

Sunday November 26th, 2023

Christ – Our Golden Altar

The past 2 Sundays we have made our way into the Holy Place as we seek Jesus in the Tabernacle.

Thus far we've seen:

1. The courtyard gives people access to God. Jesus is our 'way' to God – John 14:6
2. The altar is where sacrifices were offered. Jesus is our altar – Hebrews 13:9
3. The laver is where the priest cleansed himself. Jesus cleanses us – 1 John 1:9
4. The lampstand is how the priest saw to work. Jesus is our light – John 8:12
5. The table of shewbread offered food for the working priest. Jesus is our shewbread – John 6:51

1) The Golden Altar

- a. Hebrews 8:5 - "They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."
- b. Exodus 37:25 – "He made the altar of incense of acacia wood"
 - i. Acacia wood is very strong, dense, and resistant to disease or decay
 - ii. Picture of Christ's sinless humanity
- c. Exodus 37:26 – "He overlaid it with pure gold"
 - i. This is not a small amount of gold and was very valuable
 - ii. Picture of Christ's kingliness
- d. Exodus 30:6 – "And you shall put it in front of the veil that is above the ark of testimony, where I will meet with you"
 - i. This location is not insignificant in the mediatorial function of the altar
- e. Louis Talbot – *Christ in the Tabernacle* – "Nowhere in all the tabernacle do the glories of Christ shine with more radiance and beauty than the golden altar"

2) The Golden Altar's Purpose

- a. Exodus 30:7-10
- b. The golden altar was the place where:

- i. Incense was perpetually burned
 - ii. Atonement was made once per year
 - c. Incense – ***Could be sermon in and of itself*
 - i. Incense was common among many cultures, typically burned in palaces/places of wealth
 - ii. Very specific composition of fragrances which were only to be used on the golden altar
 - iii. Leviticus 16:12 – Coals from the brazen altar were used to ignite the incense
 - iv. Exodus 30:9 - “You shall not offer unauthorized incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering, and you shall not pour a drink offering on it.”
 - 1. Leviticus 10 – We find the death of two of Aaron’s sons when they offer “unauthorized fire” before the Lord
 - d. The golden altar was the place of regular fellowship with God
 - i. The Holy of Holies was only entered once per year
 - ii. The aroma of the incense would have filled the Holy Place
 - iii. The golden altar was a place of perpetual interaction with God in the burning of incense
 - e. The golden altar was the place of intercession from the priest for God’s people
 - i. The brazen altar was for the sinner marked by judgement/sacrifice
 - ii. The golden altar was for intercession marked by fellowship with God

3) Jesus our Golden Altar

- a. Hebrews 9:24 - “For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.”
- b. The golden altar is a picture of the present work of Christ’s intercession in Heaven with God
- c. Hebrews 7:23-28
- d. At the cross Jesus paid for our sins, at Calvary He bought us with His blood
- e. At the throne of God, he is ever interceding, maintaining our fellowship and communion with God
- f. It is crucial we don’t miss the connection here:

- i. Without the brazen altar, there is no fire for the golden altar
 - ii. Without Jesus sacrificial death, there is no intercession
- g. DA Carson – “In other words, the complete salvation of his people turns on the efficacy of his perpetual intercession, and the efficacy of his perpetual intercession turns on the once-for-all sacrifice he has offered, and on his own everlasting life.”
- h. 1 John 2:1 - “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
- i. 1 Timothy 2:5 - “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,”
- j. Romans 8:34 - “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

4) Our Application

- a. Jesus is **always** interceding
 - i. Romans 8:34 - “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”
 - 1. *Interceding* is active/present tense verb
- b. Jesus is **completely** interceding
 - i. Hebrews 7:25 - “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”
 - ii. Uttermost - Greek panteles - completely or always
- c. We cannot in this life be closer to God than we can in prayer
 - i. The enemy lies to us about our fellowship with God
 - ii. No veil between us
 - 1. Hebrews 4:16 - “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”
 - 2. Greek - proserchomai - “go to” “approach”
 - iii. Romans 8:26-27

- iv. DA Carson – “besetting sins and afflicted consciences have this in common, that they often destroy our confidence before God—our confidence that we have been forgiven, that we are accepted in the Beloved, that the debt has been paid. In all such instances, to understand the nature of Jesus’ intercession breeds quiet confidence, the assurance which, according to 1 John, brings with it our own effective prayers.”
- d. John Wesley – Arise, my soul, arise
 - i. https://hymnary.org/text/arise_my_soul_arise_shake_off_thy_guilty
- e. John Bunyan - *Christ - A Complete Savior* – “Let this doctrine give thee boldness to come to God. Shall Jesus Christ be interceding in heaven? Oh, then, be thou a praying man on earth; yea, take courage to pray. Think thus with thyself — I go to God, to God, before whose throne the Lord Jesus is ready to hand my petitions to him; yea, “he ever lives to make intercession for me.” This is a great encouragement to come to God by prayers and supplications for ourselves, and by intercessions for our families, our neighbours, and enemies.”

Community Groups

1. Read Exodus 30:1-10
2. How does the journey from the courtyard to the Holy Place lead us to Jesus?
3. According to Hebrews 8:5, what purpose does the Tabernacle serve?
4. Why is the location of the golden altar significant?
5. What is the purpose of the golden altar?
6. What do we learn from Exodus 30:9 and the account of Aaron’s son’s deaths in Leviticus 10?
What is the application for our lives?
7. What is one connection between the brazen altar and the golden altar?
8. Read Hebrews 9:24. How do we see Jesus in the golden altar?
9. How is it that Jesus “always lives to make intercession” for his people?
10. What is the application of the active/present tense verb interceding in Romans 8:34?
11. Read Hebrews 7:25. What application does uttermost have in our lives?
12. How can we live our lives differently given the reality of an ever-intercession Savior?

Daily Devotions

Monday November 27th – Read Hebrews 8:5 and review the 6 areas/items we've covered thus far in the Tabernacle. Contemplate the "copy and shadow" of these aspects. How does this inform our hearts and lives today?

Tuesday November 28th – Read Hebrews 7:23-28. How does the reality of the cross fuel the intercession of Jesus for those who know him? In verse 25, we see that Jesus "is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him." What rest can we find in this truth? How can this change our worldview?

Wednesday November 29th – Read Romans 8:34. This verse tells us that Jesus is presently and actively interceding for us. How does this change the way we see the hardships or heartaches in our lives? Pray through those things today and lay them at the golden altar of Jesus.

Thursday November 30th – Read Romans 8:26-27. We cannot be closer to God in this life than we are in prayer. Sometimes we struggle to know what to pray and this causes us not to pray. God desires our fellowship. Jesus died for it. What can we learn from this scripture? Find time to fellowship with God in prayer today.

Friday December 1st – Read John 17. Hear the words of Christ as he intercedes for our lives. Meditate on this chapter today.