



MATT BLACK, Sun, June 24, 2018
livinghopechurch.net

8 | LEVITICUS 23

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

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Announcements

1. Welcome visitors!
2. Register your kids for VBS today, either in the foyer or online. Sign up for volunteer staff positions. They are listed in the insert in your bulletin. Also, we are in need of a ton of items for donation to make this a success. Finally, if you are a volunteer and do not yet own a Living Hope T-shirt, please sign up and let us know your T-shirt size today. We must order them this week.
3. I hope you'll come out to a community outreach event down the road at the town center in Carol Stream on Gary Avenue, July 7. There is an opioid epidemic in Carol Stream, and Village Church of Carol Stream is having an event called: One God, One Voice, One Village. The mayor of Carol Stream will be there. The Gospel will

be presented. The opioid crisis will be talked about and the solution is Jesus Christ. This is a great opportunity for us to be there as a church family for our community. I was asked to man the prayer table. Several other Gospel preaching churches from the area will be represented. It's July 7 from 6-8pm. If you can come and show support that would be great. If you can help staff the prayer table, please see me (Pastor Matt) and let me know.

Introduction

Open your Bible if you will to Matthew 6:25-33. Later we will look at **Leviticus 23:33-43**. We are in a series called "The Feasts of Israel." Today we are looking at the seventh and final feast, and our message is entitled: "The Feast of Tabernacles." Saints do you know God love you? He cares for you!

Let's stand and read our passage today, **Matthew 6:25-33**, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

This is God's Word.

Sometimes we lose sight of God's care and love for us. I know we are in the summer, but you know winter was not too long ago. In fact, Chicago is a place that you can have all four seasons in one day!

Well, one thing that happens in winter is your windshield freezes over has that ever happened to you? You've got to get your scraper working and get that heater on.

Sometimes our Christian lives are that way. God is guiding us, but we can't see. God loves and cares for us, but we can't feel it. We feel vulnerable, uncared for, and unprotected. Have you felt that way?

We all feel this way at times. But we must never believe it. At all times we are cared for by the living God. He is compassionate and caring. He is gracious and plenteous in mercy! If he gave us his only Son, how shall he not graciously give us all things? (Rom 8:32).

ADONIRAM JUDSON

Let me tell you the story of Adoniram Judson. He was a Christian missionary to Burma, now called Myanmar. In 1831, there was a massive outpouring of the Spirit there

when multitudes were saved. But that outpouring was preceded by ten years of deep darkness and doubting.

In May 1824, the British fleet arrived in Rangoon where Judson and his wife Ann lived, and bombarded the harbor. All those from western countries were immediately viewed as spies, and Adoniram was dragged from his home and put in prison. After a year and a half of torture he was released. Then his wife and baby daughter died and a great darkness settled over his soul.

He dug a grave beside his hut and sat beside it, wanting to get in it. For three years after his wife and daughter's death, he felt in constant and utter spiritual desolation. He said, "God is to me the Great Unknown. I believe in him, but I find him not."¹

Finally, in 1830, his brother died after coming to faith in Christ after a life of waywardness. This time Judson had such hope seeing God's hand that his heart and soul were restored with passion again for the Lord's work.

Adoniram Judson labored for twenty more years and left behind 3700 congregations in Burma. Yes, 3700 churches in Burma. But remember the three years of darkness when he could not find God, even though he knew God was right there with him? I want to encourage you Christian, that God is always with you. He will never leave or forsake you. Never, never, never, never. He loves you and will care for you.

If Adoniram Judson could have known in that dark period of his life what God planned to do through him, he would have rejoiced. Brothers and sisters, though you may be hurting or going through a dark trial, there is cause for rejoicing. God is faithful to you. I want to encourage you to listen to God. Hear him in his Word. See his perfect track record. He loves you. You can trust him.

The Puritans talked about going through the "dark night of the soul." You may experience that. You may be so weak that at times you lose sight of God's love for you, but child of God, remember that God will never, never leave you. He's got you. He wants you to experience his peace, his joy, and his righteousness in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17).

That's what the Feast of Tabernacles is all about. This feast is a call to rejoice. The Feast of Tabernacles is the last and most joyous feast. It lasts 7 days. There is a week-long celebration commemorating how God took care of the children of Israel in the wilderness for 40 years. So the people of Israel would come from far and wide and regather in the Promised Land. Hundreds of thousands gathered in Jerusalem and built booths to live in (Exo 23:16; Deut 16:16). The people would cut branches and make a temporary shelter to remember those 40 years God took care of them.

Tabernacles was also called the Feast of Ingathering because it was at the end of the harvest season. The grapes and fruit of the land had been reaped, so the people could rest from their harvest labors. What a great time of rejoicing the Feast of Tabernacles is. In fact, it was such a joyous occasion that the rabbis said the person who had not been to Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles didn't know what rejoicing really meant.²

Outline

1. God's Care is something to celebrate (Lev 23:33-38)

¹ Adoniram Judson, 391.

² John J. Parsons, "Hoshana Rabbah: The Great Salvation," Hebrew for Christians, accessed June 30, 2015, http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Holidays/Fall_Holidays/Hoshana_Rabbah/hoshana_rabbah.html.

2. God's Care is something to remember (Lev 23:39-43)
3. God's Care is found in Jesus (John 7 & 8)

Even on your most difficult and darkest day, you are not alone. You may be in a season of drought spiritually, or you may be lacking so much financially, and you don't know what to do. There may be a trial at work, and you are filled with fear and anxiety. My call to you today is to cast your cares upon the Lord, because he cares for you (**1 Pet 5:7**).

God is directing your steps. I promise you, he will use your darkest days to give him the highest honor and glory. God is caring for you even when you are giving up yourself.

1. GOD'S CARE IS SOMETHING TO **CELEBRATE** (LEV 23:33-38)

CELEBRATE GOD'S LOVE

“For seven days you shall present food offerings to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the Lord. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work. ³⁷“These are the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim as times of holy convocation, for presenting to the Lord food offerings, burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day, ³⁸ besides the Lord's Sabbaths and besides your gifts and besides all your vow offerings and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to the Lord.”

God says to his people: Stop what you are doing, come to Jerusalem, and celebrate my love. Come and celebrate for seven straight days. They were to offer 70 sacrifices during this time. Every day was a bar-b-que. Every day was a family gathering.

The Feast of Tabernacles is the happiest time of the year for the Jews. In sharp contrast to the solemnity of Yom Kippur, five days earlier, this week-long feast is sometimes referred to as: “the season of our rejoicing.” Seven days of continual, joyous celebration.³ They were to celebrate the grace, mercy and love of God.

The God of Israel is the one true and living God. He is all powerful, all knowing, everywhere present. He has no beginning and no ending. Our God is an awesome God. He is holy and righteous. He is gracious and plenteous in mercy. What a great God we serve. He is compassionate in his love. He cares. Such a great and powerful God, and he is using that unlimited power to care for you. Child of God, drink this in. God loves you. That is something to celebrate!

Ava and Daddy Day

One of my favorite days of the week is Monday, because Monday is Ava and Daddy day. Now I love to spend time with all my children, but Ava calls it this, so I'm going with it. I delight in my children. **I figure when I'm old and gray I'll never say, “You know I really regret spending so much time with my children.”** Each one of my children is so special to me. I love to see them smile and laugh. God made us to love that because he loves that. He loves to rejoice with you. He loves when you enjoy his presence. He wants your heart to be filled with his love and peace. The Bible says something special about God's love for

³ Sam Nadler. Messiah in the Feasts of Israel (p. 149). Word of Messiah Ministries. Kindle Edition.

you in **Zephaniah 3:17**, “The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will rejoice over you with loud singing.” That’s what we are celebrating today. God loves unworthy sinners!

God feels that way about you child of God. We are so imperfect, but God love has been lavished in our hearts. It brings a deep craving to not only know him better, but walk with him closer. Dear saint of God, if you have nothing to rejoice in on this earth, rejoice that God loves you. That’s something to celebrate!

That’s what God’s people would do every year for an entire week. They called it their Season of Rejoicing. Do you have a season of rejoicing each day where you celebrate God’s love and care for you?

An Anecdote for Depression

Dear saints, do you realize God put it in his calendar for the people not only to take account of their lives on the Day of Atonement, but then he put it in his calendar that the people should rejoice and remember God’s love for them for 7 days. Are you doing that? Perhaps you are struggling with depression because of work or home or church or something else. Don’t focus on that.

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is fixed on you, because he trusts in you” (Isa 26:3).

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6-7).

Saints, do you enjoy his peace? Do you focus on the fact that the infinite, Almighty, all-powerful God who created you loves you and cares for you? He cared for his people in the wilderness.

2. GOD’S CARE IS SOMETHING TO **REMEMBER** (LEV 23:39-43)

REMEMBER HIS PROVISION

God’s people were to take one entire week and dwell in a temporary shelter like they had for forty years in the wilderness.

God provides where you are

God provided for them just where they were. God told them: “You shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days (23:40).

Each of the items they gathered had significance.

- They gathered **Palm branches** which signified God’s **victory**.
- They gathered **citrus fruit** to decorate their booth, to signify God’s **provision**.

- They gathered the **thick willow and myrtle branches**, which signified God's **protection**.

The God of Israel is the one true and living God. He is all powerful Israel lived in booths (temporary dwellings) for one whole week each year, to be reminded of the wilderness journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. While they were in the wilderness God took care of them. They were not always faithful to him, but he was *always* faithful to them.

God provides no matter how difficult the situation

Again we read in Leviticus 23:41-43, "⁴¹You shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴²You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (23:40-43). They were in a wilderness. They had nothing. Yet God provided everything in a dry desert. God cares for his people no matter how difficult the situation. He loves you. On your darkest day he is there for you.

"Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell" (Neh 9:21).

"I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet. ⁶You have not eaten bread, and you have not drunk wine or strong drink, that you may know that I am the Lord your God" (Deut 29:5-6).

God fed his people with manna every morning, and they drank water from out of the rock. God provided for 2 million people in the desert! That is a miracle. God loves his people and he will always provide for them.

God provides when you are at your weakest

Are you tired spiritually? Then God calls you to rest and trust in him. He will give you the strength you lack! Isn't that what **Isaiah 40:31** says?

"They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint."

Remember the Lord's words to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore [Paul replies] I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:9-10).

When you are the **weakest**, it's your opportunity to experience the power of God in the **fullest**. Can I tell you, this is not pleasant? Paul asked for this trial (thorn in the flesh) to be removed three times). God left it there because it was his tool to conform Paul into Christ's image. He had to rely on the omnipotent greatness of God because he was so

small. **Don't be overcome by your trials. When you are the weakest, it's your time to experience God's power in the fullest!**

REMEMBER HIS PROMISE

“God promises to take care of you. Believe it. No matter what lack you are in right now, God has you. You may have made wrong decisions. It may be hard for a while. You may be undergoing God's chastening, but remember, God's chastening comes out of his love (Heb 12:6). But God promises to turn all your bad to good.

We need one goal this morning: to glorify and honor God. If you don't know how to get out of your mess, you start there. **1 Cor 10:31**, “Whether therefore you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Take inventory of your life. Make sure there's no unconfessed sin in your life. Make sure there is no unrepented sin in your life.

What is God's promise to all his children? “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (**Heb 13:5**).

Prayer for My Dad

When God says he'll never leave you he means it. He clothed his people in the wilderness. He never left them. He'll never leave you.

I want to testify to this. I've been praying for my father for almost 30 years. I have grieved deeply over his soul. A month ago, it was eating me up inside. Why hasn't God answered my prayers for my father? The Lord spoke to me through **Psalm 68:20**, “Our God is a God of salvation, and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death.” My dad has been more tender lately. It's a side of him I've never seen. God answers prayer. He's heard me all these years. But God's timing is not my timing. God's ways are not our ways. His ways are higher than our ways. And at just the right time, the Lord will show himself mighty to save. God often brings us to the end of ourselves so we can begin to see God's mighty power.

Saint of God, whatever difficulty you are going through, you can absolutely depend on God's promises. He cared for the children of Israel in the wilderness, and he will care for you. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is **Romans 8:32**, “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

God told his people to come to Jerusalem once a year just to celebrate God's goodness for a whole week. They would set up those booths, temporary shelters, remembering that God is a God who cares.

3. GOD'S CARE IS FOUND IN **JESUS** (JN 7 & 8)

You may say, I want to experience this care from God. I need it. Well, look to Jesus. Jesus loved the Feast of Tabernacles. On his very last celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, the fall before he died, he gave us to lessons about how to rest in God and truly celebrate even when life is awful and terrible. When you are going to the deepest darkest trials in your life you can still rejoice, because if you have Christ, he is with you no

matter what. No trial can take away the love of Christ for you. Nothing can separate you from God's love. Nothing! You may feel so dark and distant from God, but God is always very near you dear child of God. Don't fear. Stop fearing. Stop worrying. He's got you in his grip.

JESUS IS THE LIVING WATER (JN 7)

Look over at John 7:37 – There was a Temple water-pouring ceremony. Each day of the feast, a priest came from the Temple down to the pool of Siloam carrying a golden pitcher. The priest would fill the golden pitcher with water from the pool and return to the Temple followed by crowds chanting from Isaiah, “we will gather water from the wells of salvation” from **Isaiah 12:3**. The priest would make one circuit around the altar and then go to most of the people were gathered. There the people cried out: “Hosanna!” from Psalm 118, which means “save us now.”⁴

The priest would do this each day for the first six days of the festival, but the seventh day of the feast would be different. On the seventh day the priest would go to the pool of Siloam with his golden pitcher, followed by the praising and worshipping crowds. He would return to the Temple as before, but now the priest would circle the altar seven times. With each circuit the crowds would grow louder and louder in their cry: “Hosanna, Hosanna!”⁵ As the priest poured out the water on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood up and gave the meaning of the ceremony.

Look over at John 7:37 if you would. We read, “On the last day of the feast [of Tabernacles], the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (Jn 7:37-39).

Are You Dry in Your Spiritual Life?

Are you spiritually dry? Cry out to Jesus, your King and Messiah, and be satisfied by his grace and love. Let the Spirit flow rivers of living water out of your heart and life. Maybe you came to him many years ago, but today you are dried out. In the text the word “come” is in the present tense, thus we are to come to him, and to keep coming to him. The circumstances we go through are often more than enough to dry us out spiritually, and leave us feeling like a desert. We are to come to him, trusting and relying upon him for the grace that He alone can provide, which is sufficient for all our wilderness experiences.⁶

When Jesus is glorified, the Spirit is given, and rivers of living water will flow out of your heart. This is the very truth that the New Covenant declares has happened in Christ. For even as Jesus was poured out unto death for our sins, so he has poured out the Holy Spirit to all who believe on him.

⁴ Nadler, 156.

⁵ In Talmud, see Sukkah 34a, 54b, 48b, 51a; Rosh Hashanah 16a

⁶ Nadler, 158-159.

Come to Jesus, through his righteousness, and he will give you the Spirit of living water. Don't you want that power and freedom in the Spirit. Christ purchased it for you. If you want it, surrender all. Give him every part of your life. Let him search you and cleanse you of sin. Let him cleanse you thoroughly. Receive the fullness of his Spirit.

JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (JN 8)

Look over at John 8. We've looked at the symbol of **water** in the Feast of Tabernacles, especially in the Spirit's soul-satisfying ministry in the lives of believers in Jesus.

Light is another Biblical symbol, and another unusual ceremony that took place in the Temple. It centered around gigantic golden candlesticks.

On the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, three 75-foot high candlesticks were erected in the middle court of the Temple (The Court of Women).

Here all worshippers, men and women alike could enter and experience the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles around the great candlesticks. The light from those huge candles was reported to give light to all the courtyards of Jerusalem. The wicks for these candles were made from the priests' old garments, and in order to light them, young men would climb seventy-five feet up several ladders.

There was a virtual orchestra as people danced and sang and rejoiced as these 75-foot candles were lit to burn all week long.

Remember, the pilgrims who attended the Feast of Tabernacles from around the world had been celebrating joyously for seven days. On the eighth day was the solemn assembly. With the lights from the great candles extinguished, **how dim it must have appeared** after such a brilliant and joyous celebration!

It was then and there that Messiah spoke of a light that would never go out. We read that Jesus spoke a prophetic word in the treasury (Jn 8:20), which is the middle court of the Temple where the now extinguished candles were. These amazing 75-foot candles had been burning all week. You could see them for miles all around Jerusalem. Now that they were extinguished, and their glory was diminished, Jesus spoke of himself as the true light.

We read, "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'" (Jn 8:12).

Appropriate the Light

God's care is found in Jesus. All people will let you down. You will let yourself down. But Jesus will never let you down. He is your light. He is your living water. This is what he said about the feast of Tabernacles. This is the glorious meaning. Just as God took care of his people in the wilderness, Jesus promises to take care of you. Don't you need his light and wisdom? Don't you need his living water? Give all that you are and all that you have to him.

Listen, you will never have the light and wisdom and discernment you need for all these trials unless you are led and guided by Jesus Christ. Marriages need spiritual insight; child rearing needs moral discernment; businesses need godly standards; and in this world filled with temptations, we all need the light of Christ's spiritual guidance.

The Moon Shines the Light of the Sun

When I was a kid, we used to go walking at night in the Bayou of Louisiana. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face, especially if it was a cloudy night with no light of the moon or stars. We were all so glad when the clouds moved away, and we could see those bright stars and that bright moon.

You know the moon seemed so bright in that pitch-black darkness. But the moon has no light of its own, it has the light of another. The moon shines the light of the sun.

And so if you are following Christ, though you have no light of your own, you have the light of Christ. Dear saint, Jesus cares for you. He said, "Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (**Jn 8:12b**). You can't go wrong. He will care for you. He's leading the way. Don't worry where other people want to lead you. You follow Jesus. If you follow him, you will have the light of life.

Conclusion

God cares for you. He will supply your needs according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. He loves you. You may be going through darkness right now. Let the light of Christ pierce your soul. Just imagine all those temporary shelters.