

## “The Tabernacle: Space for God” // Exodus 25–40 // *Rescue: The Book of Exodus* #15y<sup>1</sup>

### Bumper/ Announcement

**\*\*VAMP\*\*** Before we dive into our final message on Exodus, I just want to acknowledge, Summit, how much we have to thank God for right now. This has been one of the most incredibly fruitful seasons of our church’s history. Praise God.

- I’ve already told you about the **270 ppl who took steps of faith through baptism** in the two weeks after Easter.
- We just keep hearing the most amazing stories... and there is simply no way we can tell them all. **But I can tell you a couple:** Pastor Josh at our Apex campus told about a homebound lady named Jasmine with a severe case of muscular dystrophy who is wheelchair bound. She’s been watching online for a while and she joined a small group. We visited with her recently and she gave her life to Christ. She got baptized with that small group present. My favorite part of it is that she’s asked to be trained on how to share the gospel so that she can share with visitors that come see her. She’s connected with a small group now and they zoom her in, and **once a month** they meet at her house.
- At the CPC we baptized a guy who is a rap producer in Durham: he produced rap music albums. He came forward to be baptized. We asked him how he got here and said he learned that everytime he released an album the crime rate in Durham went up and he

didn’t like that (he figured something was off with his life) so he just looked up a church online and found ours and came for a few weeks and trusted Christ at Easter. (BTW, he was our ever face forward baptism. He was much bigger than the elder baptizing him, and when the elder said, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” the guy just put himself under face first and when he came up the elder was looking at him a little funny and the guy said, “What, did I do it wrong?” and the elder said, “No, that was fine.”)

**OK, I told you I was just going to tell two...** but sorry, I’ve got to tell 3, because God is on the move.

- One more: Our Summit College crew at NC State did this inviting campaign where they took little Easter Eggs and put a little Summit Easter inviter card and a small treat in them and spread them out all over campus... They put thousands of them out the day before the service... and NC State grounds and facilities promptly came out and gathered all of them back up--all of them, except for one. One had fallen down one of the little holes in the ground where the sprinkler head was buried so grounds and facilities didn’t see it, and the next morning when the sprinkler came on a girl was walking across campus and the egg literally flew out and hit her in the chest. This is a true story. She picked it up and opened it--this girl didn’t go to church; but she was curious, so she made a last minute decision to come to Easter service. Well, At the end, when we gave the invitation, she came

<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted: Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014); Tyler Staton, “[God Dwells Among Us](#),” April 27, 2023, Bridgetown Church; Tim Keller, “[God With Us](#),” November 10, 2002, Redeemer Presbyterian Church;

Jen Wilkin, [God of Freedom](#) Bible study. Brad Cooper, “The Tabernacle as a Paradigm for Communion with God.” Ray Vanderlaan, “Making Space for God: The Tabernacle,” in *That the World May Know* video series. I took my title here largely from his.

up and a Summit College leader met with her and he felt led by the Holy Spirit to walk her through the story of the prodigal son and she said, “I think this story is about me!” and she gave her life to Christ right there and she is going to be baptized when she returns to campus this August. Listen, if God has determined to get your attention, not even ‘grounds and facilities’ can keep him from getting the message to you. Amen? **And that’s just 3.** God is on the move.

**Two other things I’ll mention briefly:** A couple of weeks ago we hosted our Summit Collaborative retreat here--Summit Collaborative is our domestic church planting arm--we had all the pastors back for a retreat. Get this, y’all: I told you at Easter we had 26K here; this Easter we had a combined 90,000 people in churches we’ve planted in the last decade. And in the last year, we’ve gone from 1700 college students in our Collab Churches to more than 3000. And we commissioned our largest church planting class ever this year: 15 new churches this year! The classes are getting bigger because it’s no longer just us sending out teams; the churches we’ve planted are also sending out teams now. It’s the power of multiplication at work.

**Finally,** on Tuesday we hosted our Send 100 Celebration. Our goal, you’ve heard, is to send 100 new missionaries overseas in 3 years. Well we are currently in year 2 of that goal, and I’m happy to let you know that **23 people have been deployed to the mission field** already...AND this past Tuesday **(PIC)** we **commissioned 29 more** to be sent. What God is going around the world is, in a word, breathtaking. They’re planting churches in some of the most unreached and unchurched places on the planet. It’s incredible. I could tell you so many stories, and soon, I will. I could tell you about a

Muslim country in South Asia where we’re seeing a true gospel revival--like, of New Testament proportions, and a church planting movement through some of our people in Germany. So far, Summit, we’ve planted 90 churches here in the United States and more than 500 overseas.

So, **could we put our hands together now as an offering of** thanksgiving for all of this? Let’s pray: *“God, thank you... this makes us hungry for more. Show us your glory, we pray.”*

## Introduction

OK, **Exodus 27** if you have your Bibles... **Quick survey:** You can only choose one: Beach, mountain or lake. How many of you are Beach people? Mountain people? Lake people? (Which sounds like something out of a horror movie).

I like them all, but I think I’d probably say I’m a mountain person. I am from West Virginia... so, country roads, take me home. There are two distinctive features of the mountain drive I’ve always loved: one is **the runaway truck ramp** and the other is the **scenic overlook**. When I was a kid, I was always fascinated by **runaway truck ramps (PIC)** and I secretly hoped we’d have the chance to use one one day. Looked like a fun hill with little ridges. Now I realize how terrifying it would be to be in a situation where you needed one. In 2013 there was this crazy incident on I-40 where a rookie driver, literally just days on the job, was bringing his rig down the mountain when his brakes gave out--his tractor trailer that was hauling 80,000 lbs got to over 100 mph, and he was doing his best just to keep it on the road, and it kept just gaining speed, and he looked up and saw that traffic had come to a standstill and he’s going 110 MPH with 40 tons of freight, but just before the back end of the traffic jam was one of those ramps. He plowed into it at over 100MP and it just about killed him. But it

literally saved not only his life but also all the people in those cars in the traffic jam. Thank God for the runaway truck ramp!

**The other feature of the mountain drive** is the scenic overlook, where you can stop for 5–10 minutes and just take in the landscape. I love these--because, I mean, what good is driving in the mountains if you don't stop and enjoy it? Two features--one about rescue, the other, beauty.

What's that got to do with Exodus 25? The Holy Spirit ends the book of Exodus by giving instructions for the tabernacle, and you'll see that both of the features--rescue and beauty--are supposed to be part of their daily walk with God.

**Remember, this whole Exodus journey has been like a 101 course in how to walk with God.** If you picked a new time to come back to church, this is your moment. In the events of the Exodus we learned "the melody of salvation"--the basic patterns of how God saves us--a melody we're going to hear played over and over again throughout the rest of the Bible, like the score in musical play you hear at the beginning and hear again and again throughout the play.

**Then, we saw God take his people through "Wilderness University,"** (which we called **Wilderness U**), where he gave them basic training in how to trust him. Then at Mt Sinai, God gave them the Law—it was like a marriage covenant—to show them the kind of people he wanted them to be, but they failed at that almost immediately in the Golden Calf incident, Ex 32, but then God revealed himself again, Exodus 34, as the merciful God who keeps his side of the covenant even when we break ours.

**This whole journey comes to a head in the instructions for the tabernacle.** You might think that's strange for the book of Exodus to end there--why end a book filled with action and adventure with the floor plan and interior design for a building? It's because this

tabernacle is going to encapsulate their relationship with God. God is literally going to dwell among his people in the tabernacle, and **God's presence with his people has always been the point of this whole journey.**

**This Tabernacle is going to be mobile,** at least for right now, so that it can go wherever Israel goes. Eventually, when they settle down, they'll convert this tabernacle into "the Temple." In fact, many think that King Solomon, who built the Temple, actually built it around this tabernacle. But for now, it's mobile. The walls are made out of cloth and all the furniture has holsters for poles so it can all be picked up and moved quickly.

Here's what I'm going to do today: I'm going to take you on a tour of the structure of the tabernacle—we will cover 15 chapters of the Bible!—and then I'll show you how you can incorporate this structure into your walk with God... which is why I gave you **this card**. **Make sure you have this out:** I'll be referring to it several times throughout the message.

**First, let's take a tour.**

**Our 1<sup>st</sup> stop on the Tabernacle Tour is The Outer Courts – (27:9–19)**

This way, **from the East**, was the only way to enter. It was a big area--about 10,000 sq feet. For now, only Jews were allowed to enter. Later, when the tabernacle was converted into the Temple, this Court would be subdivided into an outer ring for the Gentiles and an inner ring for the Jews, so that the Gentiles could observe God's people in worship. But for now, only Jews could come in. And the **first thing** you came to in that outer court was...

**2. The Brazen Altar (27:1–8)** (or 'The Altar of Burnt Offerings')

**(PIC)** This was a big box about 7.5 ft long x 7.5 ft wide x 4.5 ft. high. It was coated with bronze and filled with rocks so you could offer sacrifices on it and then burn them. This is the place I've told you about where at least once a year, the head of each family in Israel would bring a lamb for sacrifice to this altar; (Asked production about bringing lamb... **KNIFE**) the priest would bind the sacrifice, lay it on the altar, and then the head of the family would lay his hand on the sacrifice's head and confess the sins of his family and as he did the priest would slit the throat of the offering and then they would burn it on this altar.

**Each of the corners of the altar had a horn on it**, and these horns served 2 purposes. The most practical purpose was they functioned like posts where you could tie up the animal waiting to be sacrificed. But they also were a place someone who was being hunted down by a pursuer seeking justice could cling to for mercy. If you'd been accused of a crime and someone was coming after you for vengeance, you could grab hold of these horns and they couldn't touch you until you could stand trial. It's like when you were a kid playing tag--this would have been "base." You're safe if you're here.

Next you have... **3. The Bronze Laver (Exodus 30:17–21)**

**Now, important:** the altar of burnt offering was as far as the average Israelite could go; only the priests could go beyond this point. The bronze laver was a gigantic basin filled with pure water that priests used to wash their hands and feet before they entered the Holy Place.

Note: This was only for their hands and feet. Priests were already considered clean: when they were dedicated to the ministry, they went through a thorough ritual washing in which they were washed from head to toe. This washing was just for their hands and feet, to rid them from the daily defilement they encountered in the world.

Next we have: **4. The Table of Showbread (Exodus 25:23–30)**

Now we've moved inside the tent itself. This was a gold-plated table that had 12 fresh loaves of bread on top. 12: 1 for each of the 12 tribes of Israel. On the Sabbath day, the priests working in the Temple would eat this bread and then new loaves would be put out. The reason that's significant is that in pagan worship (Egyptian worship), priests put out food for the gods to eat. This bread was not something they provided for God; this bread symbolized God's provision for them. **If you want to know the difference in biblical worship and pagan worship in a nutshell**, there it is: In pagan worship you take care of the god; in biblical worship, God takes care of you.

Next we have... **5. The Golden Lampstand (Exodus 25:31–40)**

It was carved from a solid talent of gold; the actual one would've been 5 feet tall and weighed about 75 pounds--so, about the size of a 10 yr old.

**Now, question:** What does the shape of this lamp remind you of? It's shaped like a bush--like a 'burning bush'--with 7 branches. This lamp symbolized the presence of God. This lamp, by the way, was the only source of light in the Holy Place, and it was to be kept lit continually, symbolizing the constant light of God's presence w/ his people.

**Ex 27:20** says that the fuel for this lamp was to be made from crushed olives--they had to be crushed, not ground or milled. That's an important detail we'll come back to.

Next we have... **6. The Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1–10)**

As we approach the Holy of Holies, we come to the **altar of incense**.

**(PIC)** This altar was lit twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening, and it symbolized the prayers of God's people, rising like incense up to God's throne.

This altar had 4 horns, too, **but whereas the horns of the brazen altar represented mercy**, these horns represented power. The meaning was that the very power of God itself is accessed through prayer.

Lastly we come to... **7. The Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:34)**

Now, this final place was closed off to everyone--except the High Priest, and him only once a year. There was a thick veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. This Holiest of Holy rooms had one piece of furniture in it: **the Ark of the Covenant (PIC)**. The Ark was a gold-plated box, and inside that box were 3 things: 1. A copy of the 10 commandments; 2. A pot full of manna; and 3. Aaron's shepherd's staff, which had miraculously budded (he had a walking stick and it came to life and grew flowers, and it became a symbol of God's life-giving power).<sup>2</sup> The priests at the time taught, btw, that that box represented the human heart--our hearts should possess those 3 things at all times--**God's law**, the **daily manna** of his Word, and **God's miraculous, life-giving power**.

On top of the Ark was a mercy seat, covered by two cherubim, each made of gold, each facing each other with their faces bowed toward the ground. And in the place between the cherubim, the literal presence of God dwelt in fire and cloud.

Once a year, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat on behalf of the whole nation.

There. Those are the elements of the tabernacle. But let me point out a few things you may not have noticed.

### **1. The Tabernacle recreated the Garden of Eden**

<sup>2</sup> Ex 25:16; Numbers 17:10; Ex 16:33-34; Cf. Hebrews 9:4. 1 Kings 8:9 tell us only the tablets remain by the time we get to the construction of the Temple.

**A few things stand out to the careful reader.** First, God gives his instructions about the tabernacle to Moses in 7 waves. 7 times in these chapters it says, "And the Lord said to Moses..."<sup>3</sup> Can you think of somewhere else where God spoke 7 times? In creation. By the way, the last of the times God spoke to Moses about the tabernacle is in **Ex 31:12**, and it says, "And the LORD said to Moses, "...Above all you shall **keep my Sabbaths**, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations..." In creation, God's last word had been about the Sabbath. The same thing is true of the tabernacle.

Oh, but there's more: **(BACK TO TEMPLE PIC) Exodus 27:13** tells us that the direction of the gate was always to face due East--wherever they set it up, the gate had to face East, which is significant because East was the direction Adam and Eve had been driven out of the Garden of Eden. **Gen 3:24** says that after Adam and Eve sinned, God killed an animal in front of them and drove them out of the Garden toward the East and then placed a cherub angel with a flaming sword in front of the East entrance.

So, worshippers came in from the East and the first thing they came to was the brazen altar where a sacrifice was both killed and burned. The picture? This brazen altar was the place where the flaming sword of God's judgment was extinguished and the way to God was reopened--or beginning to be reopened.

**It gets even better:** Exodus 26:1 and 26:31 tell us the curtains separating the people from the Holy Place and Holy of Holies had cherubim woven into them. Again, this is all a re-creation of the Garden of Eden.

And remember the golden lampstand? It was shaped to look like the tree of life.

<sup>3</sup> 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22 and 34; and 31:1 and 12.



**The message is clear, right?** God has recreated a way back into his presence after our sin had driven us out. God is restoring his presence with his people, because that's always been the point. **The presence of God with his people is the whole point of the Exodus.**

Interestingly, btw, **it took only 2 chapters to tell the original creation story.** Instructions for the tabernacle cover more than 50 chapters.<sup>4</sup> **Let that sink in:** For God to create the sun, moon, stars, and all the molecules and atoms in our universe, it only took 2 chapters. No big deal. But to provide our salvation--to provide the new creation, that was much harder.

Here's a **SECOND THING** you may not have noticed: **II. The Tabernacle was a mobile Mt Sinai.**

Remember Mt Sinai, where God had given them the Law? Ex 19 says Mt Sinai had been a mountain of smoke and fire with a great barrier between the people and God that no Israelite could cross lest they be killed--only Moses was allowed up into the mountain to meet with God. Well, now you have a Holy of Holies with several barriers between the people and God, which only the High Priest can penetrate once a year.

The furniture in the Holy Place recreated Mt. Sinai. The golden lampstand, representing the presence of God, was like the burning bush Moses encountered on Mt Sinai. God's presence is encapsulated in smoke and fire. **This is a mobile Mt Sinai.** The people weren't supposed to just hear from God at Mt Sinai and meet him again in the Promised Land. Maybe that's how you've seen the Christian life. Hear from God and then see him in heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Ray Vanderlaan: Exodus 25–40 (minus 32-34), design, construction, clothes for priests, etc. All of Leviticus (27 chapters) which is about purity,

No, the presence of God went with them--because the point of the Exodus was God's presence **with** his people.

**In fact (and those of you who go with us to Israel will learn this)--** Scholars ***are not even 100% sure today where Mt Sinai even is.*** Moses didn't record it because after they built the tabernacle it didn't matter--the presence of God was the point and that was now in the tabernacle. So the mountain was irrelevant.

Most importantly, **III. The Tabernacle foreshadowed Jesus**

The Apostle John, talking about Jesus, says this about him in his introduction: **"And the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt (lit. he 'tabernacled') among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."**

Jesus, God's ultimate word in creation, was, according to John, a walking tabernacle **(put up PIC of CARD).** Everything we see pictured in the tabernacle was fulfilled in Jesus.

- **In John 10:7, Jesus said he was the door,** the one way we can enter the presence of God.
- **Jesus was the sacrifice on the brazen altar**--the flaming sword of God's wrath for sin dropped onto him, and his blood was poured out on the altar so that all those who grab hold of these horns of mercy find eternal safety.
- **Jesus is our daily cleansing.** John tells us that if we confess our sins, he (Jesus) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness.
- **Jesus is our table of showbread.** In John 6:35 Jesus said, **"I am the bread of life."** And then, to prove it, he did the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 where he multiplied the bread and the fish. And do you remember how many baskets full of leftovers it says

worship, holiness, and festivals—all of which are tabernacle-centered. Numbers 1-10 which regulate encampment and care of the tabernacle.

they took up after the miracle was over? 12. Do you remember the number of loaves on this showbread table? 12.

- *(Listen, when you know the OT, you understand the NT so much better!)*
- **Jesus is the Golden Lampstand of God's presence.** In John 8:12, right after forgiving the woman caught in adultery, Jesus stood in front of the Temple and proclaimed, **"I am the Light of the World."** I am the presence of God.
  - *(BTW, how beautiful is it that when Jesus made this statement, it was right after forgiving a woman caught in adultery? I often wonder, "Why did he choose that moment to make this claim?" It's because this light is not just a revealing light, it's a healing light. It not only reveals our sin, it cleanses us from our sin if we let him. In fact, when I was working on the message this week, and I wrote down John 8:12 in my notes, I felt like the Holy Spirit said to me "Don't just tell them I'm the light of the world, tell them when I said this... it was right after forgiving a woman caught in adultery." You see, I don't know, but I feel like there might be a woman in here today in adultery and you know it's wrong and you want out of it and God is saying, "You need to come back to me. I will forgive and restore you and cleanse you with the light of my presence—it's not just a revealing light, it's a healing light—but you have to bring this into the light." Again, I don't know. But maybe that's you and you know God is talking to you right now. I'm telling you: Obey that word. This Golden Lampstand is not just a revealing light; it's a healing light.*
- And, do you remember the detail about where the fuel for the lamp came from? It had to be made **from crushed olives**, not ground or milled. Well, the night before Jesus died, Jesus went to pray where? In the **Garden of Gethsemane**-- and Gethsemane in Hebrew literally means... **'crushed olives'**<sup>5</sup>--the Garden of Gethsemane was a place where they crushed olives. On the night

before Jesus died, he went to this Garden, and as he prayed he began to sweat great drops of blood, as if God's wrath for our sin was literally crushing him. Jesus' crushed body is the fuel that brings the presence of God back to us.

- **Jesus is our altar of incense.** John says Jesus as our Advocate stands before the Father day and night interceding for us--he's doing that for you right now. **Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea; a great High Priest whose name is love, who ever lives and pleads for me...**
  - **Robert Murray M'Cheyenne** said, *"If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. Scripture assures me that he is praying for me now."* Amen? Imagine that. During a time of temptation or fear, you could hear Jesus praying! He's doing that right now.
- **Jesus is the Holy of Holies.** The moment that Jesus died, this curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom, showing that the way had been opened for all to enter the very presence of God.
- BTW, let me take you a little deeper with this: On the Day of Atonement, the one day a year the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, 2 goats were involved in the sacrifice.
  - One goat was offered up on the altar and then his blood was carried into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the mercy seat. BTW, while the High Priest was in the Holy of Holies, everyone in Israel was nervous, and a great crowd always gathered to see if he'd come out, because if the priest didn't come out, it meant that God hadn't accepted the sacrifice and the High Priest was dead. Something had gone wrong--maybe the Priest was unclean or Israel hadn't repented or something wasn't right. That was where the tradition (or legend) developed that they would tie a rope to the High Priest's ankle so they could pull him out if he died. And, **if the High Priest did finally appear**, everyone would cheer--it meant the

<sup>5</sup> Technically, "Oil press"

sacrifice had worked. For another year, God had been reconciled to his people.

- **Well then, if the High Priest emerged**, the first thing he'd do is walk straight back the brazen altar, where the other goat had been tied up, and the High Priest would then lay his hands on the head of this second goat and confess Israel's sins, and they would then send that goat outside the camp into the desert to die, symbolic of their sin being carried away from them. It's like if I had 2 balloons, and one balloon I popped, showing that God had exploded the penalty of my sin, and the other I took outside and let the wind carry it away, picturing how God carried our sin far away from us. That's what is going on here: One goat was sacrificed, showing the penalty was extinguished, and one goat was sent away, showing that God had carried our sin away forever. BTW, this is awesome: it was considered a bad omen if somehow that goat wandered back into the camp--right? Like he was bringing the guilt of the people's sin back? So Jewish rabbinic tradition tells us that there was usually someone waiting just outside the tabernacle to grab the goat and throw him over a cliff or something to make sure he didn't come back.

Now, let's come back to Jesus. When Jesus died, Scripture tells us that he was sacrificed "outside the camp." His blood was shed, and he was taken outside the camp. In other words, Jesus was both goats--the one who shed his blood for our sin and the one who carried our sin away forever.

**And after he died, everyone was nervous.** Jesus was dead and gone! Had it worked? Or had something gone wrong? Just like Israel stood fearful when the High Priest was in the Holy of Holies, wondering if it

worked, the disciples were all afraid after Jesus died. But then, after 3 days... Jesus rose. It's as if he's walking back out of the Holy of Holies saying, "It's worked!"<sup>6</sup>

And then, the culmination: on Pentecost, Acts 2 says the disciples were standing just outside the Temple, when they heard the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and fire came out of the Temple--if you read it carefully in Acts it implies it was a single ball of fire that came out--and then that ball of fire subdivided into little tongues of fire that came to rest the heads of each of the disciples. The very fire of God's presence once contained in the Holy of Holies behind a thick, impenetrable curtain now lives in us. Try and tell me you're not special. You're a walking Holy of Holies!

**So, I'll say it again: God's presence with his people has always been the point.** In the Garden of Eden, God had walked with his people every day but they sinned and drove themselves out of his presence. So, God built a tabernacle so he could dwell in their midst, though he was still separated behind several threatening barriers. But then Jesus came, who was God tabernacling with us and now, in the person of the Holy Spirit, the God of the Holy of Holies has taken up residence ***IN*** us and we can have communion with him every day. ***Try and tell me you're not special. Try and tell me that God doesn't have a plan for you. Try and tell me you don't have the power to overcome sin or temptation. God put his Holy of Holies inside of you. You're more sacred than Mt. Sinai. You're more sacred than the Holy of Holies! When you're in Israel, they take you through a long tunnel that goes under the Wailing Wall and you get to this spot where the tour guide says, "They think this was the very place where the Holy of Holies was in the Temple..." and it's this amazing moment as I was trying to get my mind around the fact that I was standing in the former Holy of***

<sup>6</sup> BTW, do you remember when Jesus resurrected, it says that two cherubim were sitting on his grave bed, one at the head and one at the foot. (Ark of

Covenant pic). What does that mean? Jesus was walking out of the Holy of Holies. His sacrifice had worked. The way into the presence of God was open.



Holies... and I'm like, "Wait a minute. The Holy of Holies is not here... it's here (ME). I'm a walking Holy of Holies. **There's literally no more special, sacred anointed place on earth than your heart. You are the Temple of God.**

Which brings me back to... this card.

## A Devotional Journey Through the Tabernacle

**Hebrews 9:24** says the tabernacle is a copy of the very throne room of God (see it?), which means we could use the structure of the Tabernacle as a way to come into God's presence every day. And that's what I've tried to give you through this card. (BTW, special shout out to my friend Brad Cooper, pastor of NewSpring Church down in South Carolina, who gave me this idea. He says he uses something like this every day in his quiet time, and actually prays through it with his kids in the car on the way to school.)

Stop 1: **1. The Outer Courts //** This should be characterized by **Thanksgiving //** **Psalm 100:4** says, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise." So, here's the prompt I gave you:

- **Praise! What am I thankful for today?**

Praise, you see, brings you into the presence of God. Pastor Brad calls praise "the password into God's presence." So, start there--start by telling God what you love about him and what you are thankful for from him. And don't rush through that. Linger there. Sing or listen to a worship song if you want. It doesn't matter if you can't sing. God doesn't care about the quality of your voice, he just wants to hear from you.

Stop **2. The Brazen Altar //** Think of this as **Embracing the Cross //** **Eph 1:7** says "In him we have redemption through his blood, the

forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace... "**((Hebrews 9:19-22))**

- **Notice what I've written: Rejoice that because of Jesus, there is nothing you could do that would make God love you any more, and nothing you have done that would make him love you any less**

This is the gospel! Rejoice in it daily. God accepts you not on the basis of how well you've done but on the basis of Christ's finished work. I come before God literally with Jesus' righteousness credited to my account because all my sin was placed upon him and that means I couldn't be more righteous in God's sight than I am right now. I couldn't be safer or more beloved. There's nothing I could do that could make him love me more and nothing I have done that makes him love me any less. So, spend a few moments holding onto those horns and just rejoice in them. **Thank God for Christ.**

And then go on to station **3. The Bronze Laver //** Let this represent daily **Cleansing & Renewal //** Again, **1 Jn 1:9** says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **((Rom 12:1-2))**

Listen: You don't need to be re-saved every day. That's already happened once for all back at the brazen altar. You've already been forgiven and cleansed from head to toe. But, you do need daily cleansing and renewal. **Here are the prompts I've given you:**

- **Confess: Where have you sinned and need forgiveness?**
- **Ask God to cleanse and renew your mind, heart and body for his service.**

Confess your sins, whatever they are. **Take that runaway truck ramp!** Get back on the road with God.

**Next stop: 4. The Table of Showbread // Scripture Feeds Us // Matt 4:4 says** “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,” a quote from the Exodus. ~~In John 6:35 Jesus tells us that he is “the bread of life.”<sup>7</sup> ((Deut 32:47))~~

- **I gave you this prompt: Spend time in God’s Word. Let it feed and sustain you. Embrace his promises.**

Rehearse God’s promises in the morning until they feed your soul and flood you with confidence and change your outlook on people and the day! **George Mueller** used to say it was his ‘sacred duty’ each morning to get his soul happy in God before going about the day. The greatest thing I can give to everyone in my life-- my wife, my kids, my coworkers, to you--is a soul happy in God, brimming with confidence in his promises--because then I won’t walk around like a sad sack of unbelief, or even worse, with an emptiness that causes me to use you to fill some void in my heart. When my soul is happy in God, I can love people and not use them. I can forgive them instead of resenting them.

**So, stop 4: Spend time in God’s Word every day.** BTW, do you have something good you use for a daily Quiet Time? Let me encourage you to use the **Summit Daily Revival** feature on our **Summit app**... I use it every morning. I do that and another one called **Lectio365**; these two tools are the best way for me to start my day feasting on Scripture.

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**Stop 5. The Golden Lampstand //** These represent **God’s Glory and Presence // ((Jn 8:12))**

*Here’s what I have written as a prompt for you:*

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<sup>7</sup> And Deuteronomy 32:47, “For this is no idle word for you; it is your very life.”

- **Worship in the light of God’s presence through song or quiet adoration or through a song, or through declarations.**

**This is different from thanksgiving.** It’s meditating on who God is and who he is to you.

**Sit in the light** of his presence. **Name those qualities about God you love most.** Call them out. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are saved!” So, name the ramparts of that tower and run in! You say, “Why do I need to name them? God already knows what they are.” Yes, but just calling them out fills your soul with faith. Ps 22:3 says “God inhabits the praises of his people.” Which means as you pray, he comes. Put them into a song. For most of us, we should probably use a song someone else has written.... I know some of you are gifted as songwriters, but if you don’t have that gift, don’t be one of those weirdos that’s always making up tunes for God. God is like, “I love you, but I know good music from bad.” You say, “Yeah, but he just likes to hear our songs. it’s like me with my 2 year old--I love to put their terrible drawings up on my refrigerator.” Yeah, I’m sure when you were a new Christian, God put your songs up on his refrigerator, too... but if you’re still drawing stick figures for your parents when you’re 35, your parents are gonna stop putting those pics up. So, I’m just saying, feel free to use someone else’s song. God’s not weird. Don’t be weird. I’m not saying it’s about the quality of your music, just saying you don’t have to be weird to be a Christian. I don’t do that with my wife: Veronica you’re so awesome...

The main point: Spend time in the light of God’s presence and watch your heart fill with joy. **And Ask God for eyes to see him more clearly.** Ask God to show you more of himself. In **Eph 1:18** Paul asks God for the *spirit of wisdom and revelation* to understand God and his

salvation more clearly. **This is that scenic overlook feature** I talked about at the beginning--stopping to take in God's beauty to give you fuel for the journey.

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Next, stop **6. The Altar of Incense // These are your Prayers of Intercession // Psalm 141:2** literally says. *Let my prayers rise before you like the evening sacrifice of incense.*

Here's the prompt I gave you:

- **Intercede for others, letting your prayer rise like a pleasing aroma to God. Pray for your family, church, community, and the world. Don't just pray to God, pray with him.**

On the Daily Revival on the **Summit App**, we give you daily prayer requests to get you started. Prayers for you, the church, our missionaries... Again, it's a good place to start.<sup>8</sup>

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Lastly, **7. The Holy of Holies //** Think of this as **The Fullness of the Spirit // ((Heb 10:19–22))**

Here's what I gave you:

- **Ask for the fullness of the Spirit and yield yourself to him completely. Abide. Listen. Be still and know that he is God.**

**Eph 5:18** tells us to be "filled with the Spirit." Paul wouldn't tell you to be filled with it if you were already as full as you could be. Yes, you got the Holy Spirit when you first got saved. But I'm telling you,

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<sup>8</sup> Oh, and I've gotta show you this one. Put Revelation 5:8 up here: "...the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding... golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." Revelation tells us that God collects all our prayers like incense in a bowl! I know it feels sometimes like God doesn't always answer your prayers, at least on the timetable you wanted; in fact, sometimes it doesn't even feel like he's listening at all. But this scene shows you he

there's a fullness, a greater richness of experience of his presence, that you can experience if you'll simply ask for it and earnestly seek it.

Here's the 2nd prompt I gave you:

- **Ask for new spiritual gifts by which to serve God and others**

In **1 Cor 14:1** Paul tells us to eagerly desire spiritual gifts--manifestations of the Spirit's power in our lives--and Paul says especially that you may prophesy. To 'prophesy' means to relay messages directly from the Spirit to others. Every day this year I am asking God for more of the gift of prophecy. You gotta be careful with it--and there are rules for it--we'll talk about those more later, but maybe you could consider praying the same with me.

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\*\*\*VAMP\*\*\*

Notice the last instruction on your card: **Let this pattern guide your time with God—not as a ritual, but as a relational rhythm to draw near to him daily because that's why God gave us the pattern of the tabernacle.**

**You have to make space for God**, which was the **title of this message**. The tabernacle was literally the center of Israel's life. Your daily time with God should be the center of your life.

**So, put this card in your Bible**, and if you've never started a quiet time, use this and our Summit app and start tomorrow!

heard every single one of them and collected them all in a bowl--the Psalms says he also collected all our tears in a bottle, too--and there's coming a time when God will answer all those prayers, or the essence of them, with one gigantic yes. Not one was ever ignored, no tear was ever forgotten. So, in the meantime, let them rise like incense to him that he collects into bowls.

Listen, **there's probably no spiritual discipline I recommend more than a daily time with God.** Listen, a couple of years ago the Institute of Bible Research did the largest nationwide study ever conducted of the effect of Bible reading on people's lives. They found that if you read the Bible 1 day a week, it has almost no effect on your life. Read it one day, listen to one sermon. Read it 2-3 days per week, there's a slight effect, they found, but negligible. But, get this, if you read your Bible 4x a week or more, you are **59% less likely to view pornography, 228% more likely to share your faith, and at least 30% less likely to struggle with loneliness, depression or anxiety.** Here's the big idea: **When the Word, not the world, becomes the center of your life, it transforms you like nothing else can.**

So let me encourage you, **if you're serious about growing in Christ,** start this habit ***daily***.

**And that brings us to the end of Exodus.** The book that establishes the melody of salvation and shows us the basics of walking with God. It ends with a vehicle for daily spending time in the presence of God, because that's always been the point: ***God's presence with his people has always been the point of this whole (Exodus) journey.***

*Have you enjoyed our study through Exodus? I know I sure have. And look at all the fruit God has given us during it! **369 baptisms** during this series! (Who said preaching the Old Testament wouldn't bring spiritual fruit? We don't need to unhitch ourselves from the Old Testament—there's good stuff in there!)*

**And where are we headed next, you ask?** Well, we're going to the other end of our Bibles... to the book of Revelation! Summer of 2025, get ready for weird. So, be back for that.

Let's pray...