

SHELTER IN PLACE

By Sarah Gandy

SCRIPTURE

Leviticus 23:41-43

“You shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

John 7:37-38

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”

OBSERVATION

In Leviticus we read about many appointment festivals, one of which is the Festival of Shelters (Festival of Booths or Festival of Tabernacles) found in Leviticus 23. This festival is considered the most joyous of festivals in Jewish culture and commemorates the time spent wandering in the desert and God’s ultimate rescue from exile. The Jews built tents/booths to live as the Israelites who wandered in the desert—a sacrificial opportunity to place themselves in the position of their ancestors. Leviticus 23:43 reminds us that God is infinitely capable of rescuing us, but it will be in His time. Each new day we have a choice: to question the ways of God or draw near to Christ and trust Him for provision. Jump to John 7, and we find the conclusion of the festival when Jesus goes into the tabernacle and begins to teach, before culminating with a shout, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to Me! Anyone who believes in Me may come and drink! For the scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart of anyone who believes in Me.’” The depiction here is that Christ is the way of salvation, and utmost joy comes through trusting in Him.

OBEDIENCE

Shelter in place, simply put, requires that we seek safety where we live. In Leviticus, the Israelites built temporary tents during the festival that served as a shelter, a dwelling place. Ultimately though, the tents were just that—temporary. During these days of undetermined outcome, where is your shelter found? Is it in a building? Is it inside the walls of your home? Is it with the latest press conference? Is it a relationship? Is it in a

pastor, family member, or friend? Is it the endless supplies you have stocked up? Is it the amount of money in your bank account? The current “shelter in place” and circumstances surround that order are temporary, but *where* we seek shelter has eternal consequences.

- Make a list of the things that give you a sense of security, and then go line-by-line through the list and ask the Lord to reveal where your confidence truly lies. Is your shelter found in Christ or are you relying on other things that produce fleeting security?
- Social isolation is distancing us from each other physically, but reflect on this question, “Are you living in spiritual isolation from the Father?” How are you seeking community now?
- Read through the lyrics of the old hymn “Joy Unspeakable,” and find ways to reflect that joy into the lives of those with whom you interact.

PRAYER

Lord, we know You are the living water that never runs dry and Your Holy Spirit dwells within the hearts of all those who trust you. Forgive us for where we have wandered out on our own and sought to control the circumstances. Renew our spirit afresh and restore to us the joy of our salvation so that others may see and come to know You as Savior. As we sink further into a time of social isolation, use these days to draw us to deeper into communion with You. Align our minds with Your will, and give us confidence to step out in faith, trusting You will lead us through the unfamiliar terrain.

To read more about the Feast of Booths, follow [this link](#).