

# **Growing Deeper in Fellowship With God**

**Exodus 25**

**Pastor Guy Gray**

## **An amazing promise—a priceless gift**

“I will dwell among them (Exodus 25:8).” What an amazing promise from God! This is the most exciting news that the Israelites could have ever heard—God himself would dwell in their midst! But it must have also caused them great concern. After all, this is the God who appeared to them in an overwhelming display of power and majesty on the Holy Mountain. How can this be? How can God Himself dwell in the midst of this imperfect people? How can this rag-tag group of Israelites know and experience almighty God in a vital relationship of daily fellowship? What an amazing promise and a priceless gift! But how will it work in real life?

## **A “Tabernacle” in the wilderness**

God tells them to build a sanctuary so that He may dwell in their midst. But we know that God does not dwell in a house made by human hands (Acts 7:48-50)! So we learn that the tabernacle is a structure carefully designed as a visual illustration of genuine fellowship with God. They were to make it precisely according to the pattern that was given (Exodus 25:9). The reason for this is that the “pattern” or design of the tabernacle was to be a visible picture of a spiritual reality (Hebrews 8:5). Everything about the tabernacle teaches us about growing deeper in our fellowship with God.

## **Meeting God on His terms**

The ultimate goal is to meet with God, but how? One of the greatest lessons of the tabernacle is that we must meet God on His terms and not our own. The Ark of the Covenant is the central focal point of the entire tabernacle (described in Exodus 25:10-22). The ark was placed in the innermost room of the tabernacle, a room that was known as the “Holy of Holies.” Everything about the ark and room it was placed in was designed to teach us that when we come to God, it must be on God’s terms. There is much here to teach that God is Holy and that no one is worthy to come before God in their own sinful condition. But on top of the Ark is a solid gold cover that is called a “mercy seat” or an “atonement cover.” This mercy seat is all important. It is God’s provision, God’s way, so that people might come to Him and experience relationship with Him (Exodus 25:17).

## **Jesus and you**

All of this points to Jesus. Jesus is called Emmanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23). In Jesus, God took on human flesh and “dwelt” among

us. In John 1:14, the word used to say that the Word “dwelt” among us literally means “to pitch a tent.” This is a direct reference to the tabernacle in the wilderness. Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s great promise to dwell with us! But there is more. In Romans 3:21-25, we are reminded once again that to come to God we must do it on His terms only. His provision for this is the blood of Jesus. In a remarkable reference to the Mercy Seat of Exodus 25, Romans 3:25 says that Jesus was set forth as a propitiation for our sins—and the word used is a direct reference to the Mercy Seat that was upon the Ark of the Covenant!

All of this means that we can come to God and experience real relationship with Him through Christ. This is good news! He wants us to have fellowship with Him and has made a way. There is hope! But we must not try to conform God’s way to our way. We must learn to come to Him in faith through Christ. We must diligently remain in The Word, in prayer and continue asking the Holy Spirit to draw us closer to Christ. As we do, we will learn to recognize God’s presence more; grow deeper in our love relationship with Him and ultimately we will become more like Him.

Here are some further passages to study to help you understand this teaching: Hebrews 8:1-6, 9:1-11 & 10:19-25.

## **QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION & DISCUSSION**

**Fellowship with God on His terms**

This week and last we were reminded of God’s commitment to fellowship with His people; to “dwell” among us. Take some time to examine how you “approach” the Lord in fellowship. Do you come to Him on His terms or yours? What is the condition of your heart? What are your motives and expectations?

It’s all about Jesus

Meditate on (and memorize if you are **really** motivated) Romans 3: 21-25 and Hebrews 9: 13 & 14. Journal and talk with the Lord about what you learn and experience.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **TODAY**

Singles Conversation  
1pm, RWCC

SHAPE Revisited  
4pm, RWCC

### **FRIDAY 03/16**

Friday Night Fellowship  
4th & 5th Grade Bowling  
7pm, RSVP to Lindsie

### **SATURDAY 03/17**

Ministry Prayer Time  
8am, RWLG

### **SUNDAY 03/25**

El Salvador Presentation &  
Pizza Night, 7pm, RWLG

### **THURSDAY 03/29**

Children's Ministry HOTEL  
Easter Basket Project  
6:30pm, RWLG

### **SATURDAY 03/31**

Junior High Bowling &  
Pizza, 1pm, Tigard Bowl

### **FRIDAY 04/06**

Good Friday Services  
6pm & 8pm, RWLG

### **SUNDAY 04/08**

Easter Services, 9am &  
11am, Lakeridge HS