

Exodus Chapter 37 v 10 - Chapter 38 v 8

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 0 0] Good evening. Well done. It's good to see you. I wonder how much we want to be here tonight. I wonder how much we would maybe rather be sat at home in the warm, watching the telly.

The psalmist, Psalm 84, talks about how much he wanted to be in the presence of the Lord and his people. And this is how he puts it. Psalm 84.

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young a place near your altar.

Lord Almighty, my King and my God, blessed are those who dwell in your house. They are ever praising you.

[1 : 0 7] Of course, in one sense, his mind and thought is looking up to that time when he would be in the very presence of the Lord in heaven, worshipping. But there was the temple.

There was the place which was known as the house of God. There was the opportunity for forgiveness. The place of worship. There God's people were, but most of all, there the Lord was.

And when we come together, whether it be a Sunday morning or evening, we're not here ultimately because of one another. We're not here ultimately so we can sing hymns, or even though we can hear God's Word preached.

We're here to be in the presence of the Lord, to know his nearness, to yearn. I wonder, it's my heart. Can I ask that of myself? It's my heart's desire that I might meet with the Lord today, tonight, that he would minister to me and that I might worship him.

Well, let's stand and sing our first hymn. It's 512 in our hymn book, Stand Up and Bless the Lord from God's Word. And I'd like you please, if you would, to turn to Exodus in chapter 37.

[2 : 1 6] Now, Exodus 37, it's getting very near to the end of the book of Exodus, but that doesn't mean that we nearly finish the book of Exodus. If you were here a fortnight ago, I think it was a fortnight ago, we were in chapter 25 when we looked at the making of the Ark of the Covenant, that first and vital part of the tabernacle, the temple that God gave instructions to Moses to build, that there might be, in one sense, his dwelling place amongst the people.

And we're going to be looking at bits in between, but we're going to read verse 37 because we're going to look at other parts of the furniture of the tabernacle and what they mean and why God instructed them and what they're about later on this evening.

Because as we saw, the Ark was a very strong indication, pointer to not only the Lord Jesus Christ, but that place of atonement.

Remember, the lid of the Ark was called the seat of atonement, or the mercy seat. So, we're going to read from verse 10 into chapter 38.

To begin with, it's going to sound like lots of numbers and figures and sizes and shapes, but hopefully as we look at this again, in a little while, we shall see that each of these pieces of furniture, I'm calling them furniture in other words, objects within the temple have a purpose to point us to God's grace in Christ.

[3 : 49] So, verse 10. This is what the people made. This is what the craftsmen made. They made the table of acacia wood, two cubits long, a cubit wide, a cubit and a half high.

Then they overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold molding around it. They also made around it a rim, a hand breadth wide, and put a gold molding on the rim. They cast four gold rings for the table and fastened them to the four corners where the four legs were.

The rings were put close to the rim to hold the poles used in carrying the table. Poles for carrying the table were made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. They made from pure gold the articles for the table, its plates and dishes and bowls, its pitchers for the pouring out of drink offerings.

In verse 17, they made the lampstand of pure gold. They hammered out its base and shaft and made its flower like cups, buds and blossoms of one piece with them.

Six branches extended from the sides of the lampstand, three on one side and three on the other. Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on one branch, three on the next branch and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand.

[5 : 06] And on the lampstand were four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms. One bud was under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second pair, a third bud under the third pair, six branches in all.

The buds and the branches were all of one piece with the lampstand hammered out of pure gold. They made its seven lamps as well as its wick, trimmers and trays of pure gold.

They made the lampstand and all its articles from one talent of pure gold. They made the altar of incense out of acacia wood. It was square, a cubit long and a cubit wide and two cubits high, its horns of one piece with it.

They overlaid the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold and made a gold molding around it. They made two gold rings below the molding, two on each of the opposite sides, to hold the poles used to carry it.

They made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. They also made the sacred anointing oil and the pure fragrant incense, the work of a perfumer. They built the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood, three cubits high, it was square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.

[6 : 22] They made a horn at each of the four corners so that the horns on the altar were of one piece and they overlaid the altar with bronze. They made all of its utensils of bronze, its pots, shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and fire pans.

They made a grating for the altar, a bronze network to be under its ledge halfway up the altar. They cast four bronze rings to hold the poles for the four corners of the bronze grating.

They made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. They inserted the poles into the rings so that they would be on the sides of the altar for carrying it. They made it hollow out of boards.

They made the bronze basin and its bronze stand from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Well, what's all that about?

Why is this in God's word? And what does God have to tell us about it? Well, hopefully, with his help, we'll understand a bit more in a little while. Well, if you'd like to turn again in your Bibles to Exodus 37, that's page 96.

[7 : 32] Page 96, if you've got one of the Red Church Bibles, that'll help you as we think about this chapter and into part of chapter 38, where we read just a little while earlier.

I'm sure all of us at some point of time have visited a stately home, perhaps a National Trust property or an English Heritage property, one of these incredible sort of massive mansions, Castle Howard, those sort of places.

And if you've gone in and you've wandered around or been on the tour or whatever, you'll be taken through different rooms. And in each room, of course, there's furniture, isn't there?

There's chairs and it's got little things saying, please do not sit on here, and tables and pianos and all sorts of different furniture like that. It would be quite unthinkable to go to such a grand house and for the rooms just to be empty and bare, the furniture gives you that sense of the feeling of what it must have been like for those rich and opulent people to live there two or three hundred years ago.

Each room is furnished carefully, intricately, sometimes with original pieces that belong to the house or where they've been gone or missing, replaced with other furniture in keeping with the particular age and era and period in history.

[8 : 59] Certainly would not do to go to Castle Howard or one of these places and to walk in and find that there was a lot of chipboard and MDF furniture from the latest MFI clearance sale.

This isn't right. This shouldn't be here. This doesn't belong. It's such a stately and grand place. Well, the tabernacle, which God has instructed Moses and the people to make, is called God's dwelling place or God's house.

And it has to be and was very carefully furnished in keeping with its purpose and its character. Every piece of the furniture that we have listed before us in Exodus and other places too was commissioned by God.

He gave instructions clearly, specifically, that that bit of furniture was to be used in the worship of God and in the living out, as it were, of the covenant of the relationship between God and His people.

As I said before, just a couple of weeks ago, we looked at the ark. We looked at it because it was the most important piece of furniture, the only piece that was inside the holy of holies. Remember, the tabernacle was this great tent and had a great sort of windbreak around it, which was the courtyard and in the courtyard were certain things and then the tent was divided between the holy place and the most holy place.

[10 : 34] And in each part, there were different pieces of furniture and there's five pieces here for us in chapter 37 and 38. Some were in the holy place and some were outside the holy place and some were in the courtyard.

Each piece was unique and each piece played its part in the relationship between God and His people. And crucially, and this is why we're here, this is why as Christians we study the Old Testament, this is why we look at things which seem to be on the surface inconsequential, unimportant, perhaps even we might say boring, because each one of these pieces points us forward to Christ.

Puts us forward to the work of Jesus in our salvation and the wonderful work that He did for us in bringing us into a living relationship with the living God.

Each one speaks of the blessings of the covenant of grace, that covenant which we as Christians have been brought into, an unbreakable relationship with God.

And so in one sense what we're going to do this evening briefly is we're going to have a little bit of an antiques roadshow. Okay? We're going to briefly examine a piece of furniture that's been brought before us in the Word of God, explain its purpose, and place a value on it.

[12 : 01] Not numerically, but spiritually a hope for ourselves. Now, as we have chapter 37 and into 38 laid out, we start in the Holy of Holies and work our way out into the courtyard, but I'm going to reverse it and work our way in from the courtyard into the holy place by these pieces of furniture.

So going backwards, as it were, through the reading, taking us closer, and you'll see the reason for that, taking us closer to the Holy of Holies, leading us into.

In one sense, in the same way that a Hebrew, a believer of the Old Testament, or a priest would enter into the presence of God, they would go this way, not out from God, but in towards God, and that certainly is the purpose of the tabernacle, to lead us into the presence of God.

So first of all, chapter 38, verses 1 through to 7, we have, we're told, the building of the altar of burnt offering. All of these pieces of furniture are repeated earlier on in chapters 27 through to 30.

That's where Moses receives the instructions about how to build them, what they're to be like, and what their purpose is. But I read here, because they're all together, and it would have been jumping around the page quite a bit to find them earlier on.

[13 : 22] And so here was the altar. The altar, we're told, of burnt offering, and how it was to be made, how it was to be overlaid, with bronze. Notice that the altar of burnt offering, was not covered in gold.

All the others were gold. Do you see that? This one was bronze. Is that because it's less important? No, because bronze could withstand the heat. That's the problem. Bronze is, if you put gold, and you put a fire and burnt something on gold, then gold is a very soft metal, and it would quite easily melt at a low temperature.

Bronze is able to withstand serious heat, which it was needed to, because it was an altar where there was a fire burning all the time, day and night in its space.

And this altar of burnt offering describes what it was for. It's for carrying out those daily sacrifices on behalf of the people. When we read in Leviticus in chapter 4, we learn about all the different offerings that were to be offered there.

There were burnt offerings, there were sacrifices for particular sins, and different animals were slaughtered, and the fats and certain parts of the organs were burnt as an offering up to God to make atonement for the sins of the people and to provide for them forgiveness.

[14 : 42] Leviticus chapter 4 and verse 27, just listen to this for a minute as God explains through Moses what's to be done. If any member of the community sins unintentionally, does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, when they realize their guilt and the sin they have committed becomes known, they must bring as their offering for the sin they committed a female goat without defect.

They're to lay their hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering. Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of the burnt offering, pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar.

They shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the fellowship offering and the priest shall burn it on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the Lord in this way the priest will make atonement for them, they will be forgiven.

These sacrifices were to bring forgiveness, guilt offerings, grain offerings, fellowship offerings as well as sin offerings all included and burnt on the altar.

And as I said before, this altar, the fire burnt constantly, day and night, even when offerings were not being brought. What's that about?

[16 : 02] Well we know, we understand, don't we, a little bit of the Old Testament and understand a little bit of atonement and how God had given these instructions to show that it was necessary for when sin took place a penalty had to be borne.

Sin always leads to death. either the death of the person who had sinned or it's possible for that sin to be forgiven through someone else bearing the punishment themselves.

And you can imagine here a Hebrew, a believer, coming to bring their offering. They're coming into the entrance and the courtyard of the tabernacle. There would have been this large altar, smoke always rising from it.

priests often busy around it, animals being slaughtered. It would have been quite a scene, something memorable, something that really would have left an impression upon you.

The altar was there to provide propitiation for the sins of God's people. Propitiation. In the NIV, that word has been changed to become atoning sacrifice.

[17 : 14] But it's the word that is used in other translations in several parts of the New Testament. It means to divert God's anger away from the one who deserves it and place it upon another.

Here, in the Old Testament, it was the Hebrews who deserved God's wrath, but it was diverted, propitiated by the death of the animal sacrifices in their place.

But, the New Testament tells us, we know that these were never sufficient because that's why those offerings had to be brought again and again, day by day, over and over and over. That's why the fire kept burning over and over and over.

It just was not enough. For thousands of years, sacrifices were brought daily, either the tabernacle and then in the temple, which was its replacement.

But this altar points us to the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus. where he made propitiation and brought forgiveness of sins with his own death and his own sacrifice on our behalf.

[18 : 23] Hebrews has a lot to say about that. In chapter 9, verse 28, just one place, so Christ was sacrificed, once, to take away the sins of many.

He's our propitiation. We deserved the punishment for sin, but Jesus took the punishment upon himself, diverting it from us unto himself.

And that means for us, dear friends, when we look at the burning altar and we see what had to be done to bring forgiveness, we recognize that in Christ we have full forgiveness for all our sins forever.

God is never angry with us because his anger has been propitiated, has been placed upon Jesus instead.

We no longer are objects of wrath, but we are now objects of mercy and love. And so, 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 9, for God did not appoint us to suffer wrath.

[19 : 29] God's plan was not that we should suffer his wrath and anger, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, at the very start of the journey, as it were, from outside into the presence of God, we have an altar.

We have sacrifice. It shows us that no one can draw near to God unless they have come via the cross. Unless they have come via that place where sin has been dealt with, the altar of burnt offering.

If we want to press into God, if we want to know God, if we want to enjoy the blessings of the covenant with God, we have to come via the cross. We have to come via the place of forgiveness.

We have to come via the place of the atoning death of Jesus. That's the first part of the furniture which the people would see as they entered into this stately home, if I can put it that way, burning, recognizing just how serious sin is.

But interestingly, and I sort of put this in a different order, verse 8, we have the brass laver or the wash basin. We're told it was made from the mirrors because those mirrors in those days, as you probably well know, that when people wanted a mirror, they didn't have the mirrors we have with silver on the back and glass on the front.

[21 : 02] Mirror would be a polished piece of brass or bronze or some other metal like that that would polish and polish and polish to look at themselves. And these mirrors were given part of the offering to God and these were used particularly, we're told, to make the bronze basin.

Again, earlier on in chapter 30, we're told about the size of it and the dimensions of it. And what was it there for? Well, if you turn back there to chapter 30 for a moment, you can see that it was used, not by the people, but by the priests.

Chapter 30 and verses 17 and following. The Lord said to Moses, make a bronze basin and so on. And then verse 19, Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and their feet with water from it.

Whenever they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash their hands and feet so they will not die.

This is a lasting ordinance. Before any other priests could perform any duty at all, before they could serve the Lord or worship the Lord or offer us, they had themselves to be washed and cleansed, their hands and their feet.

[22 : 19] And it was so serious, says God, if they don't do that, they would die. It was a punishable offense to try to come to God and serve God with dirty hands and dirty feet.

Now, clearly, God isn't telling them to do these things because of hygiene reasons. Like we say to our children before they come and sit at the dinner, have you washed your hands? It's not, they look at them and they're black and their fingernails and they're black.

They say, well, they're not that bad, but it's not for that reason, is it? And we don't tell them to wash their hands and their feet for ceremonial reasons, for spiritual reasons, but that's what it was here, to remind the priests that God was holy and that they were unclean, or rather the world that they had come from was a sinful and a dirty world.

Hands and feet are really immense. They're the bits of our body which touch the earth, don't they? They touch things with our hands. Our feet touch things, I know, through our shoes, but if you had sandals on, as they would have done, then they would be the only places that would contact the world.

Remember when Jesus was with his disciples and he washed their feet, didn't he? And he said, people who've had a bath don't need the whole body washing again, just your feet. They were the things that got dusty and dirty.

[23 : 40] So God, in one sense, was not speaking necessarily about the priests, but about the world they had come from, the world that they were touching, a world which was tainted with sin.

And before they were to come and serve the Lord, they needed to come and receive his cleansing. As Christians, we know that we've been completely forgiven, haven't we?

That's the wonder of the altar and of Christ bearing our sin. All our sins are completely forgiven. There are no sins that God holds against us, but there is a sense in which we experience a daily cleansing from the guilt of sin.

That's why when Jesus taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer, not only did he say, give us this day our daily bread, but forgive us our trespasses. That's something we have to do daily.

So when you become a Christian, you know that when you become a Christian, it's part of that coming to faith in Christ is repentance, turning away from our sin, asking forgiveness for our sin.

[24 : 41] It's actually part of our daily experience in living and serving the Lord because we are all priests in the house of God. We are part of the royal priesthood, the New Testament teaches us.

In bringing our service to God, we're to come with a sense of, or rather with a recognition, we need the Lord's cleansing. That we do sin, that we do get it wrong, that we have been contaminated.

When we come to worship, when we come to prayer, when we come to read God's Word. Hebrews 10, verse 22, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience, having our bodies washed with pure water.

That's why in one sense it's important, dear friends, when we come to worship on a Sunday, do we come prepared? Do we come just rushing in from breakfast in the morning or from the busyness or out the shower?

And sometimes that happens, we can't help it. Or do we come, Lord, give me a wash, as it were, cleanse my heart and my mind that I can come and receive and worship and serve you as I should.

[25 : 50] We often talk about keeping short accounts with God. It's important that we do that. When in our prayer time, Lord, forgive me when I've sinned against you. Remember that when God gave these instructions, remember I said, read in Leviticus, if somebody sins unintentionally.

It doesn't mean that when we blatantly sin, of course, we know that when we blatantly sin we need forgiveness, but there are times we do things that we hadn't thought about, we hadn't realised, we've been unintentional.

There is a need for us to come and be cleansed in that sense. Lord, wash me and cleanse me. Thank you that you've forgiven me and so on. Now, so that's the outside and then we're moving a bit closer.

We've gone past the washing, we've gone past the offering for sin and then we come to this, the altar of incense, verse 25. They made the altar of incense out of acacia wood.

It was square. Not as big as the burnt, the altar for burnt offering, a smaller type of altar, this time with gold because it wasn't in the same intensity of heat burning up the sacrifice.

[27 : 00] It was an incense burner, we might put it in that way. So as the priest, as it were, came past the blazing altar with the smoke blowing up, then he would come as it were into a place where there would be that deep and strong smell of incense burning on the altar.

Notice that in verse 29. They also made the sacred anointing oil and the pure, fragrant incense, the work of a perfumer. Now this incense was peculiar, unique to God.

And God gave them instructions in Exodus 30 about all the different spices. Frankincense was one of them that they were to mix together and they were only to use that incense for the worship of God.

They weren't to use it as a bit of sort of aftershave or deodorant or perfume just for the worship of God. It was God-centered. And like the other altar, this one too was to be burning night and day.

The altar of incense. When John the apostle is given a vision of heaven and he sees God's people standing before the Lord, we're told that he sees some holding golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of God's people.

[28 : 30] Incense was to be, in one sense, a physical symbol of God's people praying. Prayers of God's people to him, in one sense, therefore, are something pleasing, a sweet smell rising up to God.

When we pray, God delights in our prayers. They are, to him, like incense being, wafting up because, in 2 Corinthians chapter 2, we're told, we are to God the aroma of Christ.

Prayer is not simply something which we do to unburden ourselves. Prayer is not simply something we do to get results. Prayer is part of our worship of God.

It's part of our praise of him. It's part of our expressing our faith in him. And we do that in the name of Jesus, don't we? We pray, we do so in the name of Jesus by faith in the work of Jesus because of the accomplishments of Jesus at the cross.

We don't come in our own merits or strength to prayer. We come trusting in Jesus. Jesus said, ask anything in my name and it shall be done. That's why often when we pray at the end of our prayers, we've got to be careful we don't become automated or mechanical in that.

[29 : 46] We pray, in the name of Jesus or in the name of your Son or in the name of Christ. And so as we, as the people of God are moving closer to God, they've had their sins dealt with but now there's a place of prayer.

Now they're beginning to cry out to God and bring to God their praise and worship, their prayers. It's a privilege to pray, isn't it? That altar burnt night and day, what's it telling us?

We can pray and bring our sweet prayers in Jesus' name before God the Father night and day in any situation and circumstance. He is always ready to receive us.

And so we're taking another step closer. There we have in verse 17, the lampstand of pure gold. It's made of one piece of gold, one 75 pound lump of gold.

That's pretty hefty. Somehow out of that one piece of gold, all these branches with lamps and almonds and buds and flowers was all to be crafted and to be made.

[30 : 56] An intricately beautiful thing with numerous oil-fueled lamps giving light throughout the holy place in the night time.

Leviticus in chapter 24, we're told there that Aaron is given this important commission. Aaron is to tend the lamps before the Lord from evening till morning continually.

So in the night time when it was dark, the lamps were lit so that the priests could carry on their duties, so they could carry on with the serving of the Lord, bringing their offerings and so on.

But also surely that lampstand is to give, again, something of a description of the character of God, of the, he's the light giver.

And that lamp resembles a beautiful tree, doesn't it, with its, with its, with its buds and its blossoms and so on. So we're recognizing that God is the giver of all life and light.

[32 : 03] God himself is light. Remember, when we look at the tabernacle as we've seen it and we look at it from the, from the New Testament, we recognize the tabernacle is a picture of heaven.

In fact, we're told that Moses was given the vision, he was given something of a vision of heaven and it was to translate it into solid things on the earth. And when we get to heaven, we won't need any lamps, won't need any sun, won't need any moon.

Revelation 21, the city, that's the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, heaven as we call it, the city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of the Lord gives it light and the lamp, that's Christ, is its lamp.

Wasn't Jesus the one who stood up and said, I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness. And as God's people are drawing nearer and nearer to him, knowing their sins are forgiving, bringing their prayers, they're seeing this resplendent, golden, shining light, in one sense as much as possible, trying poorly to give a reflection of the light of God's glory, God's beauty, God's majesty that they shall see in heaven.

As believers, aren't we those who are led by the light of Christ? Isn't he our light who guides us by his word and his spirit? Isn't he the one who lights the path for us?

[33 : 34] Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. So all the time they're drawing closer and now something brilliant is before them.

Isn't that our experience as Christians? We start off, don't we? We start off on the outside. We don't know God. We're ignorant of him. In one sense, like the, I'm calling it a windshield all the way around the tabernacle.

God is there and we're on the outside. We can't look over or in, but then we come in. And how do we come in? We come in via Christ and his sacrifice for our sins. And we know forgiveness within our hearts and that cleansing of our consciences with the pure water of the word.

And then, of course, we draw closer and we begin to engage in prayer with God and speak with him and talk with him and tell him other things of our hearts. And then as we draw closer to God and as we grow in the Christian life, more and more light begins to shine.

More and more of his brilliance begins to radiate in our lives and we begin to see the fog, as it were, dissipating about our view of the world and society and of ourselves.

[34 : 37] And there's a beauty and there's a light. And then we come to the table. The last piece of furniture, this was in the Holy of Holies itself.

This table, a table. We had altars and we've had incense and we've had great brass bowls and now we've just got a table. But it's a special table, isn't it?

It's a table covered in gold with mouldings around about it. What was this table for? Well, we know that it was the table of the bread of the presence.

Every Sabbath day, the priests had to bring twelve loaves of bread of the finest, purest flour and lay them out in two rows of six upon the table and there they were to be.

They were called the show bread or the bread of the presence. And each Sabbath when the bread was taken away, it was eaten by the priests and new twelve loaves were put on the table for another, another week.

[35 : 42] All the time, constantly, there was bread upon the table. Why was God doing that?

What's that all about? Well, don't we again find our minds drawn to the words of Jesus himself, I am the bread of life.

Whoever eats of this bread shall never go hungry. Aren't we reminded again of our prayer and the Lord's prayer, give us this day our daily bread? Aren't we being reminded by God that just as we need bread daily throughout the week, so we need to feed upon and rely upon and trust in and find our sustenance in God himself.

Not just that he's the provider, not just that he's the one who gives us everything that we need physically and practically for life, but truly we see that he is the one who gives us what our souls need.

In fact, he's the one who alone satisfies. He's the one who alone is the one who fills us up and gives us contentment. Don't you, haven't you had that experience? I'm sure we've all had that experience.

[36 : 59] We're so blessed, don't we? We've been able to eat and we've been, ah, that's a good meal. I see I've enjoyed a few of those, haven't I? That's a good meal. Isn't there the sense that as Christians, as we grow in the Christian life, there are times and occasions where we have this sense of, oh, it's been so good to be in the presence of the Lord.

We've been in a time of prayer, we've sensed his nearness and his speaking, his peace to our hearts, we've read his word and somehow it's come to us as something fresh and appetizing and satisfying to our souls.

We've been in a time of worship together and we've just gone away and we've been able to say how good it's been to be in the presence of the Lord. Notice there's twelve loaves.

Why are there twelve loaves? Well, clearly representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Remember when Jesus fed the five thousand, how many baskets were left?

Twelve. And the disciples, twelve. There's a sense of completeness, isn't it? all the people of God are fed by the Lord.

[38 : 07] Nobody's left out. Nobody needs to go away from the Lord hungry. God is the one who gives us the very living bread.

What do we find as we grow in the Christian life? The more time we spend with Christ, the more we realize we owe everything to him. and everything that we need is found in him. For, from him and through him and to him are all things.

Don't we have that wonderful promise of Paul when he wrote to the Philippians? Those very generous and giving Christians who had, out of their love, given and given what Paul calls a fragrant offering, acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Don't they again get the promise from Paul, and my God shall meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory where? In Christ Jesus. So all the way through as they are coming into the tabernacle of God, as they are drawing near to the Holy of Holies, they are being brought closer to the very presence of God, closer to the realization that God is my everything, my all.

He's my light and he's my sustenance. He's my atonement for sin. He's the one who hears my prayers. We have a complete and a perfect salvation pictured for us just in this furniture.

[39 : 30] Now you tell me, dear friends, that the Old Testament is boring. You tell me that the tabernacle and all these things have nothing to do with us. Yes, they do. They are shouting at us, Jesus, the perfect and complete Savior for whoever you are and whatever you need.

So let me just close by asking these simple questions about this furniture. Have I come to God by the way of the altar that atoned for my sin? Have I come to Christ, my burnt offering, who has made propitiation?

Am I trusting Him? Am I trusting in my own righteousness that somehow I can come to God without the altar, without His sacrifice? We can only come the way that God has made possible for us to come.

Have I even, this day, come and known my conscience cleansed and washed from the guilt that condemns me? Have I come again to the precious blood and said, Lord, forgive me?

I know that You do and I thank You that You do. Cleanse me from my sins, Lord, that I might serve You as I should. Have I come to the Lord with the sweet, fragrant prayers, like incense, before Him, that He delights in and rejoices in?

[40 : 45] Or are my prayers just a shopping list or a complaints department? Are they sweet and full of the name of Jesus and full of the faith in Jesus and the trust in Jesus?

Am I living my life day by day, walking by Christ, the light of the world? Or am I stumbling along by my own wisdom and understanding? Am I trusting in His Word and reading His Word and saying, Lord, let it be to me a light to my feet and a lamp to my path?

And most importantly, dear friends, am I feasting daily upon the goodness and the nourishment that God provides for me in Christ?

Am I finding Him to be my joy, my delight, my satisfaction? Am I running here and there looking for those things which I hope will somehow fill the empty void of my life?

Am I looking and hoping that Christmas is coming and somehow I'll be able to be happy at Christmas because I'll be able to do this and see this and receive this or am I finding actually that it's in the gift of Christ and in Him alone is all my delight and all my desire?

[41 : 58] Am I satisfied with good things? And above all, dear friends, are we pressing in? Are we pressing in to the Holy of Holies? Hebrews tells us that we, with boldness and confidence, can enter the holiest place by the blood of the Lamb?

We can enter in. Am I pressing in regularly and entering into the very presence of God? Am I experiencing the nearness and presence of God in my quiet times, in my worship, in my reading of the Scriptures?

Or is it just same old, same old, same old list of prayers, same old Bible readings, then off I go to the rest of the day? Am I like the psalmist of that psalm we read at the very start of our worship?

In Psalm 84, my heart yearns, faints for the presence of the living God. Let's pray together, shall we?

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[43 : 05] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. we, your creation, your children, might dwell with you and enjoy you. And Lord, we confess again that our lives are so busily taken up with, yes, important things and necessary things, but Lord, sometimes the most trivial things, and we just haven't got that longing and desire for the presence of our God. Thank you that you've made it possible for sinful men and women like us, not just to know about you, but to know you. Not just to be taught about you, but to be taught by you.

Lord, we pray that you would draw us in, help us to come the way that you've prepared for us in Christ, our sacrifice and our Savior. Help us to draw in daily, regularly, to know that cleansing. Help us to always be bringing our prayers to you, savored with the aroma of Christ. Help us always, Lord, to be those who look to you for light and direction. Help us, Lord, to be dazzled by your beauty and glory. Lord, grant us that we might be satisfied with all the riches of the goodness of who you are. Thank you again that your word speaks to us, and we ask, O Lord, that we may mine its depths and that we might enjoy its riches. For we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

[45 : 15] Let's sing our final hymn together. Let's sing our final hymn together.