

Repetition and Redemption **Exodus 36:8-38 and John 1:14-18**

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Why do we repeat ourselves? Why do we repeat ourselves? Well, it could be that we do not believe that we communicate clearly so that we have to say what we say more than once. Or it could be that we don't have much to say, so we have to say what we say more than once. One of the standing rules for preachers in the past was tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what you told them. A friend of mine was doing his very first sermon ever in preaching lab at Sothern Seminary. He preached the sermon, looked at his watch and realized he had preached it far too quickly and simply went back to the beginning and preached it all over again. It could be that we repeat ourselves because we assume that people don't listen well or at all and so we say something more than once hoping that they will get it on one of several passes. Sometimes we repeat ourselves because we really believe that what we are saying is worth hearing and needs to be heard clearly and completely. Why do you repeat yourself?

God repeats Himself. Follow the flow of Scripture and you will find that there are themes that are repeated over and over. The central theme of the Bible is the glory of God in creation and redemption; God created a world for Himself and populated it with people from whom He will redeem those who will live for the praise of His Name and with a passion for His purpose. This central theme of the Bible is found in every book of the Bible and is woven throughout its pages and passages. The Gospel is at the heart of the Bible, the good news of God's grace and mercy to those who call upon Him for forgiveness and in faith commit themselves completely to God. The good news of God's triumph over sin and His victory over death for all who believe is found woven throughout the Bible. Not only are themes repeated but also texts are spoken more than once. And when they are we ought to sit up and take notice. Look at Psalm 136 for example. The steadfast love of the Lord endures forever. This text is found here and throughout the Old Testament. Steadfast love is a translation of the key term used of God in the Old Testament: *Hesed*. It simply means that God is faithful to Himself in fulfilling His purposes for His people in His world for His glory, and that will not ever change; it stays constant through time and eternity. The phrase, "The just shall live by Faith" is found in the prophets, the Gospels and the writings of Paul. It is the key to understanding God's relationship to us and our relationship to God. This little sentence is large with meaning. Miss it and we miss everything about the meaning of salvation. It simply means that those who are right with God are

made right with God by God and for His glory. It is not of ourselves, it is by His grace. And the text on marriage is another that is repeated three times in the Bible at every level because God wants us to know that how His people relate to one another in marriage is radically different from the way those of the world relate to one another in marriage. So, themes and texts are repeated. And we must pay close attention when we see these repetitive patterns.

But we must sit up straight and listen very carefully and closely when extended sections of material are repeated such as we find in the three gospels or such as we find here. If you are reading in Exodus and think that you have heard some of this before, you have. Word for Word the same. And what is fascinating about what God chooses to repeat: the details of the design and development of the Tabernacle or that place that symbolizes His dwelling among His people upon the earth. Philip Ryken reminds us that over fifty chapters are given us in the Bible explaining to us how this dwelling place is to be made and he reminds us that this is the only building that was designed and developed by God Himself. It was to be the portable dwelling place of God among His people for over five hundred years. That it was designed and developed by God in great detail. That it stood for as long as it did as the place that symbolized God's presence and power among His people and that it finds personal and perfect fulfillment in the coming of Jesus means that we had better pay close attention to this place and what it represents.

Five terms are used in the Old Testament to characterize this place and its immediate antecedent. Each term tells us something significant about the place. Its immediate antecedent was called THE TENT OF MEETING. It was that place set outside the camp to which Moses went to meet with God. It was during this meeting with God that God gave to Moses what He was to give to the people. At the very beginning then we see that God designates a place in which He meets with His people and through which He gives His Word to His people so that they can then give to others what He has given to them. It is next known as the TABERNACLE. The term itself paints a picture of an encampment among which one comes to pitch his tent in the middle as the center of attention. Thus the Tabernacle was built as the temporary dwelling place of God among His people and it stood at the center of the camp so that all who were in the camp knew who and what was to be the center of our lives. This word that is used in the Old Testament of the place is used in the New Testament of the person of Jesus who "tabernacle" among us. The third term is TENT. This term emphasizes the pilgrim status of those who belonged to the One who inhabited the tent, and it emphasizes the reality that a pilgrim people follow their God on a pilgrimage. He cannot be tied down to any one place or any one people. He is the God who is

calling His people forward to be His witnesses in all the earth. The fourth term is SANCTUARY. This term is so important because it pictures the place of God's dwelling as a place of retreat from the world for the people of God where through the praise of His Name and the learning of His way we might return to the world to do once again what He has called us to do. The more the church looks like, acts like, preaches/teaches like and worships like the world, the less the church becomes a sanctuary and for the purpose of God becomes a mortuary. If among other things the church is not a refreshing retreat from the world for the people of God then it ceases to be the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The final term is TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY and this term emphasizes the witness that is to be in the place and through the place to the glory of God. Put simply, we come to church as the people of God to worship and we leave as the people of God to witness to His glory in the world. To the extent that we do the first we will do the second and to the extent that we don't do the second in the world we will want to find ways to do that in the church and the church loses her perspective as the place for the people for God to give glory to God in worship so that we can give the world the Gospel in our witness.

These various terms help us to see and to understand the function of the place as do the details of the design of the place. I want you know to have your Bibles open and your pens handy as we move through the sections of this text to see what God is showing us and to know what God is revealing to us through the details of the design of the tabernacle. The first section shows us the curtains around the holy place and the holy of holies, 8-13. TEN curtains speak to us of completeness, wholeness. FINELY TWINED LINEN speaks to us of beauty and grandeur. BLUE AND PURPLE speak to us of sovereign royalty, the King who sits upon His throne and rules everything and everyone according to His will and for the glory and honor of His Name. SCARLET speaks both of our condition and His provision. Though your sins be as scarlet; There is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. The CHERUBIM speak to us of the marvelous mystery that we cannot fathom but of the grand provision that God makes for His people. The words SAME SIZE and UNIT. Speak of harmony and unity that are produced by God in His provision for His people. He brings us to Himself and He brings us together for His purpose. And the GOLD reminds us of His sovereign splendor as the King of Kings and the ruler over all.

Go next to verses 14-19 and the covering over the top of the holy of holies and the holy place. The animals that are named are animals of sacrifice; their hides are used because these animals had been killed. God is shouting to us through the thick covering over the holy of holies that we cannot get to Him at all or ever had

there not been the shedding of blood, the substitutionary sacrifice of One without spot or blemish. The phrases SAME SIZE and UNIT are repeated here because it is so important to recognize this reality as the most representative reality of our right relationship with God. When God calls us to Himself, He always calls us into connection with others who are right with Him. The BRONZE CLASPS remind us of the great strength of the One who rules over His people and His world. The next section, 20-34 takes us to the frame upon which the curtains hung and to which the overhead covering was attached and here the emphasis is on the ACACIA Wood that was known for its tenacity and durability. The One who dwells in this place will stand forever as will those who come to Him and commit their lives to Him.

Two curtains or two veils are then described the first taking the high priest once a year into the holy of holies and the second through which the priests passed into the holy place to do their work and to say their prayers. Notice the similarity between these curtains and the outside curtains. There is an emphasis on Sovereignty, Royalty, and Redemption as well as a focus on mystery. Notice also that there are four posts of acacia wood; four is the number for the world so that these four posts of acacia wood remind us that what happens behind the veil is sufficient for all the world and it is the only way of redemption for anyone in the world. And when Jesus cried on the cross, "It is Finished" it was this veil as it was found in the Temple that was ripped open from top to bottom to declare to all who will listen that the way of access to God is through Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ alone. There really is no other name given under heaven among people through which we can be saved. Jesus and Jesus alone. Finally there is the veil or curtain that leads into the holy place. Much like the veil that covers the holy of holies the only differences being that there are five posts and the bases are of bronze.

Remember that under the Old Covenant the high priest alone went into the holy of holies once a year to offer a blood sacrifice on the top of the ark of the covenant so that through the shedding of blood his and the sins of the people might be forgiven. This same priest would pray over a goat and symbolically pass his sins and the sins of the people into the goat. This goat was the scapegoat. The priest went into the holy of holies first to offer God what He required so that His rightful wrath could be turned away from the people; they knew that if the wrath of God was not satisfied then there would be no possibility of forgiveness. It was only after doing what satisfied His Holy Wrath that the act of substitution could take place. They went through this ritual year after year. The high priest coming out of the holy of holies alive was a sign to the people that God had accepted the

sacrifice. And when the high priest symbolically laid his hands on the goat, the goat with a bell around his neck was led outside the city walls released, and the people waited in silence hoping that God would accept this substitute which they could only be assured of when they did not hear the bell ringing anymore which would mean that the goat had plunged over the cliff and died.

Four bases at the holy of holies representing the world to which God is reaching to redeem. Five bases of bronze at the holy place. Could it be that the fifth represents the only One who would go into the Holy of Holies whose blood would satisfy the wrath of our holy God once for all, forever? Could it be that this fifth base represents the One who came into the world to offer Himself as our substitute? This One who came into the world and the world did not know Him, this one who came to His own and His own did not receive Him? Look at this portrait of Jesus as He will be in the end on the last day, Revelation 1:12-18. Feet of bronze? The fifth base? The one who has made it possible for us to enter even this day into the presence of God. The One who is God's tabernacling presence among us. He is the One who shows us who God is and He wants us to see Him. He is the One who reveals to us who God is and He wants us to Know Him. He is the one who brings God to us and us to God and He wants us to receive Him.

All the great details of the tabernacle point us to one place and one person. That place is Calvary and that person is Jesus. The details of the Tabernacle are God's way of declaring to us how much He wants us to see Him and to know Him. And what we see partially in the grandeur of that place we see completely in Jesus. He stands before you and me today as the only way we will ever enter into a right relationship with God. To get to God you have to go through Jesus. And to get to Jesus you have to lay down your life before Him and receive Him as your life. Have you done that? Have you acknowledged that you are as sinner deserving God's wrath and judgment but you want to be delivered from that into a life of perfect peace and lasting joy that comes when you commit your life to Jesus? Would you do that today?