

“The Building Project”  
Exodus 36:8-38  
(Preached at Trinity, August 9, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Human beings have always been fascinated with architecture. By nature we are builders, reflecting the creative wisdom of God. One of the earliest accounts of building was the city of Babel with the infamous tower designed to reach into heaven. It was testimony to the sinfulness of the human heart seeking to glorify themselves rather than God.
2. Every city has buildings that cause us to stand in amazement. Even our own city has wonderful architecture. Our State Capitol Building was completed in 1932 under Governor Huey P. Long.  
At 450 feet and 34 stories it is the tallest state capitol building in the United States. It is truly a work of art with sculptures depicting scenes from LA & US history. On the steps leading to the entrance are written the names of each of the 48 US states, with Alaska and Arizona sharing a step.  
2500 rail cars were needed to transport the limestone and marble from as far away as Vermont and Italy.
3. Our country has many amazing structure from our nation’s capitol to the Washington Monument. On the aluminum cap at the top of the monument at a height of 555 feet are written the words Laus Deo – Praise be to God. Isn’t that amazing! Didn’t they realize God isn’t allowed in our government?
4. No other building in the history of the world, however, can compare with the Tabernacle.
  - A. No other building was designed by God, not discounting God’s sovereignty over all things. God gave specific details for this building.
  - B. No other building was designed specifically as the dwelling place of God.
5. In **Chapter 26** God gave the strict orders for building the Tabernacle. Unfortunately, the children of Israel fell into idolatry and made the golden calf. Now they are prepared to obey God. God has raised up the craftsmen under Bezalel and Aholiab. The people were stirred with hearts of extravagance and have brought a great offering for the construction of the Tabernacle – far more than was needed!
6. God gave the orders, delivered the plans and now they are building it according to God’s design.  
**Verses 8-19** describe the curtains  
**Verses 20-34** describe the boards  
**Verses 35-38** describe the veil and screen
7. The immediate point in this chapter is the absolute obedience to the detail of God’s commands for the tabernacle.
  - A. **Chapter 27** is almost a duplicate of **Chapter 26** .
  - B. There are no deviations. They didn’t leave off anything for expedience. They didn’t add anything according to their imagination. They simply obeyed.
  - C. This is why the regulative principle of worship is so important. God hasn’t left His worship in the hands of men to order in any way their hearts choose. God has determined how He will be worshipped.

8. Why did God give such a detailed plan? Why was it necessary for the plan to the last detail? As we've seen in the past, God designed this structure to teach Israel. This evening I want to point out that it was a three phase plan.
- I. Phase I of the Building Project
- A. As I've pointed out over the past months, every element of the Tabernacle had symbolism
1. The Tabernacle was the dwelling place of God. This throne upon the earth was designed to imitate God's heavenly throne.
  2. The closer you went to the center of the Tabernacle the more precious the materials
    - a. Bronze was used for the outer posts but as you moved towards the Holy of holies there was a transition to silver, then gold, then fine gold.
    - b. There was a transition from linen to fin linen
    - c. The materials were designed to reflect the beauty and excellence of God.
- B. There are several names used to describe the Tabernacle
1. It is called a Sanctuary in **Exodus 25:8**  
The Sanctuary signifies a holy place set apart for God  
**Exodus 25:8** – “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”
  2. In **Exodus 25:9** it is called the Tabernacle  
Tabernacle means dwelling place – the dwelling place of God.  
**Exodus 25:9** – “According to all that I shew thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make *it*.”
  3. In **Exodus 26:36** it is referred to as a tent which indicated that it was portable  
**Exodus 26:36** – “And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework.”
  4. It was also called the Tabernacle of Congregation – **Exodus 29:44**  
Most translations call it the “Tent of Meeting.”  
**Exodus 29:44** – “And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation”  
This designated that it was the place where people could enter into God's presence.
  5. It was called the Tabernacle of Testimony in **Exodus 38** signifying the Tabernacle as the place where God was revealed in His Word.  
**Exodus 38:21** – “This is the sum of the tabernacle, *even* of the tabernacle of testimony”
- C. The Tabernacle would give way to the Temple in Jerusalem
1. The Temple was merely the permanent version of the Tabernacle
  2. Both had courtyards, the holy place, and the Holy of Holies  
In Solomon's Temple the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies.  
The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and plundered the Temple and the Ark was lost.

3. The Second Temple was rebuilt with the absence of the Ark of the Covenant, the holy oil, the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and the pot of manna. The second Temple was replaced with Herod's Temple in 19 BC and destroyed in 70 AD
4. The Tabernacle and the Temple were only Phase 1 of God's place of dwelling. God never purposed to permanently dwell in an earthly building. The Tabernacle only foreshadowed a much greater place of dwelling which led to Phase II

## II. Phase II of the Building Project

- A. At the appointed time Christ was born – God in flesh and blood coming to dwell among men
  1. He was foretold by the prophets as the abiding presence of God – God with us.  
**Isaiah 7:14** – “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”  
**Matthew 1:23** – “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”
  2. John's Gospel further describes Him  
**John 1:1** – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”  
**John 1:14** – “And the Word was made 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.”
    - a. The word for “dwelt” is σκηνώ which means to tabernacle
    - b. Jesus, the second person of the Godhead, came to dwell among men.
    - c. Jesus is the dwelling place of God.  
God came to dwell in human form.  
**Colossians 2:9** – “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”
    - d. Jesus referred to Himself as the Temple  
**John 2:19** – “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”
- B. This new Tabernacle was infinitely different
  1. The former Tabernacle was glorious. It was made of the most costly materials and constructed by men – but it was built by men.
  2. The second Tabernacle was conceived of the infinite, yet born of the earthly. No man fashioned this Tabernacle
- C. Jesus is the only access to God
  1. If you want to come to the Father you have to come through His Son  
**John 14:6** – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
  2. To know Christ is to know God. To stand in His presence is to stand in the presence of God.

3. With the old Tabernacle the entrance to the throne of God was barred by the presence of a veil. Through Jesus the veil has been destroyed.
4. With the old Tabernacle the throne of God was limited to a particular place. Imagine hearing of a place where you could meet God, where you could catch a glimpse of heaven. Jesus is that place.  
Have you come to Him?

### III. Phase III of the Building Project

- A. For those who come to Christ something amazing has happened
  1. God sends forth His Holy Spirit to indwell us  
Jesus indwells us through His Spirit  
**Ephesians 3:16-17** – “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; <sup>17</sup> That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. . .”
  2. We have become the dwelling place of God.
  3. This is God’s ultimate purpose for dwelling with men
    - a. The Tabernacle in the wilderness was limited. It involved only one nation and only the high priest could enter into the Holy of holies.
    - b. Even Jesus, God’s perfect visitation among men, was not God’s universal dwelling place among men. Jesus was rejected and slain.  
**Isaiah 53:3** – “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”
    - c. Under the New Covenant, however, God dwells with His people universally.  
**Jeremiah 31:33-34** – “But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
    - d. Jesus Christ has come to take up residence with us powerfully, particularly and permanently.
- B. The New Testament describes this by using the language of the Temple
  1. Remember, the Temple was simply a more permanent representation of the Tabernacle – a structure of stone wherein God would dwell with His people individually and through the church.
  2. Listen to the description of the new Temple God has created  
**Ephesians 2:19-22** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; <sup>20</sup> And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; <sup>21</sup> In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: <sup>22</sup> In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

**1 Peter 2:5** – “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

- C. While the Tabernacle was constructed by men, the church is built entirely by the Holy Spirit – it is not a work of men.
1. We preach the Word but it is the Holy Spirit that convinces men of sin and judgment and it is the Holy Spirit that grants faith and repentance persuading us to turn from our sin and trust Christ.
  2. This is God’s ultimate building plan upon the earth and He will continue it until every stone has been laid.  
**Matthew 16:18** – “. . . upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
  3. Every stone has been chosen and is being laid until God’s holy Temple is complete
- D. This dwelling place of God is given to us in the context of the church – there is a corporate unity  
**Ephesians 3:21** – “Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”  
**Ephesians 5:25-27** – “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”  
**1 Timothy 3:14-15** – “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: <sup>15</sup> But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”  
**Colossians 1:18** – “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.”
1. Too often Christians think of their relationship with Christ only on an individual basis – only with regard to their personal relationship with Christ.
  2. Many in our generation see little importance for the church. Many see the family as having the greatest importance while the church fades into insignificance.
  3. Without diminishing the importance of the family, the church must be seen as having greater importance. It is in through the church that fathers are taught how to oversee their families.
  4. The NT is written to the church primarily and individuals secondarily.
- E. The emphasis upon God’s holy Tabernacle is holiness
1. It is His dwelling place – the Holy of Holies could not be approached carelessly. The Ark of the Covenant could not be handled carelessly.
  2. If God dwells in us then we must be holy  
**1 Corinthians 3:16-17** – “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? <sup>17</sup> If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.”

**1 Corinthians 6:18-20** – “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. <sup>19</sup> What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

**2 Corinthians 6:16-17** – “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>17</sup> Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,”

Conclusion:

1. God has blessed us with the greatest of blessings. He has given us Himself and is dwelling in us.
2. With great blessing comes great responsibility. Come out from among them and be ye separate. May we live before this world in holiness and purity reflecting the glory of God.