

It's Never Too Late

This December will mark our sixth-year meeting as a fellowship group. In looking back, we all have grown in certain ways, but the journey is far from over. In the beginning, not knowing how to run a fellowship group, Bible Study or write scriptural essays and mini-sermons, really was a major concern. I know Chauncey and I prayed and wept in initially striking out on our own in such a direction. We'd better be sharing God's perfect truth without deviation as we both knew the eternal consequences that could follow (**Gal. 1:8-9**). If someone would have told me 30 years ago, I'd be teaching Bible Study, I'd have told them they were out of their minds. And maybe not in so nice of terms. Plus, I was *already* 58 years old and Chauncey, well *he's a little older!*

However, God knew what He was doing. He gave both Chauncey and I backgrounds in law enforcement *and* at command levels. This is in no way boasting about achieving rank as we all know the highest rank anyone can ever achieve is servant (**Matt. 20:27**). In our professions, aside from the administrative duties, we were called upon to supervise and direct subordinates. In my case, I had Special Operations Division with nearly 150 members and some of the highest levels of liability in law enforcement. SWAT, Bomb Squad, Aviation, Fugitive Warrants are just to name of few of the 11 bureaus and units. We took chaos and

turned it into order. Much like what God does with our lives when He calls us out of a world of sin and we accept His way of life (**Romans 8:28, 1 Cor. 1:9, 7:17, 24, 1 Thess. 2:12**). “Now no man takes the honor of high priesthood upon himself, but only he who is called by God, and in the same way Aaron was called.”-

Hebrews 5:4. We stepped out in faith and trusted God as it was His Fellowship, (**2 Sam. 22:3, 22:31, Psa. 16:1, 18:2, 31:4, 56:11, 62:8, Heb. 2:13**). “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.”- **Prov. 30:5**.

We share God’s Word every Sabbath. We have been keeping His appointed Feasts and Holy Days as He instructs all mankind to do in His Word. We have maintained an open forum to promote *fellowship* and *learning*. “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”- **Proverbs 27:17**.

I remember our first Feast of Tabernacles in 2016. We stayed at the Shamrock and Thistle Bed and Breakfast. In first seeing it on our arrival, I thought we’d booked into the Bates Motel. The accommodations actually turned out to be perfect for our first year’s gathering. I think most of us learned more that first year than all the previous years combined. Having everyone wear the same t-shirts and advertising the group was not on any agenda nor has it been since. Our focus is on God and growing in the likeness of His Son -**Romans 8:29 (2 Cor. 3:18)**. We had Bible Studies every day. It was so much more enlightening to see what lies ahead and discover the purpose behind the Holy Days as God was unfolding His plan for us

and all of mankind. It was a great learning experience for all who attended. Since that first Feast, we have stayed at several locations and have met a whole new family in the Family of God.

We celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles different from God's other festivals as we are commanded to live this week in tabernacles (booths, tents, non-permanent structures) or other such temporary dwellings. We are no longer required to gather boughs of the specific trees of the Holy Land to make booths, but we do travel to different places usually arranged by a vote among the fellowship in advance.

You might think living in booths suggests adversity or a lack of comforts. Back in the day, the Israelites didn't live in shacks that would blow away with any strong wind or storm, at least according to the wording in **Leviticus 23:40**- "And you shall take the boughs of beautiful trees for yourselves on the first day, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook. And you shall *rejoice* before the LORD your God seven days." This implies, not a rickety shack, but the best and most beautiful shelter that could be constructed under the circumstances. Also note the word "rejoice." How could you rejoice if you're in a shack? The primary lesson of booths is to teach us temporariness and lose our vanity. God teaches us that, like the Israelites who lived in tents in the wilderness, those who obey God's commandments are pilgrims on the way to their own

Promised Land, the Kingdom of God. We are fortunate these days to have hotels, motels and campgrounds to fulfill the role of “booths” or temporary dwellings. The spiritual lesson of booths is that in spite of the Israelites' weak position while wandering the wilderness, God supplied all their needs. The booths are a memorial of God's grace, care, and protection on our pilgrimage.

As we don't have crops to sell, the money for the Feast comes from our second tithe (**Deut. 14:22-25**). God isn't being selfish one bit. While new Christians may see it as a burden, this second tithe is a great blessing from God, allowing us to keep and enjoy His feasts properly and to receive a foretaste of the blessings of His Kingdom. Tithing is one thing we can test God on (**Malachi 3:10**).

The second tithe is to be spent; “And you shall spend the money for whatever your soul desires, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatever your soul desires. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.”- **Deut. 14:26**. He tells us “You shall rejoice” two times in Deuteronomy 16:14-15. God is serious about us rejoicing at His Feast. This doesn't mean you can go out and have a shrimp salad sandwich but you get the idea. Rejoice!

By now you may be wondering how “It's never too late” relates to the Feast of Tabernacles. Well, I wanted to share how exciting it's been in the past several

years and the growth we've seen and shared. I hope to encourage anyone who may read this or you may share this with of the joy we have found and the hope that is within us. No matter what age we begin the journey, 20 to 90, it's never too late. If God is calling, *listen* and *obey*. Because of God's grace, those who come in at the end are equal with those who went in at the beginning. Salvation is not only for young people; the reward is the same for everyone who keeps God's commandments and follows in the footsteps of Jesus (**Matt. 20:1-16**).

We are on our way to God's Kingdom and to the positions He has for us as kings and priests (**Rev. 1:6, 5:10**). The Feast of Tabernacles is a prelude of the things to come and we can only imagine what He has in store for us! "But according as it is written, "The eye has not seen, not the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."- **1 Cor. 2:9**. Pack your bags, it's almost time to go!

BL-09/18/21

