

Where Is Your Tent?

“Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and **pitched his tent toward Sodom.**”
Genesis 13:12

Preparatory Reading: Psalm 122

Introduction:

1. It is sin, foolish, and profitless to think about others during such a sermon. Apply it to yourself, hard!
2. All men are not created equal. All men do not obey the gospel equally. There is great diversity here.
3. An evil heart of unbelief lurks in our hearts, lurks in our families, and lurks in our church. Beware!
4. Psalm 122 provides a wonderful introduction to the proper attitude and actions toward God’s worship.
 - a. The words are much more than material for singing, memorizing, or reading. They are mandates!
 - b. Is your attitude that of verse 1? It should be. It must be. Anything less begs for God’s judgment.
 - c. Are you prospering (III John 1:2)? If not, check out your degree of love for God’s house (v.6).

Psalm 84:10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

- A. David, the man after God’s heart, preferred the church of God to any other place or activity.
 1. He valued a day worshipping in the house of God better than a thousand anywhere else.
 2. He valued the lowest role in the church better than comfort and luxury among the wicked.
 3. We would ignore a doorkeeper saying such things, but David was a rich and great king.
- B. I hear a fool say in his heart, “I’m here, ain’t I?” Such is nothing like David at all (84:1-4).
 1. He longed and even fainted for the church of God. His heart and flesh cried for a visit.
 2. He described it as a great blessing to dwell in God’s house or church and praise the Lord.
 3. A second-love, lukewarm approach to His church is totally unacceptable (Rev 2:4; 3:16).
- C. I hear a fool say in his heart, “I ain’t wicked.” They have no idea what God counts as wicked.
 1. If the love of God does not consume and overwhelm you, you are wicked (Mark 12:30).
 2. If the love of God’s people does not move you next, then you are wicked (Mark 12:31).
 3. Mere thoughts or words about love in either direction are totally inadequate (Prov 20:11).
 4. Friendship with the world is to be the enemy of God, the height of wickedness (Jas 4:4).
 5. Friendship with the world is to commit adultery against God, the height of wickedness.
 6. Assembling with saints is a top priority for love of God and man (84:1-8; Heb 10:23-25).
- D. I hear a fool say, “But I can assemble with *those* saints.” Not if you joined *these* saints!
 1. There are reasons you joined *this* church – doctrine, practice, providence, people, etc.
 2. You affirmed in the name of Jesus Christ that the doctrine and practice were true indeed.
 3. You confessed God’s providence in connecting you here, which creates a special bond.
 4. You promised to assemble, forgive, help, love, serve, communicate, submit, support, etc.
 5. You cannot willy-nilly decide that you can try other doctrine, practice, people, etc., etc.
 6. We do not “release” members to try heresy. We exclude forsaking members for sin, for they are violating apostolic tradition and breaking their covenant with us (Heb 10:23-25).
 7. *If* the Bible allowed “release” for Arminian Baptists, then it would allow it for Mormons.
 8. *If* the Bible allowed “release” for Presbyterians, it would for snake-handling Pentecostals.
- E. **Where is your tent?** Do you prefer God’s house over any other place and any other people?

Genesis 13:12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

- A. Here is the fatal mistake of a fool who could have been great, but he chose to flush his life.
 - 1. Lot did not go to hell, because the Bible says he went to heaven; but he had hell on earth!
 - 2. He destroyed his life, as do all belly worshippers, who mind earthly things (Phil 3:18-19).
 - 3. What was his mistake? He *looked* at the world rather than God (13:10-11; I John 2:16).
 - 4. He moved his family toward the world, first slowly, with some caution, but for pleasure.
 - 5. Compromise is never content. Sin is never satisfied. Hell is never full. He soon was in the city, married his daughters to their guys, won a seat on city council, corrupted his wife and daughters at home, and lost every bit of influence with the city and his son-in-laws.
 - 6. We walk by faith, not by sight. Our actions should be directed by heaven, not the earth.
- B. Did moving his family toward Sodom have any consequences? More than he could ever see!
 - 1. No rich man ever lost everything as quickly as Lot. He became a caveman in one day!
 - 2. No powerful man ever lost all his position, prestige, and reputation as quickly as Lot.
 - 3. No family man has ever lost his family in such a disgraceful way and so quickly as Lot.
 - 4. No friend of the kingdom of God ever created so many enemies of that same kingdom.
- C. How do you look at the world? How does the world catch your fancy and deceive your heart?
 - 1. Do you watch television? There is nothing but a lie of a glorified world being presented.
 - 2. Do you look at careers? Are you in love with “getting ahead” with some super-cool job?
 - 3. Do you look at boys or girls? Are you waiting, waiting, for a super-cool boy or girl?
 - 4. Have you got it all figured out – you can have your cake and eat it, too? It is impossible!
- D. How do you pitch your tent toward Sodom? How do you take your incremental step to sin?
 - 7. Is it with friends and conversation that is less than praising God and quoting scripture?
 - 8. Is it getting so busy that you do not have time for real personal and family devotions?

Acts 2:41-47

- A. Here is an inspired description of true conviction and Spirit-filled Christians for our learning.
 - 1. They gladly received the preached word of God and were baptized immediately in faith.
 - 2. They continued stedfastly in apostolic doctrine, fellowship, communion, and prayer.
 - 3. They became totally united with all the other believers and shared their good commonly.
 - 4. They continued daily with one purpose in Christian fellowship and glad and single hearts.
- B. These people were committed from the start; they continued in that commitment unabated.

Hebrews 11:24-26

- A. Moses had one of the most illustrious tents in the world – son of Pharaoh’s daughter, learned and skilled in Egyptian knowledge, and mighty in word and deed (Acts 7:20-22).
- B. But he willingly discarded it all for the affliction of God’s people! What a great example!

How far can you backslide, and what is the cure (Heb 3:12-13)?

- A. Sin is very deceitful, and it will harden you, and surely lead you away from God (Heb 3:12).
 - 1. Sin is deceitful, due to our lusts and the devil. You will never know, but it will take you.
 - 2. Deceit means you will not have a clue that you are no longer truly righteous before God.
 - 3. Sin will harden you by cauterizing your conscience to lose sensitivity to godliness or sin.
- C. We must exhort one another to stand, which condemns private types and scorners (Heb 3:13).
- D. This is one of the chief reasons for church members to assemble together (Heb 10:23-25).

- E. There are winners and losers in the Christian race ... but only a very few winners, and they are the only ones that really count with God (I Cor 9:24-27; Heb 12:1-3).
- F. Compare Joseph to his brothers like Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, etc. They are all forgotten.
- G. Demas loved this present world and forsook the apostle Paul. The event is not new at all.
- H. If you wander out of the way of understanding, you will stay in the congregation of the dead.

Does God really care about doctrine as long as we love Jesus?

- A. The only love of Jesus God recognizes is keeping His commandments (John 14:15,21,24).
- B. Doctrine is very important, and variations are not acceptable (Rom 16:17-18; Gal 1:6-9).
- C. Another Jesus, gospel, and spirit are unacceptable, no matter the person (II Cor 11:3-4).
- D. False doctrine dangerously eats like a cancer and leads to more ungodliness (II Tim 2:16-18).
- E. There is only one true gospel, and the others are no gospels at all. Lascivious gospel, etc.
- F. There are not truths – there is truth – one truth – one way – one gospel – one faith – etc.!

Does God really care about details as long as we love Jesus?

- B. The only love of Jesus God recognizes is keeping His commandments (John 14:15,21,24).
- C. Details are very important, as Cain, Moses, Saul, David, Uzzah, and Ananias learned, and some of these were better Christians than you will ever socialize with in any setting!
- D. Find this foolish and effeminate idea taught in either Testament, and we will consider it.
- E. Jesus arranged discipleship to test whether we love Him (Matt 10:34-37; Luke 14:25-33).
- F. This fuzzy-wuzzy question means nothing, for true love is objective truth (John 14:21).
- G. The great ones in the kingdom of heaven keep and teach God's least things (Matt 5:19-20).
- H. You are either for Jesus Christ or you are against Him. There is no middle or neutral ground.

How can fellowship with “good Christians” of a different persuasion hurt me?

- A. Evil communications corrupt good manners; the rule is more sure than gravity (I Cor 15:33).
 1. Get the warning! Be not deceived! Be not deceived! You do not believe it will hurt you!
 2. What were the evil communications? A new idea on the resurrection by teachers in the church at Corinth (15:12). Surely these were “good Christians” that they communed with.
 3. Notice that Paul did not warn about doing drugs, visiting prostitutes, or aborting a baby.
 4. Paul despised early Preterists for their false doctrine (I Tim 1:18-20; II Tim 2:16-18).
 5. How can you call a Christian “good,” when they teach and commune with false doctrine?
 6. What is your standard of “good,” since you have left the word of God and gospel truth?
- B. What do you mean by fellowship? How can fellows in a ship row by two different rhythms?
 1. God Himself asks, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:2). No!
 2. The only kind of fellowship God accepts is one mouth, mind, and judgment (I Cor 1:10).
- C. Of course, “good Christians” make the best heretics. How stupid do you think the devil is?
 1. Good people who loved God and the Bible killed the Lord Jesus Christ! Can you think?
 2. It was “devout and honorable women” who persecuted Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:50).
 3. Religious people are most dangerous – hard to detect, and vicious in their compromise.

Where are the strong fathers like Joshua and Abraham?

- A. Young men know nothing of life, sin, deception, or compromise ... girls even less ... for they are not experienced or wise enough to see, understand, know, or fear the danger.
 1. They are not battle tested, for they have never contended for anything against anyone!
 2. Because this is the case, you must think for them without regard to their moral opinions.

- B. Your children are at risk ... you owe them to God ... their folly will soon break your heart.
 - 1. Does the devil want your children? Ask DSS, the PTA, the NEA, MTV, and the ACLU!
 - 2. You must bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, not the compromise of fuzzy feelings with other “good Christians” (Deut 6:4-9; Ps 78:1-8; Eph 6:4).
- C. Your daughters do not have a right to go out wherever they want, for they are the most vulnerable of all creatures; it is your duty to protect them by any means (Gen 34:1-2).
- D. The story of Eli is so terrible that you would think it would inflame every father to zeal.

Why do you get so worked up about differences and perilous times, etc.?

- A. Why don't you get worked up at all against compromise and heresy is a better question!
- B. Let us hope, by God's grace and according to His word, we are like Moses, Elijah, and Paul.
 - 1. Moses was righteously angry about compromise by “good Christians” (Ex 32:19-29).
 - 2. Elijah was jealous for God's religion during widespread compromise (I Kgs 19:10,14).
 - 3. Jesus was jealous against the “good Christians” and their bookstore (John 2:12-18).
 - 4. Paul was jealous for his Corinthians brethren on behalf of Jesus Christ (II Cor 11:1-2).
- C. Godly jealousy and zeal are good things ... and they burn and devour (Song 8:6-7; Gal 4:18).
- D. I want a great church like David wanted a great Israel, without strange children (Ps 144).
- E. We are at war, because that is my job (II Cor 10:4-6). You will hate my preaching for the anger, heat, and pressure, unless your heart is right and you are seeking truth and godliness.

Where are the perilous times (II Tim 3:1 – 4:5)?

- A. They are *out there* for sure ... Benny, Billy, Rod, John, Ernest, Rod Carpenter, Benedict, etc.
- B. But they are also in our hearts, as the devil makes increasing assaults on our convictions.
- C. But they are also in our families, as foolish children test the faith and standards of parents.
- D. But they are also in our church, as carnal, lazy, and weak members lose conviction for truth.

Do you think there are only a few in the way of truth acceptable to God?

- A. Absolutely! The Bible plainly says that the vast majority of even Christians miss the mark!
- B. Of course! How many were in Noah's church? Eight, and seven of them are quite suspicious!
- C. Of course! Out of 600,000 Jewish men that left Egypt, only two of them made it to Canaan!
- D. Of course! Out of the millions of Israel, God only had 7000 faithful in the days of Elijah!
- E. Of course! Out of the great crowd that followed Jesus, only a few remained (John 6:60-71)!
- F. Of course! Jesus said only a few would find the strait gate and narrow way (Matt 7:13-14).
- G. Of course! Jesus said what is highly esteemed – the majority – is wrong (Luke 6:26; 16:15)!
- H. Of course! Jesus called His people a little flock and asked about faith (Luke 12:32; 18:8)!
- I. Of course! Paul warned that there were many belly worshippers at Philippi (Phil 3:18-19)!
- J. Have you thought about “many”? See Matt 7:13-14,21-23; John 6:66; I Cor 10:5; 11:30; 16:9; II Cor 2:17; 11:18; 12:21; Phil 3:18; Titus 1:10; II Pet 2:2; I John 2:18; 4:1; II John 1:7.
- K. If you do not like the small company or the restrictions, the Broad Way is wide open for you!
- L. The falling away and perilous times were that – perilous (II Thess 2:1-3; II Tim 3:1 – 4:5).

Do you really think the truth is as restrictive as we teach and practice?

- A. No! I believe the truth is more restrictive than we teach or practice, but we are heading for it.
- B. If you do not like the small company or the restrictions, there is a Broadway waiting for you!
- C. Have you read the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus destroyed the Jews' “good religion”?
- D. Why not ask Moses why he didn't try to have Egypt and the Jews (Heb 11:24-26)?

Can we relax our stand a little to be more loving and accommodating?

- A. If anything, we should tighten our standards! Why would we even think of relaxing them?
- B. Where did you get the mindset or thought of backing off a little? It is not from the Bible!
- C. Why are you thinking of how close we can get to sin instead of how far away we can get?
- D. Where is William Screven, who opposed the abomination of infant sprinkling at any cost?
- E. How long halt ye between two opinions? If the world is God, serve it. If God, serve Him.
- F. Comfort or popularity is not part of our goals as Bible Christians. They are evil and wrong.
- G. Every plant our Father has not planted will be ripped up. They are blind leaders of the blind.
- H. You are not the first one to ask for smooth things and fables instead of doctrine.

But I am not going to depart from the living God.

- A. If you compromise scripture to allow “another Jesus,” what will keep you from Mormonism?
- B. How do you know? Sin and evil communications are deceptive, so you are playing with a danger you do not understand nor will you ever know when you are deceived and our enemy!
- C. Do you think David planned to commit aggravated adultery and murder? How did he do it? He was not where he should have been and doing what he should have been doing.

How do you measure a real Christian?

- A. A real Christian loves God and shows it by public devotion to Him His word, His church, etc.
- B. A real Christian loves God’s people and shows it by outward love and service to them.
 - 1. Love of the brethren is key. You cannot love God without it (I John 3:10,14; 4:20).
 - 2. Those who withdraw in practice or do so formally prove they are not real Christians.
 - 3. A real Christian continues in the truth of the gospel without quitting (John 8:31-32).
 - 4. Your Christianity is clearly recognized by the zeal you show toward God and others.
- C. A baptized believer who lives up to His baptism, which is certainly explained in this church.
- D. Afflictions, difficulties, or temptations are not the time to give up, but get up to the Lord!
- E. Peter would not leave, even though the hard doctrine of Jesus drove most away (John 6).
- F. Romans 8:5-6 contrasts the spiritually and carnally minded. See Paul’s rule (Phil 3:18-19).

The church and pastor does not move me any more.

- A. You get out of your church what you put in it. The happiest church members are always and only those church members investing in the church by all means. The complainers in any church are always and only those who do nothing and would not be missed in the least if they stopped attending. This is an axiom of life in general, and it applies to churches as well. It is preparation and spirit that make all the difference in the world. There is a reason for asking those joining us to remember that they are to love and serve more than be loved and served.
- B. Every man shall bear his own burden. This generation loves to blame others, because it is arrogant, lazy, selfish, and self-righteous. Lazy souls that want it done for them and to them are always the ones who do nothing or next to nothing for others. There is always a reason for Joshua and Achan; and it was not their parents, pastor, or church. It was their own folly.
- C. Jeremiah and Ezekiel hollered and yelled with graphic illustrations and terrible warnings of God’s demands on Israel, and hardly anyone paid them attention, and they were persecuted by Israel instead. What else is new? God’s ministers do not care (I Cor 4:1-4).
- D. The Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest pastor ever, but only a few followed Him with the commitment of true disciples.

Conclusion:

1. Talk after this sermon and before the next that is not spiritual in nature is ignorance or rebellion.
2. You are your brother's keeper (Lev 19:17; Gal 6:1; I Thes 5:14; Heb 3:12-13; 10:23-25; Jas 5:19-20).
3. Who is on the Lord's side (Ex 32:19-29)? Read the text and learn what it really means to follow God.
4. How do you move your tent back to where it should be? Confess spiritual compromise and sin, beg the Lord to restore the joy of your salvation, fill yourself with the word of God and prayer, and serve!
5. Two keys are attitude and preparation, for they indicate the priority in your life for the things of God.
6. If you are too busy, you are too busy. What else is new? You have to cut something out of your life, and it cannot be the church of God, His word, reading, or ruling your family in the fear of the Lord.
7. The Lord purges His churches in both testaments by various means ... death (Acts 5:1-11; I Cor 11:30), heresy (I Cor 11:19), civil war in Israel, etc., etc.

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "Playing with Sin," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/playing-with-sin.pdf>
2. The sermon outline, "God Hates Compromise," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/compromise.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, "Remember Lot's Wife," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/remember-lots-wife.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "Running Scared," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/running-scared.pdf>.
5. The sermon outline, "Carnal Christians," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/carnal-christians.pdf>.
6. The sermon outline, "Truth Is Fallen," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/truth-is-fallen-in-the-streets.pdf>.
7. The sermon, "Protecting Daughters," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/protecting-our-daughters.pdf>.
8. The sermon outline, "Psalm 144," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/psalm-144.pdf>.
9. The sermon outline, "Cut It Down," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/cut-it-down.pdf>.
10. The sermon outline, "Bible Christians," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/bible-christians.pdf>.
11. The sermon outline, "Exceeding Magnificent," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/exceeding-magnificent.pdf>.
12. The sermon, "Three Assumptions of Faith," ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/pdf/three-assumptions>.
13. The FAQ, "Why Do You Sweat the Small Stuff?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/introduction/faq/small-stuff.htm>.
14. The sermon outline, "Incremental Compromise," is not available in e-format.