, anybody could look upon the horizon to where the Tabernacle was and they could see for themselves the cloud by day or the fire by night.

e. They could look for themselves and SEE the Presence of God in their midst.

3. There is coming a day when you will not need to have me tell you if the Presence of God is here because you will know for yourself!

C. None of this would have happened without proper preparation.

1. If Moses and those working had not been faithful and obedient, they would have missed the presence of God.

2. We, too, must be faithful and obedient to prepare ourselves for the presence and power of God.

- a. We do this through prayer.
- b. We do this by reading the Word.
- c. We do this through worship, fasting, and study.
- d. Here in a few minutes, I'm going to give us a few ways that I want to ask you to help us prepare for the presence of God.

4. Dedication means we are ready.

A. Eventually, the construction was done.

1. It must have been an exciting day for Moses.
2. The day the hammers on gold stopped.
3. The day there was no more sewing of curtains.
4. The day when no more wood was cut for poles.
5. The day when the punch-list was finally checked off.
6. The day when the last of God's furniture was in place.

B. At that moment, the Tabernacle was ready for its intended purpose.

1. It was now ready for God to come and dwell.
2. Ordinary items like wood, animal skins, and jewelry had been transformed from household items to sacred furniture.
3. The common had become holy.
4. When we dedicate something to the Lord, we ask Him to use it and make it holy.

C. Isn't this exactly what God has had us do here?

1. This building wasn't originally built for the Lord.
2. It was built to make someone money.
3. This building used to sell groceries, appliances, car parts, antiques, and fancy sandwiches.

- a. The first time I was here, I bought a gun at a gun show.
- b. This place has been many things in its lifetime.

4. But God called us to take something common and ordinary, to prepare it and to give it to Him!

5. This month, we are declaring to God "It is ready, come and make it holy!"

6. The presence of God is the only thing that can make common things into holy things and common people into a holy people.

5. When we give ourselves to the Lord, He fills us with His presence.

A. When the work was done, God did what He had promised.

1. Exodus 40:34 says the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

2. God showed up in a way so powerful that even Moses couldn't enter the tabernacle.

B. From this, we learn that God inhabits what is given to Him!

1. If you want more of God in your life, then give it to him.

2. If you want God's presence in your marriage, give it to him.

3. Whatever we give to God, He blesses.

C. In the tabernacle, God made himself available to His people.

1. "The tabernacle served as a symbol of God's immanence among His people and a centralized and sacred place to worship God in the desert."¹

2. In other words, the Tabernacle became the place where God displayed His presence and His power.

3. In the midst of a sinful world and sinful people, the Tabernacle was where the holiness of God was displayed.

¹ Timothy Hyun, "[Tabernacle](#)," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

4. The Tabernacle was the place among God's people that Heaven met Earth.

5. During the days of the Old Testament, God's presence was limited to the Tabernacle and, later, to the Temple.

6. In our day, God's presence lives in believers and in the gathering of the Church.

D. **It is MY prayer and intention that this building will be a place where God's people gather and experience the Presence and Glory of God!**

1. A few months ago the Lord shared a prophetic word to me through one of the believers of this congregation.

2. The Lord said, "Up until this point you have been people of the Word. Now you will become a people of my Presence".

3. God is leading us to a place where we not only know God through His Word but also through the active presence of God through the Holy Spirit.

4. Church, it is time we prepare ourselves for the Presence of God.

6. Will you join me in 21 days of preparation?

A. Will you prepare yourself spiritually?

1. Through prayer, worship, and Bible reading.

2. Draw closer to God than ever before so you might be ready for what God has in store for us.

B. Will you prepare our community?

1. There are many people who have been watching what is going on.

2. Many of them are in desperate need of salvation and redemption.

3. Will you join me in praying for them and inviting them to Church where they themselves can see and feel the power of God?

C. This morning, let us make our prayer time a time of preparation.

1. Will you ask the Lord to show you what needs to change in your life?
2. Will you ask the Lord what steps He wants you to make in drawing closer to Him?
3. Will you give your life to the Lord as a holy offering dedicated to Him so He might fill you and change you?