

Good morning brethren and welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles in this first service, in this first Holy Day. Whether this is your first Feast of Tabernacles or your 25th this is a very special time of year, a time to be fed for 8 straight days through 10 sermons; a time for fellowship; a time to grow; a time to rejoice.

Today we'll focus on God's instruction to rejoice during this Feast of Tabernacles and the title is quite simply, *Instructed to Rejoice* - Instructed to Rejoice.

Our first order of business is to consider God's instruction regarding offerings and I want to take us through a few sections of scripture here just to set the stage for the expectation that we are required by God to give an offering and we know that, but just to be reminded of some of the scriptures. If we go to the book of **Deuteronomy 16** – in this section of scripture we have a reference to 3 seasons in a year; the spring season, the summer season and a fall season. Verses 1-8 speak of the spring season, talking about the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread; a time of year that we would collect an offering. Verses 9-10 speak to the summer season with the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. And then the 3rd season, the fall – starting in verse 11 – speaks of the Feast of Tabernacles. So let's look at **verse 11** and it says, **And you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, your maidservant, and the Levite that is within your gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the Eternal your God has chosen to place His name there.** We'll dwell on that one a little bit later. But notice here, even talking about the building up to the 3 seasons of the year and collecting an offering to God it's speaking of rejoice: rejoicing even in our offerings, for the opportunity to be able to give an offering to God, to even understand that that's what God requires of us.

In **verse 12** it says, **you shall remember that you were a bondman in Egypt:** or slave to sin prior to your calling, **and you shall observe and do these statutes. You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after you have gathered in your corn and your wine:** and that's what we're in the midst of doing, what we began last night at sundown – observing the Feast of Tabernacles for 7 days. And how do we do that? We do that through being obedient to God. We observe the Feast of Tabernacles through being prepared for and giving an offering, through listening to the sermons, through fellowship, through prayer, through study, serving others. **You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days.**

And **verse 14** it says, **And you shall rejoice in your Feast,** again, the point is just driven home time and time again in scripture – that we are to **rejoice in your Feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates.** **Verse 15 - Seven days you shall keep a solemn Feast unto the Eternal your God in the place which the Eternal shall choose: because the Eternal your God shall bless you in all your increase, and in all the works for your hands, therefore you shall truly rejoice.** And then in **verse 16** it says, **Three times in a year,** or three seasons, says, **shall all your males appear before the Eternal your God in the place which He shall choose; in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, spring, the Feast of Weeks, summer season, and the Feast of Tabernacles: the fall season, and they shall not appear before the Eternal empty:** and **verse 17** it says, **Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessings of the Eternal your God which He has given you.**

I was just thinking about the blessings, just the blessings that we're able to keep a Feast of Tabernacles and to have the sermons and to be led and taught by God: and we are to give an offering as we are able. And I think that's been made real clear what it means, that we shall as we are able. Part of our rejoicing at the Feast of Tabernacles is being able to give an offering to God.

And so again, **verse 17 – Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessings of the Eternal your God which He has given you.** And He has blessed us mightily brethren; and now, probably the place to dwell on that is in the spiritual side – through your calling, through being able to receive God's spirit to understand where we are in time, what your role is as time moves on – truly is a blessing. So we are to give as we are able.

Let's look at another aspect of the offering. Let's turn to **Exodus 25:1 - And the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that give it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.** And so another little twist here is that we give an offering willingly, because that's when God will accept it. When we are in unison with God... (Exodus 35:5) **verse 5 – Take from among you an offering unto the Eternal: whosoever is of a willing heart let him bring it, an offering of the Eternal; gold, and silver, and brass,** so yes, brethren, God requires an offering, but when we are called by Him and led by His spirit we understand – we understand on the seven annual Holy Days that we are required to give an offering to God and we give it thankfully, gratefully, willingly, in the attitude of rejoicing; rejoicing in the fact that God called you and that you understand His plan and His word and that He's given you His spirit. What a beautiful plan it is, you know, so we take up the offering on the seven annual Holy Days. So that's something that we all need to tend to in whatever fashion where we are, whether it be a basket in the room, or if we just mail it in directly to the P.O. boxes but you know, that's something that we need to take care of as we strive to seek God in our lives with His blessings.

I can't pass up the fact that this message about rejoicing at the Feast of Tabernacles and here in these verses that we just went through regarding giving an offering, you can't get through the verses on this Holy Day offerings without being reminded that we are to rejoice and be thankful at the Feast. Why is that? Because God makes it clear that we are to rejoice and keep this Feast of Tabernacles. From our Holy Day offering today through the second sermon on the Last Great Day and the sermons in between and the fellowship and service in between, we are to rejoice in our blessings from God because we truly are blessed of all people. Of all people, to know God's plan, to know where we are in time, to be called, to have God's spirit dwelling within you. We rejoice in our blessings from God: like I said, from our calling to this way of life, to the plan of salvation, we are to consider *all* of our blessings and rejoice and be thankful before God. And again, just a reminder that the title for this sermon is: *Instructed to Rejoice*.

So let's consider the aspect of our calling when it comes to rejoicing; something to rejoice over. Just take a quick look back of what we were called out of and where our minds were before God chose us. Before He chose to work with us and mould us and fashion us; to put His spirit in us so He could abide and dwell within us.

Let's look at how some of this all began in **Genesis 3:1 – going back to the garden of Eden when man was originally cut off from God; just like all of us were, just like all of us were before God called us out of this world – cut off.** So it says in **verse 1 - Now the serpent was more subtle than any beasts of the field which the Eternal God had made.** And the serpent here is referring to Satan... **more subtle than any beast of the field which the Eternal had made. And he said unto the woman, Yeah, has God said, you shall not eat of every tree in the garden?** Is He holding back, is He holding something back on you?

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: and verse 3 - But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. Far larger context than physical death but Satan and his subtlety, **says unto the woman, in verse 4 it says, and the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die:** just because you eat a piece of that fruit... just cause you partake of the world a little bit, **you shall not surely die.** No, it wasn't immediate physical death but it was a long term spiritual death. That was the road that it was going down, but I don't think even Satan understood. He was just trying to thwart God's plan for mankind.

And he goes on to say in **verse 5:** it says, **For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes will be opened, and you shall see/you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.** Again, like the Laodicean attitude, deciding what's right and wrong, veering off into the world, living a way contrary to God's way of life, contrary to His words, His commands, His laws. And then in **verse 6** says, **And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made aprons.** Just like before we were called, we were totally partaking of the fruit of this world, cut off from God.

Genesis 3:23 –as a result of man choosing to go his own way, to go contrary to God, to living a life in direct opposite of serving others and having love towards one another... it says in **verse 23 - Therefore the Eternal God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence it was taken. So He drove out man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.** Through the subtlety of Satan mankind was cut off from God, did no longer have access to God the Father; did not have access to God's spirit; did not have access to have a relationship with God until, unless God worked with you individually through the Old Testament timeframe leading up to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who made a way possible of reconciliation to God, but here is where it was cut off. And mankind followed this track through time, to this very time – cut off from God – not knowing the truth. So man was cut off.

Let's turn to **II Corinthians 4:1** – again understanding what we were called out of and how the society got the way that it is and how God called us out of this. It says in **II Corinthians 4:1 - Therefore seeing we have this ministry, that we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.** And it goes on..., **But if our gospel be hid,** that's the good news, the understanding of God's word, the truth that's in God's word as God reveals it to us when we're called; when He opens up our minds as it says, as when we, **prior to us being called; But if our gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that are lost:** and **verse 4 - In whom the god of this world, which is Satan the devil, the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.** So mankind is cut off. Mankind is no match for Satan who led and leads to spiritual blindness; not understanding God's word.

Let's turn to **Ephesians 2** and look at another aspect as God calls us, talking about our calling, what we were called out of, setting the stage of growing up in a world that doesn't know God; doesn't truly know God; that has a false god; that worships a false god; that only knows a false god. **Ephesians 2:1** – it says, **And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespass and sins:** prior to your calling you were dead, as it says there ... as Eve told the serpent, well, if you eat of that tree you'll die, you'll surely die and when

Satan says, you won't die. Well, we were *dead* in sin! ...as it says here in **verse 1** of **Ephesians 2**. And in **verse 2** it says, **wherein times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience**: that's where we were prior to being called. When God calls us and we start changing, we start responding, we start not doing things that we did prior to being called. We struggle, we work, we pray to God, we ask for help, we begin to make those changes in our lives. We start to build character that God wants to mould us and fashion us to be members of His very own family, the family of God.

In **verse 3** he says, **Among whom we also had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others**. Just fitting in with the world, no different; same attitude, same spirit, same darkness cut off from God. Then it says in **verse 4** - **But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love where with He loved us, Even when we were dead in sin, He has quickened us together in Christ**, so we were all in the same boat, just like the rest of mankind prior to God calling us. The same spiritual boat – cut off from God, blinded, lost, disobedient, deceived, lacking understanding, couldn't understand the Bible, didn't understand God's plan for mankind, and then He calls us...and then God calls us and gives us this opportunity to understand His word, to understand His plan, to know what it means to have the spirit of God; to know the difference between a deceived version of born again to a spiritual version, a true version of being born into the God Family.

Let's turn to **John 6:37** - **All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that come to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him that sent Me**. So God the Father starts to begin this process here talking about God the Father giving, or calling individuals that can respond as a result of Jesus Christ dying for our sins, paying the penalty for our sins and then... and then it be by being resurrected, having life, being able to have His life dwell in and through us as we are called and as we repent and are baptized and received the laying on of hands and God's spirit beginning to dwell in us, to abide in us, to flow through us – to the benefit of others. And as it says, like when we're called – it's the same thing. It's no longer about our will; it's about doing God's will and that's where Jesus Christ gave this example. It says, **For I came down from heaven**. Being born a human being. He began life as a human being, says He **came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but to the will of Him that sent Him**. Who had the plan, who made the plan, the one true God. **And this is the Father's will which has sent Me, that of all that He has given me that I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day**. So God's plan, God's purpose for all of us called is that He will continue to work with us as we respond, and as we strive to live His way of life, as we respond to Him that none of us will be lost...if we do our part. And we'll be able to continue to live to the point till we become members of the God family.

It says, in **verse 41**, says - **The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, I come down from heaven?** They knew who He was. They doubted who He said He was. Says, **Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him: and I will raise Him up at the last day**. So it's a calling. God the Father calls us. **No man can come to Me**, can come to this way of life, that can receive God's spirit, **except the Father...God the Father, except the Father which has sent me draw him/call him**. You know, brethren, like I said, we were all cut off; we were all in the same spiritual boat, cut off from God prior to being called. We were blinded, we were lost, we were deceived. We didn't even understand the basic-ness of God's laws, our conduct was the conduct of the world and then God began to work with us. God began to work with you, in your mind, beginning

with a calling, a calling out of this world, a calling to a different way of life, a calling to the purpose of God's plan. Rejoice, be thankful... yeah, you can dwell upon that during this Feast of Tabernacles – to think about that calling, and you have the opportunity to sit with one another fellowshiping. You know, sharing your stories of your calling and how God called you and how you responded to it. But yes, it is something to be thankful about – to rejoice over, to rejoice: because you wouldn't be at the Feast of Tabernacles had God the Father not called you. You wouldn't know what the Feast of Tabernacles was unless God the Father called you. You wouldn't be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. You wouldn't be listening to sermons. You wouldn't be giving an offering, willingly, if God the Father didn't call you. So rejoice in that brethren. That's the only reason you're here – because God's call, His invitation, His appointed times.

So God called you so He could reside, or abide, or dwell in you, to prove you, to try you and we'll touch on that a little bit more in a minute. So rejoice and be thankful in your calling brethren. Rejoice and be thankful in your calling – Thank God – rejoice at this Feast; through your calling... through your calling; being called by God the Father which is why you're able to keep this Feast of Tabernacles.

So after God calls us, again, an amazing part of the calling and God's plan for mankind is He calls us and He begins to give us a little bit of knowledge. He begins to give us a little bit of understanding and we want more, and we seek more, and we start to understand things about the Sabbath day and what is the Sabbath day and what's the purpose of the Sabbath, when is the Sabbath; which is a microcosm if you will of God's plan, because on the Sabbath you've got 6 days of the week to go about your business and then on the 7th day is the Sabbath – holy to God – a day where God teaches you through the sermons. You got 6 days to go about your business and 1 day which is devoted to God. And if you look at the big plan, 7000 year plan, man has 6000 years to go about his own business and that's soon coming to a halt and you've got the return of Jesus Christ and you've got the Kingdom of God ruling on this earth for a 1000 years; a 7000 year plan. And the Feast of Tabernacles pictures that 1000 years when the Kingdom of God, the government of God is ruling mankind, physical mankind on this earth for a 1000 years as the next step in God's plan as we go through the annual Holy Days.

Something to rejoice over? The understanding that you have that God has a plan. He has a plan; He has a purpose, there's a reason that people have been created, that they have been born and live on this earth; that God is building a family. To understand that and then to understand the details of it through the outline of God's plan with the 7 annual Holy Days. Rejoice brethren! It's something to be thankful for, the understanding that you have to know that there's a purpose in your being born into this world and that calling that God gave you, and then the changes that you begin to make.

So let's look at God's plan for mankind and we can rejoice in God's plan. Let's look at **Leviticus 23** and consider the plan as God has it laid out here in 7 annual Holy Days. Says in **Leviticus 23:1 - And the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning the Feasts, which is really appointed times ...concerning the appointed times of the Eternal, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations,** coming together; an assembly, **even these are My appointed times.** So there's appointed times. There's a weekly appointed time, you know, and there are 7 annual appointed times when you think about the Holy Days and the Sabbath.

It says in **verse 3 - Six days shall work be done: but on a seventh day is a Sabbath of rest,** rest from the prior 6 days of going about your business of making a living, of going to school, of taking care of your home, or your property. So, **but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation;** where we assembly ourselves together before God to be taught of God – to fellowship with one another wherever

it's possible, wherever we can get together – it's a holy convocation, it's the assembling of ourselves together that's the priority of putting God's way and God first in your life and putting the brethren first. To be there together with your brethren whenever possible through assembling of ourselves together before God, holy convocation. It says, **you shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath unto the Eternal in all your dwellings.** So starting it off with the Sabbath day – 6 days to do your business, 1 day dedicated to being taught by God, to learning His way of life.

And **verse 4** it says, **These are the feasts**, again, appointed times **of the Eternal, even of holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their seasons**, again, **you shall proclaim in their appointed times.** And that's what happens on the 7 annual Holy Days, you know, we have sermons teaching us about the meaning of the Holy Days. So it says, **which you shall proclaim**, or be taught, taught the meaning of the Holy Days, the purpose of the Holy Days, or if you've been around a long time – to be reminded of God's plan and then as God gives us more understanding, even more detail of God's plan for mankind, and the meaning behind the Holy Days.

And **verse 5** it says, **In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Eternals/LORD's Passover.** Again, another appointed time. So we have the Passover, a way for us to be forgiven of sin, to be reconciled back to God the Father through Jesus Christ's shed blood and resurrection.

And **verse 6** it says, **And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread unto the Eternal: seven days you eat unleavened bread. The first day is a holy convocation: and it's the day that you don't work. But you shall offer an offering made of fire unto the Eternal seven days: in the seventh day is a holy convocation:** Okay, so it's the Days of Unleavened Bread, you've got the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread and the 7th Day of Unleavened Bread – both Holy Days picturing the journey of coming out of sin and continuing to get closer to be in agreement with God's way and with God's plan and God's laws.

And **verse 15 of Leviticus 23**, it says - **And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf offering/sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the Sabbath/seventh Sabbath shall you number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meat offering unto the Eternal.** So it's 50, count 50 to Pentecost. Pentecost, the next step in God's plan laid out here, and as we go through these annual Holy Days and we're taught the meaning, the nuances around them and we continue to grow. To know God's plan and His purpose – something else to fellowship about – the awesomeness of God's plan and what He has in store for mankind and how we have a place in it.

And **verse 21**, something to rejoice over, to be thankful for, to thank God, to be on your knees and thank God and rejoice before Him during this Feast of Tabernacles: for your calling, for the plan of salvation, for all of mankind. What an awesome God we serve. **Verse 21** says - **you shall proclaim that same day, it shall be a holy convocation unto you: you shall do no work therein: it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.** Reminder that the Holy Days are to be kept, they're annual Sabbaths.

Verse 24, speaking of the Feast of Trumpets, the next step in God's plan. Says, **Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall you have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of Trumpets**, again, a holy convocation. **And you shall do no servile work therein: but you shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Eternal. And the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of the seventh month there shall be a Day of Atonement: it shall**

be a holy convocation unto you; and you shall afflict your souls, it says you shall fast, **you shall humble yourself before your God and offer an offering made by fire unto the Eternal. And you shall do no work in that day: for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before God/the Lord/Eternal your God.** And then it goes on – the consequences of not obeying God, which are always the same, being cut off from God. Says, **for whatsoever soul it shall be that shall not be afflicted,** or shall not fast, **in that day, they shall be cut off from among the people. And whatever soul it be that does any work in that day, the soul/the same soul will I destroy from among the people. You shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and you shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even to even, shall you celebrate your Sabbath.** The Day of Atonement, the next step in God's plan. And as we heard on the Day of Atonement, more of the meaning behind the Holy Day and the nuances of God's plan and how God's plan all works together.

Then we've got the Feast of Tabernacles, which we're keeping now. **Leviticus 23:33 - And the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of the seventh month shall be a Feast of Tabernacles for seven days unto the Eternal. On the first day, today, shall be a holy convocation:** or a Holy Day, **you shall do no servile work therein. Seven days shall you offer an offering made by fire unto the Eternal: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation;** and we have another Feast – the Last Great Day – another holy convocation, **and you shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Eternal: it is a solemn assembly; you shall do no servile work therein.** The 7 annual Holy Days – an outline of God's plan.

It says in **verse 37, These are the Feasts of the Eternal, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations.** After considering our calling to this way of life and God opening up our minds and bringing us out of this deceived world; He starts with some basic things like the Sabbath day which often times in the past we have called the test command. We are called, we understand we're called – you begin to understand the Sabbath. It's a test commandment. Are you going to keep the Sabbath day? Are you going to make arrangements that you're not going to work no more on the Sabbath day? Are you going to change your lifestyle where you're no longer going to sporting events on the Sabbath day? Are you committed to keeping the Sabbath holy and attending services where it's possible, to gather yourselves together to be taught by God through the sermon and to have fellowship with the brethren. Yes, it's a test command – it's tested all of us. We have 6 days to go about our own business and 1 day belongs to God. And again, the primary purpose is to be taught – to learn about this way of life and then to take that throughout the next 6 days and apply it in how you live. So we are to assemble ourselves.

And again, then we read through the scriptures about the Passover; a way to be forgiven of sin and reconciled to God – reconciled to God; to be able to have a relationship with God through our Passover Jesus Christ, through His death; paying the penalty for our sins and His resurrection which gives us the hope... His spirit gives us life, so He can dwell within us so we can go before God's throne and repent of sin and be reconciled and to have a relationship and be reconciled back to God.

And then the Days of Unleavened Bread, again, another beautiful part of God's plan knowing that we were in this world and it takes a lifetime of living this way of life and being tried and tested and proven to come out of sin, that 7 day period of taking leavening out of your house and you eat no leaven – picturing removing sin and cleaning up your lives and getting closer to God.

And then Pentecost, the ability to have the holy spirit actually dwell within you, the helper, the promise that was given; given on the Day of Pentecost, initially and then given through baptism and laying on of

hands when you repent of sins after God the Father calls you and you make a commitment to live this way of life; to make a commitment to keep the Holy Days and the Sabbath days, to keep His laws, commands as He works with you.

And then we had the Feast of Trumpets, again, announcing the return of Jesus Christ, the Feast of Trumpets and we've grown so much more in understanding of these Holy Days.

Then the Day of Atonement, the removing of Satan for 1000 years.

So that at the Feast of Tabernacles, for that 1000 year period when the reign... the reign of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God governing mankind for 1000 years and Satan put aside – beauty of the plan which is what the Feast of Tabernacles pictures – and we'll learn more about that over the next 6 days – 7 days if you count this afternoon.

And then we have the Last Great Day... the *Last Great Day*, the most fulfilling part, to me, to know that all people who have ever lived and never knew God will be given a chance, will be drawn, will be called by God and given an opportunity to live this way of life. What a beautiful plan. What a beautiful plan God has and rejoice in that plan. God's given us so much. He's called us out of this world, He's opened up our minds and given us His understanding. The pages of the Bible which were just a bunch of words because you couldn't understand them and now they have life, have meaning, they make sense, they all hang together. Rejoice brethren. You think about that. I think about the meaning of the Holy Days and God's plan for all of mankind; think about the fact that when He calls you His intent is to work with you all the way to the point where you become a member of His family. Knowing God's plan – something to rejoice in.

So back to **Leviticus 23**, we'll look at **verse 39** – says, **Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered the fruit of the land, you shall keep a Feast of the Eternal seven days: and the first day shall be a Sabbath, and the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. And you shall take you on the first day boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of thick trees, and the willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days.** So again brethren, this message is about rejoicing during the Feast of Tabernacles – being thankful for what God is doing in your life, being thankful that we can even have a Feast of Tabernacles, that we can keep a Feast of Tabernacles, that we can understand it. You know, thankful for our calling, thankful for God's plan for all of mankind.

Verse 41 it says, **And you shall keep a Feast unto the Eternal seven days in the year. And it shall be a statute forever in your generations: you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.** Then in **verse 42** - **You shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:** And we got further understanding on that last year if you remember. And we'll talk a little bit about that. **You shall dwell in booths**, for one aspect, physical aspect, a physical dwelling in this physical body, a temporary dwelling, a booth, but there's more meaning to it and we'll get to that in the minute. Says, **that your generations may know I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Eternal your God. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the Feasts of the Eternal.** Again, what a great plan God has for mankind through 7 annual Holy Days, including the Sabbath. What a plan! His appointed times, to rejoice, be thankful for your Great God, for how He has called you and opened up your minds and He's given you this understanding that's just amazing. It's amazing if you think about it. If you just go back to; if you ever tried to read the Bible prior to being called. I remember when it didn't make any sense, then God calls you, He opens up your mind

and the next thing you know it makes so much sense; you understand; He gives it to you through His spirit working with you in your mind. Knowing God's plan.

So let's just pick up a little bit on the dwelling in booths that we were taught last year where we really got a more meaningful or a deeper understanding of what it is to dwell in booths; what some of the intent is behind it. If we go to **Nehemiah 8:1** we'll just go through Nehemiah 8 and consider... again, remember in a framework, in the mindset of rejoicing at the Feast of Tabernacles, where we can see that these people – these people rejoiced – they rejoiced to the point of tears because they understood, they were given understanding. We've been giving understanding. So think about that as we go through these verses here. **Nehemiah 8:1 - And all the people gathered themselves together as one man**, again, this was the time when the Holy Day observance was restored to Israel, okay. **Nehemiah 8:1**, it says **And all the people gathered together themselves as one man, in the street that was before the water gate; and they spoke unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Eternal had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the high priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.** And the connection to Trumpets here that they could hear, that they could understand, because God gives the calling and the understanding. He gives it to you individually in your mind when you truly hear, when you have understanding of the meanings behind God's word.

And **verse 3** it says, **And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.** You know, looking forward to the sermons during the Feast of Tabernacles, praying about the sermons; that God inspire the speaking, that He inspire the hearing; to inspire you to be attentive, to pay attention. And it says in **verse 4** that he stood on a pulpit of wood made for that purpose so that people could hear him.

And **verse 5** it says, **And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;)** standing on the pulpit of wood, **and when he opened it, the people stood up:** okay, they stood up out of respect. It was God's laws being given to them. And it says, **and Ezra blessed the Eternal, the Great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Eternal with their faces to the ground.**

Verse 8 - So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. Just like when God calls you and gives you His spirit and helps you to understand the meaning behind His word. It says, **and Nehemiah, and Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Eternal your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.** They saw how they had lost God's way, just like we have in the past when the Church fell asleep, falling back into captivity, back into the ways of this world, when God started calling us back into His truth, waking us up, shedding some tears – yeah, shedding some tears. There are times when we fall short of God's way and we go before His throne in repentance and shed tears because you want to be right with God, you want to live this way of life you've been called to, you want to strive to do everything you can to be in agreement with God and when you fall short, and you go before God's throne – yes, you're forgiven, you know and you repent and He forgives you, but it still hurts and you shed tears.

And **verse 10** it says, **And they said unto them/Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them whom nothing was prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be you sorry; for the joy of the Eternal is your strength.** So something that we need

to think about: **joy of the Eternal is your strength**, so wear that joy during this Feast of Tabernacles and be thankful – rejoice in God’s plan and what He has for you – your place in it.

And **verse 12** says - **And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, send their portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.** They rejoiced. They rejoiced because they understood God’s word, because God gave them understanding. It says, in **verse 14** then talking about the next day and it says, **And they found written in the law which the Eternal had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the Feast of the seventh month: And that they should publish or proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.** And so when they found that they were supposed to make booths, they went out and did it because they were still excited, they were rejoicing, they were getting understanding from God, maybe it was simply physical understanding, but they were getting understanding and it was meaningful to them. Just as we get understanding – something to rejoice about, to be thankful for when God gives you understanding. Especially some of you that are new, I know that you want to know more, you think about it, you pray about it, you talk to others about it who’ve been around for a long time and things start to make more sense and things start to click. Be thankful. Be thankful for your God because He’s given you the understanding. It’s only by Him opening your mind and giving you His spirit that you can have understanding. Be thankful. Rejoice.

So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street at the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. And it says in **verse 17**, it says, **And all the congregation of them that were come again out of captivity made booths, and sat under them: for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.** Because they understood what they were supposed to be doing.

It says in **verse 18**, it says, **Also day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the Feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according to the manner.** It was the Last Great Day so they were being given understanding about God’s plan as much as God would give to them at that time. But look at what He’s given to us, in the same time and then we have this aspect of dwelling in booths and it was made very clear a year ago it was ‘A Unique Feast’. This is a unique Feast. To dwell in booths – so much more meaning – to sit down – and if you think about it, and if you meditate on that – to sit down, to continue in, to stay in, to dwell in – each day during the Feast. So they sat under for a purpose, to judge, to consider, to contemplate, to meditate, and you think about rejoicing at the Feast because we are to rejoice for 7 days and part of that rejoicing, really, is just sitting down and meditating and considering and thinking about what God has given you – the spiritual understanding of His word. From the understanding of why the world was cut off, and that God has a plan and He calls us individually and that there is 7 annual Holy Days which are the outline of His plan for mankind...which on those Holy Days are expounded upon and you’re given more and deeper understanding year by year – reminded of God’s plan for salvation for all of mankind. And yes, we have a temporary physical body to dwell in – it is a temporary dwelling, but through our calling and responding to God we are to continue in, to stay in, to dwell in God’s way of life and we are to look at ourselves and meditate upon those things, to stay in this way of life and looking forward to that permanent spiritual dwelling in the Family of God. We have been given so much knowledge and understanding. We have so much to be thankful for brethren.

So much to rejoice over – just to have further deeper understanding of dwelling in booths – so much more than a physical dwelling in booths, a temporary place to live – a hotel... No, it's a way of life, continue in, to stay in, to dwell in God's way of life, thinking about it and judging yourself. Where do you stand? Where do you fall short? What changes do you need to make? Considering your actions, contemplating on the calling you've been given – meditating – asking God to help you to see yourselves truly and to make changes and to continue to grow while we're in our temporary dwelling, in this physical body, looking forward to that permanent spiritual body that will be given by living this way of life and being responding to God when we fall short and when we repent of sin and seek forgiveness. And through the blood of Christ have that penalty paid and through His life and God forgiving us and having His spirit dwell in us – to feel and have a relationship with God – that we can get on our knees and talk to our God, or we can be driving down a road, or we can be sitting in our office at work, or we could be on a shop floor, wherever we are... when we need God's help, when we recognize it..."I need God!" Maybe you've got a big meeting you've got to go to and you look to God to help you, that it's effective and that He'll bless you and that you'll have the right attitude towards people when they might be in disagreement. Look to God in all things, sit down and continue in this way of life, dwell in this way, let God dwell in you, live through you. A beautiful plan God has for all mankind and we've been blessed to be given the understanding now early on in this process. We've been given so much. We know so much that people wanted to know for a long time.

Let's turn to **Matthew 13:1**, thinking again about all we've been given... all we've been given and this might drive that point home a little bit more here. It says in **Matthew 13:1**, Jesus speaking in parables. Says, in **The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And the great multitude were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And He spoke many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower is sent forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell on stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. Some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But others fell onto good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who has ears to hear, let him hear.** So that was the parable and the amazing thing here is in **verse 10**, it says, **And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speak you unto them in parables? And He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.** Because they weren't called. They didn't have it, they couldn't understand it. The Bible is a mystery to mankind and until God calls you and opens up your mind and begins to work with you and as you respond to Him and you repent of going against His word – even when you didn't even know – and you're forgiven, you're baptized and you're forgiven – you receive the holy spirit and that all the words in God's time make sense to you and they hang together.

And so they're saying, **why are you speaking in parables? And He said unto them because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but not unto them. For whoever has to him it should be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that what he has.** We continue to grow throughout the process. So it says, **Therefore I speak to them in parables: because they seeing not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Elijah, which says, By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart has waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and**

should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them. You know brethren, when God calls us out of this world and the words of the Bible begin to make sense, the word of God begins to make sense to us, and we hear and we understand –it’s only through that calling, something to rejoice in! I mean, you think about where you live and all the people that live near you. They have no idea of God’s plan, have no idea of what God is doing, don’t know why man was born, don’t have a clue why man was born. We just have a mixed up world that’s going to get fixed. The 6000 years of doing our own thing is soon over and we’ve been given so much understanding of this way of life. *Truly* something to be thankful for, to rejoice over.

And even here in **verse 17 ...many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and not hear them.** To understand God’s word, but even the disciples who He was talking to then – they wanted to know more. They wanted to know what you know. They wanted to know where we are in time. They wanted to know when Jesus Christ would return to be King of kings. They wanted to know when the Kingdom of God would be established. This verse... it applies even to us, because *you* know, you understand, you know where we are in time; you know when Jesus Christ is going to return. You know when the Kingdom of God will be established on this earth, ruling mankind. Are you thankful? You’re rejoicing? You know brethren, as you do dwell in booths during this Feast of Tabernacles; when you consider; when you meditate; when you take that time to think about your calling and all the things that God’s given you – the things that you should be thankful for and rejoice over... you have so much understanding; you know so much more than people of old knew – those who were called because God continues to reveal over time and there’s going to be more, there’s going to be more God will continue to give so just stay in this way of life and keep working towards the purpose of your calling. This is something to be rejoiceful in.

Let’s look at **Psalms 97:1** – says, **The Eternal reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgement are the habitation of His throne. A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about. His lightnings enlarge/enlighten the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Eternal, at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images; which boast themselves of idols: worship Him, all you gods. Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of Your judgments, O Eternal. For you, Eternal, are high above all the earth: you are exalted far above all gods. You that love the Eternal, talking to us, You that love the Eternal, hate evil: He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is shown in righteousness, and gladness for upright in heart. Rejoice in the Eternal, you righteous; give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.**

Being so thankful for what we know, for what God has given us. Like it says back there in **Matthew 13:17** - **For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which you see, and have not seen them; and hear that things which you hear, and have not heard them.** Be thankful for God’s plan of salvation; be thankful for your calling; be thankful for what you know; be thankful for being part of the family of God; thankful for the opportunity.

Let’s turn to **Deuteronomy 14**, just want to focus in on one verse here, it is **verse 23**, again, talking about the time of the Feast, just want to pick up on a couple of thoughts here. **Deuteronomy 14:23** it says -

And you shall eat, during the Feast, **You shall eat before the Eternal your God**, because we're in His presence when we're at the Feast of Tabernacles, we're in God's presence so we shall eat before Him, before the Eternal our God, **in the place where He shall choose to place His name... the place that He shall choose...** I was looking at these words here and thinking about them, the place, it's where you reside, abide, or where you dwell, and thinking about the dwelling in booths, as a place where God's spirit resides, abides and dwells within us, within those whom He has called, who are baptized and receive the laying on of hands, who has God's spirit, and in the place that He shall choose. Another aspect of that choice is, to prove or to try you, wherever we are – keeping the Feast of Tabernacles – the place that He shall choose. He's chosen us through our calling. He chooses to put His spirit in us, through our repentance and seeking Him and striving to live this way of life. But He chose us and He chose to reside in us for a purpose – and that is to prove us, and to try us. So we can be in many places to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. We will be in many places, but not everyone can make it to one of the 'official' if you will, sites. Some of you are sacrificing even that to benefit others, so people that would have to stay home would be able to at least enjoy some aspect of a Feast of Tabernacles and others of you, you are alone and you're keeping the Feast alone; but we're still keeping a Feast in a place where God shall choose. With the proper attitude and proper attention to details. If you listen to the sermons day by day for these 8 days, and whether you are with a group or you're alone, you're keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. God called you and He chose you. He put His name in you when you were baptized and you were given His holy spirit. The spirit that dwells in you brethren, but not only that, but in the aspect of service to others, especially to your brethren, which we heard in a recent sermon about preparing for the Feast of Tabernacles, that we are preparing and should be thinking about planning for serving others. Because it's one thing to have God's spirit to dwell in you after your baptized, to dwell in you... but you know in the book of John and how many times has Mr. Weinland talked to us about the flow of God's spirit, 'I am coming', and it's a flow of God's spirit; so that God's spirit flows from God into you, into your mind, into your being, into your attitude so you have understanding, so you have the strength to continue working towards this way of life; but we know we can't stop there. It can't just dwell in you. To serve others the spirit of God not only dwells in you, but flows through you to the benefit of others and that's grace. That's the grace of God. Its unselfish love toward others, utilizing His spirit and His love in your relationships, to have God's spirit come down and flow into you and by your relationships will you serve others and the way you treat others – they benefit. It's a beautiful thing; it's God's way; it is God's way of life. So I know it can be tough when you can't physically be where you want to be for keeping the Feast, but you are still keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Listening to sermons every day, having the right attitude, paying attention to detail, keeping the High Days holy, even if you're by yourself. There are lessons for all of us along the way here because a year from now who knows... who knows what you'll be facing.

Here's that note I had... so 'Preparing for the Feast' right? Sermon given on Sept. 5th, you know there was one quote in here that was pretty profound. "Don't let any part of the family not be part of the family." So you're serving others, you're utilizing God's spirit to the benefit of others, you're inclusive at the Feast of Tabernacles where you can, where you meet with more than 1 person, or you reach out to the people you know that can't make it. You know they are by themselves. Brethren, we need to love one another; we need to put one another first. God has a great plan. We have so much to rejoice in but we need to share it with others and to have the right relationship – allowing God's spirit not only to dwell in us, but to flow through us to the benefit of others, living this way of life in your relationships; to serve others. And we're reminded quite often that it's not always that easy. We are human beings and we're fighting a battle.

Let's look at **Ephesians 6:10** it says, **Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** Because it's not easy, it's a spiritual warfare as it says here in **verse 12**, says, **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

Verse 13 says, **Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, having done all, to stand.** And it says, **Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with the truth, and having the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; And above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.** You know, **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for the saints;** so staying spiritually focused – especially here at the Feast because God will fight your battles for you if you do your part; if you rejoice in that fact, that you can rely on God – be thankful you can rely on God because He's there to help you, it's just a matter of calling out to Him and so we just have to remember it's not something we do on our own. We can't live this way of life on our own, we must have God's help. We must have His spirit; we must have His help – and He'll give it.

Let's look at **Psalm 86:1** because we can't do it on our own. We need to humbly go before God's throne. We need to approach our calling with humility. It's nothing to be pumped up or filled with ourselves over. You've been blessed to understand; you've been blessed to be called. Go to God with humility with that calling, approach your calling with humility. It's nothing to be pumped up over – big headed, we remove the leaven during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Humbly go before your God and ask Him to give you what you need, to approach the Feast in humility. Rejoicing, being thankful, but having a spirit of service toward others. **Psalm 86:1** says, a prayer of David - **Bow down your ear, O Eternal, hear me: for I am poor and needy.** Going to God, before His throne in humility – recognizing that we are nothing without Him; that we cannot live this way of life – that we need His spirit dwelling in us and we need His help; we need His spiritual protection. We need Him to fight our battles for us. By how we live and how we respond we can put on the armour of God; and the armour of God fighting our battles for us.

Verse 2, it says, **Preserve My soul; for I am holy: O you My God, save your servants that trusted you. Be merciful unto me, O LORD: for I cry unto you daily.** Praying at the Feast of Tabernacles, spending that extra time in doing so. You're not having to go to work so spend that time during the Feast of Tabernacles to cry out daily to your God. It says, **Rejoice the soul of your servant: for unto you, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.** The source of true rejoicing. **Rejoice the soul of your servant unto you...I lift up my soul. For you, LORD, are good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon you.** He'll forgive us. He's ready to forgive us. He's full of mercy. **Give ear, O LORD/O Eternal, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplication. In the day of my trouble I call upon you: for you will answer me. Among the gods there is none like you, O LORD; neither are there any works like unto Your works. All nations which you have made shall come and worship before you, O LORD; and shall glorify Your name. For You are great, and You do wonderful things: you are God alone.** Again, recognizing who we are and who God is and how He has a plan. He has a purpose for mankind. Something to be so thankful for during this Feast of Tabernacles – God's plan for man and how great God is.

And **verse 11**, the attitude that we want to have, especially as we listen to the sermons. Says, **Teach me your way, O Eternal; I will walk in Your truth: unite my heart to fear Your name. I will praise you, O LORD my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Your name forevermore. For great is Your mercy toward me: and You have delivered My soul from the lowest hell. O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set You before them. But you, O LORD, are a God full of compassion and gracious, patience, and full of mercy and truth.** That's the God we serve. Says, **O turn unto me, and have mercy on me; give Your strength unto Your servant, and save the son of your handmaid. Show me a token for good; for they that hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because You, Eternal, have helped me, and comforted me.** So we need to be looking to God during this Feast of Tabernacles asking Him to help us to rejoice, asking Him to help us to spend that fellowship time in service, having God's spirit dwell, flow into us and through us to the benefit of others; to live this way of life; to practice this way of life; to prove this way of life.

So brethren, we can have a fabulous Feast of Tabernacles. Rejoice in the time that you have to be taught for 8 days through 10 sermons. Rejoice in God's plan for salvation as outlined in His 7 annual Holy Days. Rejoice in your calling, to be part of something so very special. Rejoice in the time you have to sit down and meditate on God's way of life and the continuation of His plan during this Feast of Tabernacles. Rejoice in your service to others. Be thankful that we have this opportunity to be together and ***you shall remember that you were bondmen in Egypt.** We were in the world. Deceived, not living this way of life, not knowing this way of life. **...remember that you were a bondman, or a servant, in Egypt and you shall observe and do these statutes. You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after that you have gathered in your corn: And you shall rejoice in your Feast, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, and all that are within your gates. Seven days shall you keep a solemn Feast unto the Eternal your God in the place which the Eternal shall choose: because the Eternal your God shall bless you in all your increase, and in all the works of your hands, therefore you shall surely rejoice.**

~~~end

**\*Deuteronomy 16:12-15**