

RUF Bible Study – The Book of Exodus
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Exodus 40 – The Tabernacle – God With Us

I have to be honest. I don't know much about the tabernacle. I haven't heard many (any?) sermons on the tabernacle. I wasn't taught about it in seminary. I think I've seen charts and diagrams in books, and, like you, I flip right past them. It might be cool to get a presentation of the tabernacle, or to go see a life-size demonstration. But for the most part I'm not really that interested. I have a practical agnosticism about it. For me, it has always seemed irrelevant.

I'll be you're the same.

I like tents though. I'm trying to start something with my kids I'm calling ServenScouts and one of the first things the kids have to do is pitch a tent and sleep in it one night. They're terribly excited. If they see a tent go up, they want to be in it.

God likes tents. It's his idea to build this tabernacle, which is really a big huge tent structure in the middle of the Israelite camp. He spends 13 of the 40 chapters in Exodus talking about it. 1/3 of Exodus concerns this topic right here – the tabernacle. Then, if you keep going in your Bible reading, you see that the very next book is Leviticus which is almost entirely devoted to the sacrifices for the tabernacle. It seems like an awful lot of chapters to something that we really don't care much about. Doesn't it?

Let me say two things about that. The first is this: we've been saying all along that Exodus has the theme of *From slavery to worship by a redeemer*. Here we are to the worship part, 13 chapters of it. We actually touched on this before with the Golden Calf, because that too had to do with worship. But that was *wrong* worship. The people were worshipping as they wanted, not as God wanted. It is certainly no coincidence that that incident occurs smack in the middle of the tabernacle instructions. It highlights the fact that worship is of utmost importance to God, and when it is done wrong, he gets very angry to say the least.

Thus, after seeing the plagues, the miraculous saving stories and the smoke on the mountain, resist the temptation to think that the story is over. It's not. This is why God brought his people out. To worship him. Not for freedom from everything and anything, but for freedom to worship their redeemer. And he cares about how it's done. This is the climax of the book, what everything has been driving towards. Don't be bored. Be thrilled.

And then there's this. I have all along been trying to communicate to you that the Old Testament is extremely relevant for you today. That there are connections all over the place between the Old and New Testaments. That the New Testament fulfills so much of the Old Testament, but that it doesn't wipe it out and render it moot. That, in many respects, you cannot understand the New Testament unless you understand the Old Testament. I've been showing you these connections, fulfillments and understandings along the way. Remember how we noticed that when Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration they were talking about his "departure" (Luke 9), but the word for Jesus' departure is *exodus*. They were talking about how Jesus was leading his people out of slavery into the freedom to worship as sons and daughters. Whoa.

But here's another one, one connected to all this tent and tabernacle stuff. John 1:14 says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The NLT says he "made his home among us." Almost comically, but really accurately, Eugene Peterson translates this in *The Message* as "he moved into our neighborhood."

Big deal. Yes, it is. The word there that no one wants to translate into English is the Greek word for "tabernacle." You may have heard this – Jesus became flesh and tabernacled among us." It's not the best verb. He set up his tabernacle tent in our midst. Why is that important? Because you don't really understand that unless you understand what a tabernacle is or does. It is a deliberate connection between what we have in Exodus 40 and what we have in Jesus. In other words, when I'm talking about the tabernacle for the next few minutes, I'm talking about what we have in a fuller reality in Jesus Christ.

So what do we have?

Because God is transcendent, there is a barrier.

In some ways, I'm summarizing a lot of Exodus here to make this point. There are so many words and concepts we can use to describe God's transcendence, his otherness. Some of them are obvious to us just as they were to the Hebrews in

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Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By Doug Serven, © Doug Serven, 2007, website: www.ouruf.org. For this series, I used commentaries on Exodus from Cole, Ryken, Enns, Childs, Pink, Cassuto, Motyer and Currid, as well *A House for My Name* by Leithart, *From Paradise to the Promised Land* by Alexander, and *The Gospel According to Moses* by A Dickson. I listened to sermons from Tim Keller and Les Newsom. The reader should assume that none of the ideas expressed are original to me.

This week's lesson is heavily influenced by Rev. Jeffrey Myers and his book *The Lord's Service*. It's difficult to find helpful books on liturgy but his is a gem. Also consulted were Leithart's *A House for My Name* and Poythress' *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*.

Exodus. God is a spirit. He has no body as we do. That makes it hard to relate to him. We cannot see or hear him. We cannot touch or smell him. How do you relate to someone like that?

God is transcendent over time. He tells us that in his name, I am who I am. He always has been and always will be. He is not bound by our dimensions or our time concepts. That blows our mind.

God is powerful, using all of nature at his disposal. He can overturn laws of nature without blinking. He can send the Angel of Death and deliberately choose to kill only the firstborn sons.

God is holy. He cannot tolerate sin. None of us like sin, but God cannot be in the presence of it. When people are in his presence, they tremble in fear, knowing instantly their immense unworthiness.

God is just. He says in Exodus 34 that he will punish sin. In fact he says that he will let no sin go unpunished. This is a part of his holiness. He is just and the judge, the all-seeing, all-powerful, all-knowing judge over all of his creation.

God is mysterious. He is a fire. He is a cloud. He is a leader. He is a defender. He is terrible and beautiful. He resides on the top of the mountain with the thunder and the lightning. He is scary a lot of the time.

There are barriers to this kind of God, aren't there? Doesn't he feel hard to relate to?

That makes sense to us. But it's interesting to think about that what I just wrote wouldn't have made sense to Adam and Eve. And it won't make sense to us in the future in the new heavens and earth. Being at distance with God isn't so much a creator/creature distinction but a SIN distinction. Because of our sin, we find it harder to relate to him. We perceive our separateness. We are in rebellion to God. Sin is the barrier. You feel your sin each and every day.

We've seen this in Exodus many times.

God's people haven't exactly been exemplary here. They fuss and whine. They grumble and mumble. They lack trust. They're insecure. They forget what God has done. They directly disobeyed his commandments, while thinking they were doing the right thing in worshipping him the wrong way. And God gets mad. The holiness, justice thing kicks in and they seemed doomed.

Do you feel this way ever?² Everyone does at some level. Coming to God, coming near God, and being around God can be a fairly attractive proposition at first. After all, who doesn't want to get saved out of slavery? But you can start to notice that people begin to get nervous the more they really get to know God.

A lot of people come to God out of a position of goodness. They are good people. Loyal. Upright. They think, God will make me more good. Gooder, if you will. So that's a win-win. But as they get closer to God, the real God, the holy, just God, they begin to see that their goodness and their loyalty isn't good enough or loyal enough. And they have real trouble with that. God stops agreeing with all they're doing (sin!) and he's suddenly no fun any more.

Other people come to God out of this idea of freedom. They love freedom and God is shown to them as being the ultimate in freedom and fulfillment. Being in relationship with God will get me even more free-er. Again, this is a win-win. But as they get to know God better, they see that he places enormous constraints on their lives (their sinfulness!). He has something to say about freedom, a different concept of it than theirs. And getting closer to God ceases to be fun.

There are barriers. Our sin. Our frailty. Our idolatry. Our creatureliness corrupted by the sin. We all feel them.

But notice that God knows this. He sees it too. He created the tabernacle for just this reason. He isn't blind to this at all, but instead pictures it for us. God is there, but you don't have direct access to him. He's way too holy for that. He does have a tent but you can't go in it. He is present, but you cannot see him or you will die. He shows us the barriers, not at all pretending that they're not there.

Just a few examples. In many ways the tabernacle is a portable Mt. Sinai. Israel is gathered around and may only come to the base. Elders and priests may ascend part way to feast in God's presence. Only Moses could enter the cloud on the top of God's presence. The people may enter the tabernacle courtyard but not touch the altar. The priests work in the Holy Place but are not allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest (who is a permanent "Moses") can enter. Entering the tabernacle then is like being around and climbing Mt. Sinai.

Another comparison is to heaven, an analogy that Hebrews 9 makes, saying that the earthly tabernacle is built as an image of the heavenly tabernacle. The tabernacle, like the Garden, has a doorway on the east side, with cherubim all over guarding the location. Like the garden and Eden, most of the tabernacle is off limits. Here we see the rod of Aaron, which is constructed out of gold in a way that bears resemblance to the tree of life.³

As we are seeing, the whole tent is a barrier to the people. But on the very inside of the tent, there is another tent. And in that other tent, which is called the Holy of Holies, there sits the Ark of the Covenant. This is a box that was made, and was the place where God's presence was to dwell, the purpose of the whole building. It is the inside of the inside of this place.

On the top of the ark are cherubim. These are special angels, and we first read about them in Genesis 3:24 when they stand guard to the way of the tree of life with a flaming sword that turned every way. So cherubim are not really too much like the happy, chubby cherubs you see on greeting cards. They are the palace guards for the King of Kings. This imagery in the Holy of Holies and on the Ark is just one of the things that connects the Tent of Meeting with heaven. With creation. With majesty and holiness. There are others inherent in the tabernacle. It is a portable picture of heaven

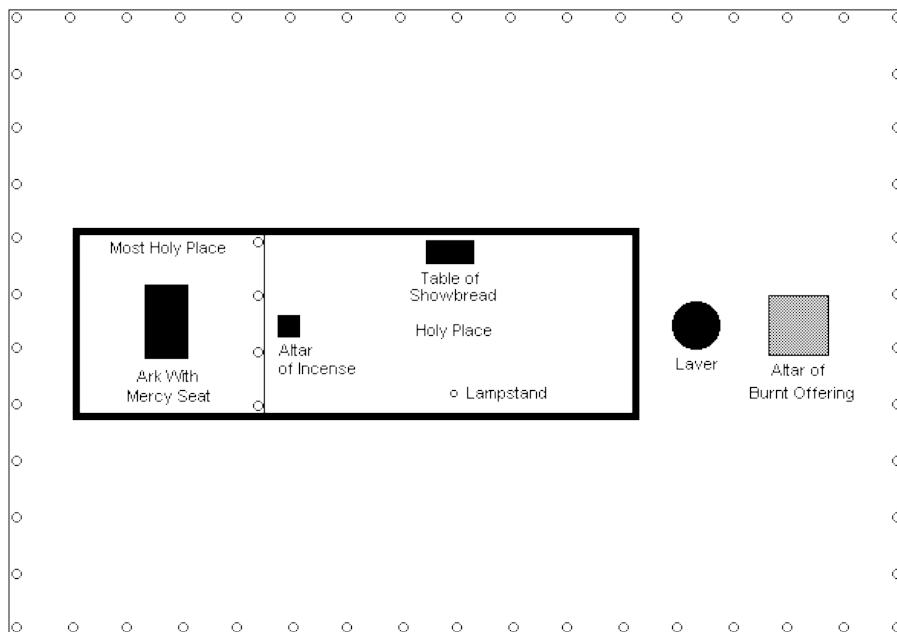
² The coming thoughts come from Tim Keller's sermon on this.

³ These are from Leithart's *A House for My Name*.

The ark is an earthly symbol of a heavenly reality.⁴ It is God’s throne, as it were. The place where God would come down. Commentator Peter Enns writes, “The tabernacle seems to represent a microcosm of creation itself. The splendor and beauty of the materials used – fine fabrics, precious metals, and stones – affirm the goodness of the created world. The precise and perfect dimensions of the tabernacle indicate a sense of order amid chaos.”⁵

On the bottom of the ark, inside the ark, are the tablets of the covenant. This is God’s footstool. Underneath the cherubim, underneath the throne of God sat the two tablets that held the Ten Commandments, the summary of the law. So we have the picture then of God sitting on his throne with his law underneath his feet.

Here is an illustration of it: (and two of the tabernacle)



Again, this is a big problem for us. We get here the idea of God as creator, as holy but also as judge. We cannot keep the covenant. Israel didn’t last a day. The more we get to know them, the less confidence we have that they will keep it. Thus, the ark cannot save them. It can only condemn them. Do you feel that barrier?

If you want to know God, you have to understand this barrier. You have to be aware of it. You feel it. You know it’s there, but do you acknowledge it? Is it a part of your worship of him? He did create the world after all. He is holy, holy, holy. He doesn’t allow sin to go unpunished. He cannot be seen or else you will die. Do you think you have him all figured out? Aren’t there some things about him that have to still be mysterious? Is God transcendent for you? Could you just waltz right into the tabernacle? Could you scamper up Mt. Sinai to take a look? Could you build a ladder so that you could look over the tent and into the Holy of Holies?

⁴ Ryken, 818

⁵ Enns, 521

You would die. You are not able. There is a barrier. Do not think you can worship him any way you wish. You must come to him as he prescribes.

Because God is immanent, there is a way to him.

God is not your buddy. He is transcendent. But. And this is the glorious word of the Bible, appearing so often as good news for us. But he gives access. There is a way in. God wants to be, and is close to his people.

We've been seeing this over and over in Exodus. Transcendence is not the only idea Exodus communicates. God has heard and knows his people. He loves them like a firstborn son. He bears them away on the wings of people. He saves them. He says he will be their God and they will be his people. He initiates relationship with Moses, even going so far to tell him his name. He invites Moses to be with him. He shows Moses his glory and even a part of himself. He says that he is gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

And it's his idea to build this tent. Although it separates him from his people, it also is *there*. It is present. When the people wonder if God is with them, they could look over to the Tabernacle and see God present with them. As Enns puts it: "The tabernacle is a piece of holy ground amid a world that has lost its way." Do you see this? God has made a way for him to be close to his people. He has made a way for his presence to be among the people.

Not only is it there, but it's *a tent*. Why is it a tent? Because the people lived in tents. God lives in the same sort of house as everyone else. Yes, it is far greater. Yes it is far grander. But it connects. It has a kitchen where people wash. It has a living room where people gather. And it has a throne room, where the king sits to rule his people.

We return to the Ark of the Covenant again. Remember the picture of God as Lord of Creation, over all his people in holiness and glory. And God as judge, the administrator of the covenant, who will not tolerate any breaking of his law.

I left something out. The ark had a lid. It is called the atonement cover or the mercy seat as Luther termed it. It isn't a seat for someone to sit on, but a seat of power, a place, a location where atonement occurs.

William Tyndale is said to have coined the word atonement and it means just what its parts say: at – one – ment. This is where separated parties come together and reconciliation happens. When sin happens, when we are in estrangement, when we break the law, when we are filled with sickness and death, when we deceive ourselves and others, when things break down, when shalom is punctured, when trust is broken, when people take advantage of and hurt others – we need atonement. We need things to be made right. We need payment for sin.

There is a way for this. God has made that way. He says that atonement requires blood. If you read through Leviticus, you see the importance and power of blood to cover the people and their sins. The priest is to come into the presence of God, slaughter an innocent victim as a substitute for the people, and sprinkle the blood on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way, he satisfies God's holiness and the breaking of the law, what is above and what is below the mercy seat.

"There is no mercy unless there is blood on the mercy seat. God is above, enthroned in majesty. We are down below, breaking his law. If we are to be saved, something has to come down between his perfect holiness and our unholy sin – namely, the blood of a sacrifice acceptable to God."⁶

So you have to feel the tension, the anticipation as Moses tells the people what they are to do and what it is they should expect. They work and they work.

And then, one year to the very day – an explicit connection between the salvation experience of being released from slavery by a redeemer – they start to construct the tabernacle for the first time. "Then Moses did; according to all that the Lord commanded him so he did." (40:16). They start with the middle and construct that tent. Moses sets up the ark of the covenant inside the Holy of Holies. God's presence does not come. He puts up the table with the bread. God is not with them. He sets up the lampstand and the altar with the fragrances and the altar for the offerings and the basin for washing. No God. He then put up the court all around the tent, the barriers and the screens. And they waited. "So Moses finished the work."

Will God come?

Yes. "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." God was with his people! In fact, he was so with them, that even Moses couldn't get in. The place was so thick with God's presence, that Moses couldn't enter. I don't really know what that means.

And so we finish the book of Exodus. God with his people. God promising to be with his people. He is in their midst and the guides them on their travels to the Promised Land. That's how the book ends. Looking forward to Canaan, assured of God's presence. In worship. Tada.

Because God is transcendent and immanent, we must worship him in Jesus Christ.

A strange, exciting beautiful story. So what?

There are two answers to that question, and they are what I brought up at the very beginning.

The first is that we read in John 1 that Jesus "tabernacled" among us. What does that mean? If we think about the tabernacle, which we've just been thinking about, then we see that this is an awesome picture of God with us. That is what

⁶ Ryken, 821

Jesus is, after all. He's God with us. Immanuel. That's what Immanuel means – God with us. And that is what the tabernacle is and was. God is still holy. We are still sinful. God is still creator. We have still broken the covenant of life. God is still judge and we are still guilty. That is the message of the Bible, and always has been. Christians are not good people.

We are a people who have seen and testified to our separation with God. We see the barrier. But we want in to see God. How can we get there? Where is the tabernacle for us?

It is in Christ. He fulfilled the law. He is the priest who makes the sin offering on our behalf, our mediator, which has been a prominent role in Exodus. And – amazingly! – he is the offering itself. It is his blood that is splattered on the mercy seat which makes atonement for our sins. It is his blood that we call upon to make us right before God, acceptable in his presence. He is a way better priest than Aaron. He is a way better offering than bulls and lambs, for he is the lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. He doesn't just approach the word of God in the tabernacle; he is the Word of God made flesh. And he isn't just representing life like the pot of manna, showing God's provision for his people. He is the Bread of Life, giving us life as we feed on him.

<u>Category</u>	<u>In the Tabernacle</u>	<u>Offering</u>	<u>Our Worship</u>
Glory	Aaron's Rod <i>Jesus is the greater, final and faithful high priest.</i> [Priest]	Sin Offering	Confession and Restoration
Wisdom	10 C Tablets <i>Jesus is the Word of God incarnate.</i> [Prophet]	Ascension Offering	Consecration by the Word
Life	Pot of Manna <i>Jesus is the heavenly manna, the bread of life come from heaven to give life to the world.</i> [King]	Peace Offering	Communion Meal

Do you see then that as we look at the tabernacle, we're looking at Christ fulfilling all of these things? Do you understand how absolutely amazing this is for us! Remember when Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple was ripped FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. This was a thick fabric that had to be cut. It couldn't just be torn like a piece of paper. And it ripped from the top, high up there. God ripped the divisions down for you, because of what Jesus has done. He has fulfilled these things. This is amazing news for you today.

If you're like me, you haven't thought about this for very long. You pass over this quickly, and I honestly don't blame you. There are a lot of details. But do you see the pattern here, the overarching themes at least?

It should make you better understand the book of Hebrews, which is filled with Old Testament references and fulfillments. Hebrews 9 is all about this very topic. It begins: *1 That first covenant between God and Israel had regulations for worship and a place of worship here on earth. 2 There were two rooms in that Tabernacle. In the first room were a lampstand, a table, and sacred loaves of bread on the table. This room was called the Holy Place. 3 Then there was a curtain, and behind the curtain was the second room called the Most Holy Place. 4 In that room were a gold incense altar and a wooden chest called the Ark of the Covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides. Inside the Ark were a gold jar containing manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted leaves, and the stone tablets of the covenant. 5 Above the Ark were the cherubim of divine glory, whose wings stretched out over the Ark's cover, the place of atonement. But we cannot explain these things in detail now.*

And then the writer of Hebrews goes on to show how Jesus fulfills all of this for us. He does a better job than I am, for sure. He was inspired by God to do so after all.

11 So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come.[e] He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. 12 With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. 13 Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. 14 Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. 15 That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

This is awesome stuff. This isn't ho-hum material. There is still a way! The tabernacle and the temple are no longer here. If you are a thinking person, then you should reason that that means that there is no atonement possible. God said there are strict rules for the way forgiveness happens. Those things are not possible (there is no temple at the moment and there hasn't been one for almost 2000 years) and thus they are not happening. The temple is destroyed. Therefore, there is no longer any forgiveness for his people.

Not true. Jesus Christ is the tabernacle. He said that he is the temple, and the people who heard him say that knew what he meant. He is God. God with us. God making a way. The door. The way. The truth. The life. The word. The bread. The wine. The sin offering. He is.

What does that mean? It means you have to come to Jesus. If you are not a Christian, then you need to see your separation from God both in temporal and in eternal ways. You cannot be good enough. You cannot be free enough. You need entrance into God with forgiveness or you will die. You need to see Jesus as the way in, the mercy seat, the blood that makes atonement for your sins. Call out to him. Have faith in the one who saves his people from their sins.

If you are a Christian, are you struggling today? Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins? Come to Jesus. None but Jesus does helpless sinners good. He is for you today.

The tabernacle was only a picture of Jesus. You cannot enter God's presence in any way you wish, but only through Jesus, the way God has prescribed to. Come to Jesus. He will present you to God and cover your sin so you can be loved, accepted and forgiven. That is the gospel for you today.

And there is another implication. Jesus fulfills the law. I am convinced that that doesn't mean that he obliterates it. He fulfills the tabernacle and the temple. Fulfilling the law doesn't mean it doesn't have meaning. Remember on the night before his death, Jesus changed the Passover meal into what we now call the Lord's Supper. He took a form and meaning and changed it. He filled it. He didn't obliterate it. He connected it, changed it and fulfilled it.

So is Exodus relevant to us?

Yes. It shows us ourselves. It is our story. Our salvation story. If you are a Christian, you too were released from slavery to worship by a redeemer. We've been seeing ourselves and our God in this book. That is relevant. And it shows us how God relates to us. Through signs and symbols. Through his creation. Through sacrifice. Through the law. We've seen his character and his attributes and what we are like.

This is the same God we worship today. He is no different. He is still all those things. We are still all those things. In other words, Jesus doesn't just wipe away the whole Old Testament. He fulfills it, yes. But doesn't throw it out.

That means we need to know it and apply it to our lives. Specifically here I want to point out that Exodus teaches us that worship matters. It is the point of the redemption. It is the culmination of the book. It is what we end on. Worship.

There has been evangelism along the way. There has been some intense counseling sessions. We have seen plagues and death, redemption and life. But we end all of that story with worship.

Does worship matter to you? Does what you do in worship matter? Does God care how we worship? Do you care about worship?

I don't think we think about it enough. I sure haven't. I take a much more haphazard approach. I think that whatever I do will most likely be okay, as long as my heart is in the right place. I think that I don't want to get too crazy about it, because that would be legalistic and wrong. I think that we should be fun and approachable to people. That people should enjoy worship.

But I think God disagrees with all of that. I'm including some patterns of the way God relates to his people in covenants and in worship. These patterns should be a part of our worship in our lives. We should take care in our worship. Not because if we worship exactly correctly then God will be pleased with us. No. It's just like the law. We don't obey the law in order to be accepted. Because we're accepted, we obey the law. So we don't worship right in order to please God. Because we're accepted and God is pleased with us in Christ, we worship the way that pleases him. And the Old Testament shows us the patterns of what that looks like.

Our worship really comes from synagogue style and structure. And that comes from the temple. And that comes from the tabernacle. And that comes from this passage. What I'm arguing for here is continuity between the Old and New Testaments and between both of those with our day and age. I'm also arguing that worship is more about what God does for us than what we do for God. God is the actor, and we react to him. God is the initiator, and we respond to him. Does that mean we're passive in worship? Not at all. We are extremely active, but we're doing so in response. Do we go away wishing there were more? Not if our worship is biblical. If it is, then we have our true needs met, and we're taught that those are our primary needs. As my friend and PhD student Mike Farley wrote to me: "It's okay to go to worship to get your needs met (because God is glorified when he meets our true needs and we delight in his provision), as long as God is the one who defines what our true needs really are."

Another way to put it: We worship God who is above us and over us, but God is also among us and in us enabling us to respond to him. And the key worship leader is Jesus Christ himself, the God-man who is our high priest ministering in the heavenly tabernacle to which we have access in him. So the liturgy is an embodiment of the fact that our whole relationship to God is accomplished in Christ and by the Spirit."⁷

⁷ From an email exchange between me and Mike, a PhD student at Saint Louis University in reformed liturgy and an MDiv graduate from Covenant Theological Seminary.

If you are not a Christian, you should go to church and see what the people of God are doing there. Check it out. It's a good place to be to learn. If you are a Christian, think about your worship. Guard your steps when you enter his presence. Don't offer the sacrifice of fools.

Two more points. We are told in the New Testament that we are God's temple. In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul writes: *16Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

You are God's temple. Temple connects to tabernacle. But it is "you" plural. It doesn't mean that you and you and you and you – each of you – are all God's temples. It means that you – all of you – are God's temple. You plural. Temple singular. Together we worship God. You need each other. We must be a community.

And the tabernacle always, always, always brought the people in in order to send them out. The temple never was the place where the people just hung out and stayed. They came and worshiped God together as he commanded, and then they left forgiven, reinvigorated by his words, encouraged and fed by his fellowship meal and commissioned by his charge. They left to go out and take the land. To subdue the earth and multiply it. To take dominion individually and collectively.

What did Jesus say at the end of Matthew? He had talked of his exodus. He had brought his people out of slavery and into worship. They were the people of God. He was in their midst, a tabernacle dwelling among them.

He said that they were to go out into the world, making disciples of all nations by baptizing them into the church and teaching them ALL the things of God. Reaching the world for Christ. Equipping the church to serve.

And then – just like in Exodus – he promised that he would be with them always, to the very end of the age.

Do you want to know if God is with you? Look to the tabernacle first. Then look to Christ. He is with us. You can find him. Worship him this Sunday with God's people. Do not neglect the proper worship of your Savior.

At the end of C.S. Lewis' book *The Last Battle*, Lewis writes:

Now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read; which goes on forever; and which every chapter is better than the one before.

So are we. Exodus has ended. It is our story. You have been released from slavery to worship God. Now the story begins.

Appendices:

These were helpful things as I studied, but they don't translate well into getting into the manuscript.

From Myers' *The Lord's Service*:

Covenantal Renewal

1. As covenant Lord, Yahweh takes hold of his creation in order to do something new with it.
2. The Lord effects a separation. What God grasps is then transformed from one state to another, from the old to the new: a new creation. This new union receives from God a corresponding new name, which implies a new hierarchical relationship. There is a covenant head (Yahweh) and there are those who are dependant on that covenant head (human creatures).
3. A new verbal communication of stipulations is expressed by the covenant Lord, a way of life fit for the new covenant situation, a gracious enumeration of how to live fully and joyfully in this new covenant.
4. The Lord offers His covenant partners a fellowship meal. He gives the gift of signs and seals of the covenant together with a setting forth of blessings for grateful faithfulness and curses for ungrateful disobedience.
5. The Lord arranges for the future succession of the covenant.

Mosaic Covenant

1. The people of God are graciously regarded by Yahweh, who takes hold of them and their situation in order to do something new. (according to his promises made to Abraham in Gen. 15:12-21)
2. The people of God are torn from Egypt, separated from the death of slavery to Pharaoh, and cross the Red Sea as a new creation. They are bound together into a new entity – a nation with a new name: Israelites. God reveals himself with a new name: Yahweh (Ex. 3:14-15). There is now a new authority structure for the new nation: Moses, Aaron, priests, Levites and elders are newly installed as rulers.
3. God speaks to the people, graciously providing them a new word from Him fit for their new estate – the Ten Commandments and what is called the “law of the covenant” (Ex. 20-23). The people then hear and respond with oaths of loyalty.
4. Not only does God utter the Ten Words from Mt. Sinai, but He also provides them with new signs and seals of His covenant: the tabernacle, the priesthood and the sacrificial system. Not surprisingly, associated with these sacramental tokens of his presence are all sorts of blessings promised to those who faithfully perform them and curses for those who faithlessly violate the covenant rituals.
5. Finally, the entire book of Deuteronomy renews the covenant with the second generation of Israelites in the wilderness just before they cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. The whole book is concerned with the maintenance of the Mosaic covenant under the leadership of Joshua (see especially Deut. 32-34)

The New Covenant

1. God takes hold of his creation to do something new. Jesus takes on our flesh in order to faithfully execute the covenantal promises.
2. In Christ we have the fulfillment of all the typological death and resurrection events in the Old Testament. Jesus and his people united to Him die to the old Adamic world and rise again as a new creation. God's people are mercifully separated out from the old world in union with Christ. This is also a marriage: the Husband leaves his family to secure for himself a new bride, and the Church is separated out from the old world to be united to her new covenant Lord. The people of God, therefore, are now united to Christ and become a new creation in Him. We become the Church, the body of Christ, a new reality. Furthermore, we are baptized into the newly revealed name of God: the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The people of God now are given new names: Christians. All of this means that there is a new hierarchy, new lines of authority: Jesus is Lord and as Head of His Church has instituted a government which represents Him on earth: pastors, elders, and deacons. (Eph. 4)
3. God speaks anew to His people, now through His Son (Hebr. 1:1ff). There's a 'new' way of life for those in covenant with God through Christ – the way of love and sacrificial living. This is all laid out for us in the new covenantal documents we call the 'New Testament [Covenant].'
4. The public face of the covenant has changed too. Gone are circumcision and the animal sacrifices. New, non-bloody signs and seals of the covenant are instituted – the Lord's Supper and Baptism. These are now the memorials of God's new covenant.
5. Finally, provision is made for the succession of the covenant with the ordination of ministers, elders and deacons, and Christ's charge to them to make disciples by baptizing and teaching the nations.

So what should our worship look like?

God Calls Us

We Gather Together and Praise Him [Call to Worship from Scripture and responses]

God Cleanses Us

We Confess Our Sins and Are Forgiven in Christ

We are restored as priests in Christ who have the authority to come boldly into God's presence by the Spirit.

The sacrificial animal was executed and its blood must soak the altar from top to bottom, thus opening the door in heaven from God to man. Blood must be shed. The animal (standing in the place of the worshipper) must die. The blood is applied on the altar. No one dare come into God's presence without confessing their sins and re-appropriating the efficacy of the shed blood of Christ. There is no sanctuary access without confession and forgiveness.

God Consecrates Us (Scripture Reading and Sermon)

We Respond in Prayer and Offering

The double-edged sword of the Word chops us up and rearranges us as living sacrifices (Lev. 1:6). The sword of the priest, which earlier had executed the animal, now serves to prepare him for his transformation into fire on the altar. The sword and the fire on the altar do not destroy, but transform. The judgment has been rendered by the knife when the animal was killed. The animal is transformed into smoke on top of the altar and is transported into God's glory-cloud presence. The NT makes clear that the transforming sword of God is the Word which the fiery Spirit uses to transfigure Christ's people (Hebr. 4:12). The sermon occupies the major place in this second step of sacrificial worship.

God Communes with Us (The Lord's Supper)

We Eat God's Food at His Table

In the Old Covenant this was symbolized when the animal is turned into smoke, ascends, and is assimilated into God's glory cloud, which corresponds to the worshiper's being drawn into the nearest possible relation to God. From Genesis to Revelation the covenant meal remains the preeminent symbol of God's intimate love and presence with mankind in Christ. God and man are at one (atonement) and at peace around the table. Once the congregation has received the forgiveness of sins and experienced the transforming ministry of the Word of God, then the Lord provides them with the assurance of peace – a covenantal memorial meal.

God Commissions Us

We Go Out to Serve God and Others [Benediction from the Scripture (not a prayer but a commission)]

From Peter Leithart's *A House for My Name*:

<u>Tabernacle</u>	<u>House</u>	<u>Sinai</u>	<u>Israel</u>
Courtyard	"Kitchen"	Base (people)	People
Holy Place	"Living Room"	Middle (elders)	Priests
Most Holy Place	"Throne Room"	Top (Moses)	High Priest
<u>Universe</u>	<u>Earth</u>	<u>Tabernacle Area</u>	
Heaven	Land of Eden	Most Holy Place (throne of God)	
Firmament	Garden	Holy Place (lampstand)	
Land	Eastern land	Courtyard (altar)	
Sea	Other lands	Outside the courtyard	