

**Eagle Ridge Lake Elsinore — Sunday, September 15**  
**“As the Church...” (part 1)**

Welcome/Introduction

Scripture Reading (Numbers 9:15-23 ESV)

- Reflection (1-2 minutes)

**Numbers 9:15-23 (ESV)**

**15** On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony. And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning.

**16** So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night. **17** And whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel camped. **18** At the command of the Lord the people of Israel set out, and at the command of the Lord they camped. As long as the cloud rested over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. **19** Even when the cloud continued over the tabernacle many days, the people of Israel kept the charge of the Lord and did not set out.

**20** Sometimes the cloud was a few days over the tabernacle, and according to the command of the Lord they remained in camp; then according to the command of the Lord they set out. **21** And sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning. And when the cloud lifted in the morning, they set out, or if it continued for a day and a night, when the cloud lifted they set out.

**22** Whether it was two days, or a month, or a longer time, that the cloud continued over the tabernacle, abiding there, the people of Israel remained in camp and did not set out, but when it lifted they set out. **23** At the command of the Lord they camped, and at the command of the Lord they set out. They kept the charge of the Lord, at the command of the Lord by Moses.

**As the Church, we abide in the presence of God.**

- When we look at the story of God leading His people out of Egypt, they had to be completely dependent upon Him for all things (guidance, protection, and provision)
  - He led them in a miraculous way. He protected them in miraculous ways. He provided for them in miraculous ways.
  - All He asked was that they follow and obey His word.
  - We need to seek Him in these stories to see where we land as we follow Him on a daily basis.
- **Exodus 19:4-5, “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;”**
  - The same message is given to us today.

- Israel = enslaved to Egypt ... Us = enslaved to sin
- Israel = set free through God's intervention ... Us = set free through Christ's intervention on the cross.
- Israel = obedience/trust in the wilderness ... Us = obedience/trust through the Word of God.
- On Mt. Sinai, the Lord spoke to Moses and gave him specific instructions.
  - **Exodus 25:8, "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst."**
  - God desires to be with us, and so created the physical dwelling in which we get to enter into His presence.
    - So He asked the people to give of what they had to so this dwelling to could be made.
    - gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece." (Exodus 25:3-7)
    - Chapters 26-30, God lays out the specific design of the tabernacle.
  - **Exodus 25:2, "...from every man whose heart moves him..."**
    - God will dwell with us, but we also must have a willing heart to give back to Him and want to dwell in His presence as well.
    - As Israel found out, as is the same for us today, it can be very easy to give to the Lord, but much more difficult to obey what He wants us to do.
      - It can be very easy to give, and never be in God's presence.
      - It can be very easy to give, and be comfortable while others do what you're called to do.
    - **1 Samuel 15:22 (NLT), "What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams."**
    - **2 Corinthians 9:7, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."**
- **Let's look at our passage this morning: Numbers 9:15-23**
  - What stands out in this passage is the number of times the word "command" is used... 7 times in 9 verses.
    - This is a display of God's sovereign and purposeful leadership.

- God did not have to explain Himself, where He was taking them, or to explain the duration of time spent at each location along the journey.
  - The people’s job was to simply, by faith, follow His lead.
  - If we fully trust in God’s sovereignty, He will not lead us astray.
    - Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”
- **Verse 16: “So it was always...”**
  - What a beautiful promise of God’s everlasting presence in this place and in our life.
- **Verse 22: “Whether it was two days, or a month, or a longer time, that the cloud continued over the tabernacle, abiding there, the people of Israel remained in camp and did not set out, but when it lifted they set out.”**
  - No matter the time or duration, the Israelites initially dedicated themselves to the command of the Lord.
  - There is no reason why we shouldn’t do the same today.
    - Our cultural mandate is to get it done now. Make the time now. Give it to me now!
    - This mentality does not exist in the presence of God.
    - We wait on Him. We need to learn patience and trust.
- The purpose of this ‘tabernacle’ that we’re setting up on a weekly basis is just the same as it was for Moses and the Israelites...to be able to come in to the presence of God every week!
  - This is a place where we willingly come, expecting to meet Him.
    - Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”
  - Everything we do in this place is for that purpose!
  - **REMINDER: Our Christianity (faith/trust) is not and should never be dependent upon a building. Our faith in God does not begin and end in this temporary structure.**
    - However, we spend hours upon hours planning, preparing, setting up, and tearing down each week so we have a place to enter and experience God’s presence.
    - The details, materials, curriculum, signs/banners, hospitality, children’s ministry, worship, instruments, screens, chairs, etc. etc. is all meant to bring us in to a holy/reverent atmosphere where we can hear, learn, and be encouraged and equipped to live the life God wants to live.

- So when we walk in to this place each week, it's meant to serve that purpose alone.
- This is why we do what we do on Sunday.
  - This is our opportunity to come in to the very presence of God.
  - This is our opportunity to hear His voice.
  - This is our opportunity to worship, praise, and glorify His name.
  - This is our opportunity to be encouraged and equipped to do what He has called us to do.

## **As the Church, we abide in the presence of God *daily* through the sacrifice of Jesus.**

- Although the church building is a temporary/weekly gathering, we are meant to abide in God's presence each and every day!
- We can accomplish this because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
  - Matthew 27:45-46, 50-51, "Now from the sixth hour (12:00pm) there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour (3:00pm). And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'... And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split."
  - According to Jewish tradition, the veil was 60 feet long and 30 feet wide!! (standard movie theatre screen)
  - The temple veil is torn from top to bottom, as a symbol of God's action of removing any barrier/requirement between us and Himself.
    - Through Jesus' death on the cross and the forgiveness of our sins, we have full access to be in the presence of God, daily.
    - Hebrews 10:19-20, 24-25, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,...And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."
- We abide in God's presence daily by living AS THE CHURCH in our daily routine.
  - What you experience here on Sunday should dictate how you live Monday-Saturday.

- Monday-Saturday should not dictate whether you need to come to church to 'get clean'.
- **John 15:4-5, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."**

### **Conclusion (Invite worship team up)**

- As the church, we abide in the presence of God.
  - He desires to dwell among us, so He has asked us to build Him a place.
- As the Church, we abide in the presence of God daily through the sacrifice of Jesus.
  - We have constant, immediate access to our Heavenly Father through the blood sacrifice of His Son Jesus.
  - We don't have to wait. We don't need 'credentials'. We just need to walk in.

### **Communion (self-serve; we'll partake together)**

- Come up and take a wafer and a cup of juice, and then take your seat.
- Once everyone has seated again, read...
  - **1 Corinthians 11:28, "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup."**
    - Spend some time in prayer, examine yourself before the Lord (**one minute**)
  - **1 Corinthians 11:23-26, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'**
    - Let's partake together.
  - **In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes...**
    - Let's partake together.

**Tithe/Offering (Jason)**

**Closing Prayer**

**Worship (1 song)**