

The title of this morning's sermon is, *Our Inheritance*.

On Sunday mornings we took a brief pause in our verse-by-verse study through Luke's Gospel to look at the seven OT feasts. The seventh feast will relate to the Transfiguration, which we're at in Luke.

We're going to start off the sermon a little differently today. I want to try something...

I'm going to ask you some questions and you tell me the book in the OT that most clearly comes to mind. We might have a few different answers, but that's okay...

If I say, "Tell me the book in the OT..."

- Most clearly associated with God's deliverance. Exodus! It's hard to imagine another time of deliverance rivaling Israel's deliverance from Egypt.
- Most clearly associated with victories...you might say Joshua.
- Most clearly associated with failures...you might say Judges.
- Most clearly associated with apostasy...you might say Kings.
- Most clearly associated with rebuilding...you might say Nehemiah.

Last one: most clearly associated with God's provision, or God providing for His people?

I think it has to be Numbers, b/c when Israel was in the wilderness, God provided for them in very dramatic ways.

I would also say the ways God provided for Israel are some of the clearest pictures of Christ in the OT. Since Christ is represented by these types, it's as though Christ was dwelling with Israel in the wilderness...and this brings us to Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: CHRIST SPIRITUALLY DWELT WITH ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.

Let me briefly explain how the different ways God provided for Israel looked forward to Christ:

1. God provided Israel with manna, and Jesus compared Himself w/ the manna: **John 6:32-33**
"Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, My Father gives you the true bread from heaven (referring to Himself). For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."
2. God provided Israel with water from a rock and **1 Cor 10:3** says **[Israel] all ate the same spiritual food (referring to the manna), 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and THE ROCK WAS CHRIST.**
 - a. The word **spiritual** is the key: it says **spiritual food** and **spiritual drink**. It doesn't mean Jesus was literally – or physically – the manna or rock, but it does mean Jesus spiritually provided for Israel in the OT...like He spiritually provides for us - the church - in the NT.
 - b. The words **followed them** really make it sound like Jesus was with them accompanying them around.

3. He provided Israel with a cloud during the day that protected them from the heat of the sun, and a pillar of fire at night that protected them from the cold. **Exo 13:21 THE LORD WENT BEFORE THEM by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.** So the LORD was even in the cloud and fire.
4. He provided Israel with a bronze serpent that saved them from the fiery serpents that were killing them, and Jesus compared Himself with the serpent: **John 3:14 “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”**

Think about what they camped around! The ark!

- This reminded them of the sacrifices, which were pictures of Christ.
- The ark represented the presence of the LORD...communicating the Lord dwelt with them.

So when Israel was in the wilderness God provided for Israel in all these dramatic ways that were pictures or types of Christ...so it was really like Christ was there with Israel in the wilderness dwelling with them.

Israel's time in the wilderness was so amazing, God gave them a feast to make sure they kept remembering it:

- The Feast of Tabernacles celebrated the way God provided for Israel in the wilderness.
- They lived in tents – or temporary shelters called booths – for seven days.

That's why the Feast of Tabernacles is also called The Feast of Booths.

Let's go ahead and look at the verses that describe the feast...

We're in **Lev 23**. This is the chapter that contains all seven feasts. We've looked at the first six feasts, which has gotten us to **verse 33**...

Lev 23:33 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34 “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths (or some translations say Tabernacles) to the LORD. 35 On the first day shall be a holy convocation (or Sabbath); you shall not do any ordinary work. 36 For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation (or another Sabbath) and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.

Let me get you to notice something so you can appreciate the dramatic change that took place between the 6th and 7th feasts...

If you look back at **verse 27** it says the Day of Atonement took place on the **tenth day**, and then the word **afflict** is repeated in the next few verses:

- **27 “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and YOU SHALL AFFLICT YOURSELVES and present a food offering to the LORD.**
- **29 For WHOEVER IS NOT AFFLICTED on that very day...**

- **32 It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and YOU SHALL AFFLICT YOURSELVES.**

So the Day of Atonement was about the Israelites afflicting themselves, and this is fitting b/c it looked forward to the Tribulation.

Five days later **on the fifteenth day of the month** the Feast of Tabernacles took place, and it was about rest...

- The Feast was seven days long...
- **Verse 35** says **the first day** is a Sabbath.
- Then **verse 36** says **the eighth day** is a Sabbath.

So it began and ended with rest...it was about refreshment and rejuvenation.

Can you imagine the refreshing change this was to go from the Day of Atonement to the Feast of Tabernacles?!

Look at **verse 37**...

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.

39 “On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land (this is also why the Feast of Tabernacles is also called the Feast of Ingathering...b/c they gathered in the harvest), **you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest** (or Sabbath), **and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest.** (another sabbath. Before we read the next verse I want you to look for the focus on branches...) **40 And 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.**

The Israelites would make their tents – or booths – out of palm branches. If I say “palm branches” and ask for the one event in all of Scripture that comes to mind, what would you say? The Triumphant Entry.

Listen to these verses from Mark’s Gospel...

Mark 11:8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields.

They threw these palm branches down, b/c they associated the coming King – Messiah – with the Feast of Tabernacles. Listen to the next verse...

9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 BLESSED IS THE COMING KINGDOM of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

They knew the Feast of Tabernacles was associated with the Messiah’s Kingdom, and they threw palm branches down b/c they thought He was establishing that kingdom on the earth.

Look at **verse 41**...

41 You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. (now notice this...) IT IS A STATUTE FOREVER THROUGHOUT YOUR GENERATIONS; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

One other reason the Feast of Tabernacles had such a strong connection to the Messiah’s Kingdom is the OT – specifically **Micah 4:1-7** and **Isa 2:3-4** – prophesied the Jews would celebrate it during the Millennium!

The Jews were even told if they didn’t come to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast they’d be punished! Let me read some verses to you from Zech. The context is the previous verses describe the Tribulation followed by the Second Coming of Christ...

Zech 14:16 Then everyone who survives (survives the Tribulation) of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles). 17 And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. 18 [this] shall be the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

So this is one other reason the Feast of Tabernacles is associated with the Millennium: people knew they’d be celebrating this feast, rejoicing at having Jesus Christ in our midst.

Now the last three verses...

42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 43 that 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.”
44 Thus Moses declared to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the LORD.

So they dwelt in booths – or tents – for seven days. It was like one huge camping trip. This is why it’s almost comical to me that the Feast of Tabernacles is associated with rest, b/c for some people camping is anything but restful and refreshing.

Now let me connect the dots for you...

Christ was with Israel in the wilderness...He was spiritually dwelling with them through types and shadows:

- The manna
- The rock
- The cloud and fire
- The bronze serpent
- The ark

The Feast of Tabernacles did two things:

1. It looked back on Israel's time in the wilderness when Jesus spiritually dwelt with Israel in the wilderness through the types and shadows.
2. It also looks forward to when Jesus physically dwells – or tabernacles – among His people during the Millennium.

And this brings us to the last part of Lesson 2. We covered Parts I through VII in the previous sermons, and I want to briefly review them...

LESSON 2: THE SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS:

- (Part I) Passover looked forward to Jesus' crucifixion.
- (Part II) Unleavened Bread looked forward to Jesus' unleavened body in the grave.
- (Part III) Firstfruits looked forward to Jesus' resurrection.
- (Part IV) Pentecost (or Weeks) looked forward to the "harvest" of the church.
- (Part V) The "Gap" between Pentecost and Trumpets looked forward to the Church Age.
- (Part VI) Trumpets looks forward to the Rapture.
- (Part VII) Day of Atonement looks forward to the Tribulation.

The last part...

(PART VIII) TABERNACLES LOOKS FORWARD TO THE MILLENNIUM.

We've discussed how the previous feasts were fulfilled by Christ. For example:

- All the Passover Lambs looked forward to Jesus being our Passover Lamb.
- The Feast of Trumpets gathered God's people and looked forward to the Rapture when the Lord will truly gather His people.
- On the Day of Atonement the Israelites afflicted themselves, and it looked forward to the Tribulation, when the Israelites will truly be afflicted for their sins...and have their sins atoned for by Christ.

It's the same with the Feast of Tabernacles...it looks forward to the time Christ truly tabernacles – or dwells – among His people.

As far as the application for us, this is what I would ask you:

- Do you look forward to dwelling with Christ?
- Are you longing to be w/ Christ?

Hold on to this question for a moment. I want to share an OT account with you that provides a fitting illustration. Here's the background...

In the OT, the firstborn son is the prominent son. Jacob – or Israel – had 12 sons, and those 12 sons became 12 tribes. The firstborn was Reuben, and so Reuben should've been the prominent tribe, but two things happened...

First, Reuben lost his firstborn status b/c he sinned w/ his father's concubine. When Jacob was blessing his sons, this is what he said to him...

Gen 49:4 Unstable as water, YOU SHALL NOT HAVE PREEMINENCE (or you shall not be firstborn),

**because you went up to your father's bed;
then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!**

The second thing happened when Israel constructed the Golden Calf. Please turn to the left one book to **Exo 32:25...**

The people started behaving very immorally, and look at **verse 25...**

Exo 32:25 And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), 26a then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the LORD's side? Come to me.”

Pause here...

It's important to notice Moses was giving the people a choice:

- They could join him and demonstrate they're on the Lord's side and repentant of their sins in constructing the Golden Calf.
- Or they could reject God and cling to their sin and idolatry.

Look at the rest of the verse...

26b And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.

I don't know how many Israelites joined Moses, but I'm assuming it was a lot more than just the men from the tribe of Levi. I'm sure some people from each tribe gathered to Moses, but Levi is singled out b/c so many of them – it actually says **all [of them]** – joined him.

27 And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’”

This might sound troubling, but understand these people rejected Moses' invitation. Forgiveness was as easy as turning from their sin to God...but they wouldn't repent. Since they wanted to engage in deliberate, persistent sin, they had to be killed.

Hebrew has no word for cousin, so even though it says **brother**, it's better to think of a cousin or distant relative:

- We know that, b/c the brothers of the Levites were other Levites and the whole tribe joined Moses.
- But they still had to execute people they had some distant relationship to since the nation of Israel is descended from 12 brothers.

They had to choose the Lord over anyone else in their lives.

28 And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.

There were millions of Israelites at this time, so it seems only a very small percent were unwilling to repent...about 1/100th of a percent.

Now listen to what Moses says to the Levites as a result of their commitment to the Lord...

29 And Moses said, "TODAY YOU HAVE BEEN ORDAINED FOR THE SERVICE OF THE LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day."

The Levites were **ordained** – or chosen or set apart – from the other 12 tribes, b/c of what they did here. They became the new firstborn.

Listen to this verse making the same point...

Num 3:11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel INSTEAD OF EVERY FIRSTBORN who opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine,

So the Levites became the firstborn...even though they were the third born.

Do you know what the firstborn gets?

He gets a double portion. He gets twice as much as the other sons...and when there's 11 other sons, that's an especially big deal...

Deut 21:17 [the firstborn shall receive] a double portion of all that [the father] has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.

Consider the timing of this...

Israel is about to enter the Promised Land! If you're one of the twelve tribes, there wasn't a better time in all of Israel's history to be the firstborn. They're going to divide up the land and what would you expect for the Levites?

- They get twice as much land as the rest of the tribes...
- Or maybe they get the best land...the land that MOST flows with milk and honey.

This is what you'd expect, BUT listen to parts of these verses:

- **Num 18:23 The Levites...shall have no inheritance. 24b...I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel."**
- **Deut 18:1a The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel.**
- They get into the land and have to be reminded again: **Josh 13:14a To the tribe of Levi alone Moses gave no inheritance.**

Levi is the only tribe that didn't get an inheritance!

This seems odd, b/c:

- They did something earlier that was so pleasing to God He gave them the firstborn son status.
- Then it seems like He punishes them by giving them no inheritance or portion in the land.

Many of you probably know what happened...

They did get an inheritance – or portion – in a sense:

- They got to be the priests...
- They got to be the temple workers...

Josh 18:7 the Levites have no part among you, for THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LORD IS THEIR INHERITANCE

Now upon first hearing that, maybe you say:

- *Wow, how wonderful. They got to be the temple workers.*
- *What a great blessing...they got to be the priests.*

I don't know whether that sounds attractive to you or not, so I'll just tell you...it shouldn't!

Think of what it really meant:

- The priests were spread throughout the land in the different cities of refuge...say goodbye to many of your family and friends and go live among a tribe that's not yours. No texting or phone calls or Skype to stay in contact.
- Say goodbye to much in the way of possessions or property...priests had the humblest, and most non-glamorous positions. Along with the prophets, they were the pictures of modesty.
- Plus, you had to live off the giving of others. If you're familiar with the spiritual condition of Israel throughout much of the OT, you can guess the nation probably didn't give faithfully to the priests.
- It was a hard, taxing, exhausting life. Remember Jesus is contrasted with the earthly priests:

- He SAT DOWN at the right hand of God in the heavenly temple, b/c His work was done.
- But there were no furnishings in the earthly temple for rest:
 - No chairs...
 - No couches...
 - No recliners...
- Because the priests' work was never done:
 - There were always more sacrifices to perform...
 - More lamps to fill...
 - More upkeep...
 - More people to minister to...
- It was a grueling, exhausting life, with almost no money or possessions.

And – interestingly – this is what God gave them...as a reward for their faithfulness!

But...

They got one other thing as their inheritance or portion. Turn to the right two books to **Deut 10:9**...

- **Deut 10:9 Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers. THE LORD IS HIS INHERITANCE, as the LORD your God said to him.**
- **Josh 13:33 To the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL IS THEIR INHERITANCE, just as he said to them.**

And this brings us to our last lesson, which I want to word as a question, so it makes us think...

LESSON 3: ARE WE CONTENT WITH CHRIST AS OUR INHERITANCE?

Consider for a moment that you're a Levite and all the tribes receive a physical inheritance in the land:

- They have property...
- They have possessions...
- They have homes they didn't have to build...
- They have vineyards they didn't have to plant...
- They have wells they didn't have to dig...

But you get the Lord:

- He's your portion.
- He's your inheritance.

So here's the question...

How would you feel about that?

- Would you feel slighted or shortchanged?
- Would you wish you had more?

Or...

- Would you be satisfied?
- Would you be content?

Let me give you two examples from Scripture...

God called David a man after His own heart. Considering some of the things he did, we can almost wonder why he received that title. A large part of it had to do w/ his heart for the Lord. Listen to what he wrote...

Psa 16:5a The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup.

Despite David's sins, he stands out not only from many of the other kings – but from most of the rest of the nation of Israel – in that there's no record of him ever engaging in idolatry. He was deeply content w/ the Lord.

Early in his life, he was forced to flee from Saul, relegated to living in caves, leaving behind his home, friends, family and even his wife. At this time when he seemed to have lost everything, he wrote **Psalm 142**,

5 O LORD; I say, "You are my portion in the land of the living."

David wasn't a great man for living a perfectly righteous and moral life, but he received such a great title b/c his sufficiency came from his relationship w/ the Lord. No matter what David had or didn't have, God was his portion and he needed nothing else.

I want to show you one more example by having you look at some verses in **Psalm 73**. Please turn there...

You might remember some months back Jake Motzkus preached a sermon on **Psa 73**. We're going to look at some of the verses pretty quickly. The psalmist – a man named Asaph – looked at the prosperity of the wicked, and it really upset him...

**2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,
my steps had nearly slipped.**

**3 For I was envious of the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.**

He has this struggle, largely associated with how much they have

**4 For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek – they have plenty to eat
5 They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind – they don't experience misfortune**

12 Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches – they have plenty of wealth and material possessions

He thinks things are so good for them, and he thinks things are so bad for him...

**13 All in vain have I kept my heart clean
and washed my hands in innocence.**

**14 For all the day long I have been stricken
and rebuked every morning.**

The wicked have it so well, and he has it so badly.

It goes on like this for him until he goes into the temple to worship, and then he has a revelation:

- He realizes how poor they actually are...
- And how rich he actually is!

And here's the important thing to know...nothing in his life or their lives changed physically!

Instead, he was able to see things spiritually, and he realized how much he had in the Lord. Look at **verse 25...**

Psa 73:25a Whom have I in heaven but you?

Now pause here so I can ask you a question...

Why do you look forward to heaven?

- Is it because you'll finally be pain free? And there's nothing wrong with looking forward to that.
- Is it b/c you'll finally some loved one you lost? And again there's nothing wrong w/ that.

But is that what you look forward to **MOST!**

There is something wrong if we look forward to anything **MORE** than we look forward to seeing our Savior!

Look what this reality produced in Asaph's life...

25b And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

This is an amazing statement...

When Asaph realized what he had in the Lord, he said nothing in this life – nothing this world had to offer – had any attraction for him.

73:26a My flesh and my heart may fail,

Here's another important part of Asaph's revelation...

- He knew his body was going to break down...
- He knew his life was going to come to an end...

That reality alone was part of his revelation, b/c as soon as we look at this life in light of eternity, everything comes into focus.

But even though he knew his body was weak, look at the rest of what he said...

26ba but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

He saw God as his portion and inheritance:

- He knew no matter what the wicked had, if they didn't have the Lord, they had nothing.
- He knew no matter how little he had, if he had the Lord, he had everything.

Now let me be clear about why this is important...

First, the Feast of Tabernacles looks forward to the Millennium, which is to say it looks forward to the time we get to be with Christ:

- When He tabernacles among us...
- When He physically becomes our portion and inheritance...

The Lord wants us looking forward to this!

And let me tell you the other reason this is important, by giving you a present application...

For some time the church has experienced a fairly peaceful time. Then – as I shared last Sunday – God brought us into a season of trials and testing:

- We experienced one death...
- We received the news of two people having cancer...both fathers with young children...
- This is on top of the other prayer requests and struggles...
- After saying that on Sunday, on Monday, I got the news that one of our long-time members and Sunday school teachers lost her son.

So this is important, b/c...this is real life!

I would ask you...

If God chose to take everything else from you:

- Your home...
- Your job...
- Your friends...
- Your spouse...
- Your health...
- Your child...

Would your relationship with Him be enough?

We have to be content w/ Christ as our inheritance...b/c there could be a time when it seems like Christ is all we have.

My prayer for myself, each of you, and our church in general, is that we can say like Asaph and David:

- **God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.**
- **O LORD; You are my portion in the land of the living.**

Let's pray.