

Leviticus 23:33-43

³³The LORD said to Moses,

³⁴“Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD’s Festival of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days.

³⁵The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work.

³⁶For seven days present food offerings to the LORD, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the LORD. It is the closing special assembly; do no regular work.

³⁷ (“These are the LORD’s appointed festivals, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing food offerings to the LORD—the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day.

³⁸These offerings are in addition to those for the LORD’s Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the LORD.)

³⁹“So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also is a day of sabbath rest.

⁴⁰On the first day you are to take branches from luxuriant trees—from palms, willows and other leafy trees—and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.

⁴¹Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month.

⁴²Live in temporary shelters for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters

⁴³so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’”

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ! Last week was long and taxing and strange but this morning I can say with a newly found understand I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord. I went to bed last night after saying my prayers, asking others to pray for us, and listening to Donnie sing STAND. I woke this morning with a sermon that I believe you need to hear. So I am asking you to pray with me and for as I wrestle with:

WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE JOURNEY!

SHALL WE PRAY!

Father God we are here in your house this morning. Here to praise you and worship you and hear a Word from heaven. We need a Word that will sustain us. We need a Word that will inform and transform us. We need a Word that will help us become new creations in your Son Jesus the Christ. I am asking that you allow me to preach that Word. Allow the people of God to hear the Word and share the Word with accuracy and authority. Abba, I need you this morning! Guide my thoughts, my heart and my tongue in the name of Jesus. Amen and Amen.

For the past three Sundays we have been looking at the biblical story as seen thru the lens of the Lord's instructions as recorded in the book of Leviticus. If you have been tracking with me you know I have been attempting to help you see how the feasts and holidays – Holy Days - of the OT find their fulfillment in the NT with Jesus the Christ. I even pointed out how little time God really asks of us. One of our members responded after the sermon that the reason we get into so much trouble is because we have too much idle time. While that might sound like a trite comment, it is really true and I hope to speak to that this morning. But before I can get to that point I need to find some agreement in this place.

Can I get any agreement that we are on a Journey ... a journey that we hope will take us to heaven?

Can I get any agreement that the road will not be easy but God has promised strength for the journey?

Can I get any agreement that God is not through with us yet ... but when God get through with us we shall come forth as pure gold?

There are many things that are needed for this Christian journey. But this morning I am going to focus on just four of them. As I outline them for you I am asking you to pay close attention to where **YOU** individually and where **WE** are corporately as a church. The four things are not present as being 1, 2, 3, 4, but rather they are things that must be in operation at all times, in all situations.

#1 You must believe that God is Lord!

After each set of instructions given to the Children of Israel you find a reminder of who is in charge. **I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD!**

I brought you out of Egypt
I provided manna from heaven to feed you
I provided the sun by day and the moon by night

I gave you commandments to obey
I punished you when you disobeyed
I forgave you when you strayed

I sent leaders and teachers and priests to help you
I preserved my Word for you
I gave you my Son so that you could return to me

I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD!

#2 You must teach what I have taught you to the next generation

Teach them about the feasts and holy days and the ordinances

Teach them the commandments
(forehead, doorposts, as you walk down the street)

Teach them to honor my house and the people I have placed in my house

But don't just teach it – live it and observe it – celebrate!

#3 You must celebrate!

A clergy friend of mine was sharing the heartbreak of the closing of the church she was serving. As she spoke her words of lament she said that they did not want to celebrate their church anniversary; youth/children day; or even celebrate her birthday. I listened without understanding. Last week I attended the 21st anniversary celebration for another clergy person and I noted how excited they were about his leadership. I still did not get it, but when I read the passage for this week I begin to see the importance of celebration. When you are planning celebration, in the midst of celebration – you don't have time for other stuff.

After the introduction of each feast and holy day God instructed the people to celebrate. The purpose of each celebration was to remind the people of what the Lord had done.

celebrate that He delivered you
celebrate that He provided for you
celebrate that He forgives you

#4 You must love

LOVE IS ESSENTIAL ON THIS JOURNEY

He had selected a book from the black history display to read for his quiet time. The first page said, "We must meet hate with love." He turned and as only a 7 year old could, he said, "This does not make sense." I responded Jesus teaches we are to love those who don't love us... before I could finish Jamie said "yeah, they teach us that at church."

*"But to you who are listening I say:
Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,*

LOVE IS ESSENTIAL ON THIS JOURNEY

I saw about 3 minutes of CNN's coverage last Thursday of the Pope as he questioned whether or not Donald Trump was Christian. As I understood the Pope's comments he wanted to know how someone could be Christian when they did not want to help, protect or even tolerate those who held opinions different from their own.

*On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty,
give him something to drink.
In doing this,
you will heap burning coals on his head."*

LOVE IS ESSENTIAL ON THIS JOURNEY

For 13 years I have served a congregation that has tolerated a sub-set of members who bend the rules; spin the truth; are rude and disrespectful of children and seniors; and are dividing the body of believers called FBCPF. We have tolerated them **because a church is a hospital for sinners not a social club for saints.**

LOVE IS ESSENTIAL ON THIS JOURNEY

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

⁴³⁻⁴⁷ "You're familiar with the old written law, 'Love your friend,' and its unwritten companion, 'Hate your enemy.' I'm challenging that. I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that.

WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE JOURNEY!

- #1 You must believe that God is Lord!**
- #2 You must teach what I have taught you to the next generation**
- #3 You must celebrate!**

#4 You must love

What is at the end of the journey?

**I don't know about yours –
but I plan to see Jesus standing there to greet me.
I am reaching for the top!**