DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

In this week's texts, Exodus 37:1-9 and Hebrews 8:5,we see the description of the Ark of the Covenant, the precise point where Yahweh would meet with His people, first through the mediation of Moses, then later through the mediation of the priesthood; we also see in the Epistle to the Hebrews how Christ fulfills the functions of the Ark.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

1. All we see in Ex 37:1-9 is a description of the Ark:
    - What materials are involved in the construction of the box?
    - What materials are involved in the construction of the "mercy seat"?
    - What materials are involved in the construction of the poles?
    - If you express its dimensions in modern units of measure (see footnotes), how long would it have been? How wide and how tall?
2. It is puzzling that the instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings should take up so much of the Book of Exodus (most of ch 25-39). Why was it essential that the Tabernacle and its furnishings be constructed according to such exacting detail? Especially, why the redundancy? (Heb 8:5 gives us a clue.)

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

The sermon reminds us that the whole Bible is about Jesus:

- The Old Testament **looks forward** to Him.
- The Gospels **present** Him.
- The Epistles **explain** Him.
- The Book of Revelation **celebrates** His final victory.

What are some of your favorite OT texts that provide a glimpse into the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus?

SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

The sermon focuses on three aspects of the Ark, how all three point forward to Jesus:

- Its **design**, including its central and secluded location in the Tabernacle
- Its **contents**: the jar of manna, the tablets of the Law, and – later – Aaron's staff that budded
- Its **function**, especially in the liturgy of the Day of Atonement

1. This kind of detail in the furnishings of the Tabernacle suggests that Yahweh was playing the long game centuries before the time of Christ. Details that appeared to be only ornamental at the time would, in retrospect, turn out to be highly symbolic.
    - Have you ever seen God "playing the long game" in your life or in the life of someone close to you?
    - What does it do to your faith to become aware of God's long-term plans and intentions?

2. The manna in the Ark was a memento of Yahweh's faithfulness.
    - What are some reminders of God's faithfulness in your life?
    - Have there ever been times when you found yourself needing to rehearse the faithfulness of God?

3. The close proximity of the tablets of the Law and the manna and the mercy seat say something about God's relationship with and His intentions toward His people: we see His faithfulness and mercy to a people who have spurned His Law. How have you seen God's mercy (His withholding the judgment you deserved) and His grace (His extending favor you didn't deserve) in your life or the life of someone close to you?