

Sermon Notes for Easter VI C 2010

I want to speak today about a tent, a mansion, and a temple.

Three dwelling places.

Of increasing permanence.

Of increasing perfection.

A tent of God's presence, a mansion of God's presence; a temple of God's presence.

The Gospel of John used the idea of a tent to speak about the Incarnation of Jesus.

"The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory."

"Lived among us" more literally "pitched his tent."

Tent a temporary shelter.

The Lord temporarily among us in the flesh.

The divine camped out with us in the earthly life of Jesus.

Temporary in this sense; we do not see and touch him as Thomas did in the Upper Room.

As Mary did when she grabbed him in the Garden.

His physical presence is not the same for us as it was for the first disciples.

He pitched a tent here for about 33 years;

Spent some more months with us in the Resurrection.

And then ascended to his Father and ours.

The camping trip among was over.

And yet it was not, it not over, in another very real sense.

He says in our section of John 14 that he is with everyone who loves him and keeps his word.

"Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

And not the same verb with a sense of temporality built in;

Now, the strong verb *poieo*, to make or do.

Combined with *monen*, the word for mansion, a substantial home, one for generations.

Thus a strong affirmation that God is at home with us

That the assurance of Jesus as he prepared to depart from the disciples.

Odd: I am leaving; I will never leave you alone.

I must return to my Father and your Father; I am with you always.

If you love me and obey me, I will be with you.

If you love me and obey me, I will be with you as much as I have ever been;

As much as when you grabbed me and ate with me and saw me.

The famous words of blessing at the end of chapter 20 are for people like us

who have not seen the physical body of Jesus but have come to faith.

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Blessed are those in 2010 who love and obey Jesus.
He comes to make his mansion with them, even better than a tent.

And also in the Advocate, the Holy Spirit.

If the disappearance of Jesus into the clouds is the bad news;
the descent of the Spirit is the good news indeed.
A Spirit who will teach us everything;
who will continue remind the church of all that Jesus had taught it.

Jesus said, "I am going away, and I am coming to you."

There is the mystery; the loss; the promise.
As we lose the ascended Lord, we do not lose the ascended Lord.
For he gives us a Spirit who continually bears us up his presence.
To the many mansions of his father's house.

The Christian life is at its best like that

Down here in the muck and messiness of the real world that God has given us;
But also a life transformed, transported into the presence of Christ.
A life of prayer and service and sacramental fellowship,
A life in the Holy Spirit.
Is one in which are continually lifted up to the right hand of him who sits at God's right
hand.

The power of the Spirit among us is a foretaste of the day when God will join heaven and earth.

When a new Jerusalem will appear, when a voice from a heaven will cry:
"See the home of God is among mortals;
he will dwell with them'
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them."

John says we won't need a temple building that day, for the presence of the Lord is the Temple in that new creation.

A temple; see; much more than a tent.
A temple, so much more than even a mansion.
A place of the unfiltered presence of God.

The God who was among us for a short human life will be with us forever.

The God who draws us into his mansion in obedience and love and his Holy Spirit.

The earth will be as full of the presence of God as the waters cover the sea.