

The Heart of the Sanctuary

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- [0 : 0 0] We're working our way through, little by little, we've already been in this chapter two Sundays. And so two weeks ago, we stepped into chapter 25, kind of giving you what I call a more conceptual view of this command for them to make God a tabernacle.
- And I showed you that God showed Moses a pattern, something he could look at and see with his eyes, and said, I want you to make the tabernacle after the pattern.
- And the concept there was that in the New Testament, the Bible says that God dwells in his people. And that the Lord Jesus Christ was that pattern that God showed for man to make that life after.
- And the concept then was kind of, it was interesting, and it was something that we can consider, that we're to pattern our lives after the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as what's written in the books, as God gave Moses not only something he saw, but he gave him it in writing.
- And then last week, we went back through that same passage, the first nine verses, and took a second look at it, this time relating what we read to making your life a sanctuary for God to dwell in.
- [1 : 1 8] And I showed you that that's going to be dependent upon your attitude, because God was looking for a willing heart in verse number two. And that's something you have to do, is choose that you want God to dwell in you and walk in you.
- If you don't choose that, then he's not going to do that. Secondly, it was dependent upon whether you hold back or not. Because as we saw, that all that gold, all that silver, all of those items that he needed, they had in their possession.
- And most of that they left Egypt with, as they spoiled the Egyptians. And the third thing was that it was dependent on how well you know the pattern. If you're going to make your life a pattern, and a sanctuary for God to dwell in, well, you're going to have to do it according to what he told you to do it, the way he wants it, not the way you like it.
- And so we're going to now move into the next portion of this chapter, in verse number 10, where God begins informing Moses about the furnishings of this tabernacle. Now remember, he's still in the mount.
- And these are only instructions that come out before the construction ever begins down below. And so this is the furnishings. In chapter 31, he calls it the furniture.
- [2 : 2 4] And in verse number 9, he calls it the instruments of the tabernacle. So let's read verses 10 through 22. And we're going to read about this first piece of furniture called the ark.
- So follow along, Exodus 25, verse 10. And they shall make an ark of shittim wood. Two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.
- And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold within and without, shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof.

And two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be born with them.

The staves shall be in the rings of the ark. They shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold.

[3 : 32] Two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold. Of beaten work shalt thou make them in the two ends of the mercy seat.

And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end. Even of the mercy seat shall you make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings.

And their faces shall look one to another. Toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark. And in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.

And there I will meet with thee. And I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, and from between the two cherubims, which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Now the rest of this chapter he gets with two other elements here. Furnishing is the table for the showbread. And also the candlestick is going to finish out the chapter.

[4 : 39] But for today, let's relate what we read and focus in on this first piece of furniture, the ark. And I want to relate it to you and I, I hope, by the help of God, in a very important way.

But before we do that, let's seek the Lord one more time. Fathers, we have read this passage. We've opened the book. We've seen with our eyes this piece of furniture.

And understand this is something from years and years ago that you had in your mind. And that you commanded Moses and these to build and to make you. I pray, God, that you'll help us to relate this and give us understanding in this.

And may it be beneficial to the life that we live today. And so God, give me the wisdom and the power to describe and to preach. And give your people ears to hear.

And just do an interaction, something that takes place today that's of the Spirit of God in this place. Where we'll hear from you. And we'll hear it from the inside.

[5 : 44] The way you speak from the heart. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I want to give you a couple things. Four things about the ark that we read here. And then at the end, kind of come back and relate that to something that I think is very important.

And so let's just understand what we can about this piece of furniture. The one that God here, that we read about. The first thing I want you to know is that this ark is a special piece.

Like, it's mentioned first. The first thing. Doesn't even talk about the tabernacle yet. Didn't describe how that's going to be built and how big that is. He just starts with this piece of furniture.

The first and the very foremost thing, Moses, is they shall make an ark. It's a special piece. And there's good reason that it's mentioned first before anything else.

To me, without a doubt, having read this and considered it and understand what's coming next, this is the most important piece of furniture in this sanctuary. It is the individual piece and will be the individual place where the presence of God would dwell in this tabernacle structure.

[6 : 55] Dimensions are given. We read that in verse number 10. Two and a half cubits by one and a half by one and a half. And if a cubit's 18 inches, and there's some argument about that, but it's got to be pretty close to that, give or take, you're looking at something very close to what this table is in front of me.

Very, very close to that. It's a little bit shorter. Not quite as long and maybe a little bit wider than that. And maybe just a little shorter overall. But the idea is if you need to picture something, you're talking something comparable to what's in front of me at the table.

And so the dimensions are given and the material of the body of the ark is given, the wood, and laying that over with gold. There's no description of how thick of a layer, whether this was just some minute portion of a millimeter, or if this was a little heavier.

But knowing a little bit about gold, that's a very, very heavy material. And the thicker you put that overlaying it, the heavier that thing's going to get. And there's no doubt in my mind this was a heavy piece of furniture.

So they overlay it with gold. We read that. Within and without. So were you to look down inside of this box made of wood, you would see a complete inner filled with gold.

[8 : 12] Everything you look at, there's no wood to be seen at all. It's completely covered in gold. It really is essentially a box. A wooden crate that's got an opening across the top with a crown of gold, some decorative design around the top.

Now here's where it gets special. The covering of the ark in verse 17 is called a mercy seat. It's such an interesting word.

God just calls it a mercy seat and just goes on from there. It doesn't give you any description or any reasoning for this terminology that he chose for the top of this ark.

It's a mercy seat. Okay. What's a mercy seat? Well, I don't know. But here's what it's going to look like. And he tells you that this is a mercy seat and it's going to be a solid work of gold.

Beaten work containing two cherubims in verse 18. And it gives a couple verses about the cherubims. Three verses here in Exodus 25 about the cherubims and how they're facing and how their wings are spread abroad and on top and cover over the mercy seat.

[9 : 21] This space that's between them and their wings are covering over that space. And so there's a hollow spot, if you want to call it that, in the center of this top piece called the mercy seat.

All of this is very interesting and it's hard to imagine. In Hebrews chapter 9, it talks about this thing. And we'll look there in just a second. But it says, of which we cannot now speak particularly. We just really don't know about these cherubims.

And it's intrigued me for, I can't remember when. It hasn't intrigued me whenever I read about these cherubims here. And then I read about them again in 1 Kings with Solomon putting his temple and the cherubims there a little bit different.

And then you read about them in Ezekiel. And that just blows my mind in Ezekiel chapter 1 and chapter 10. And I've always been intrigued by them. But just like the author in Hebrews, of which we cannot speak particularly.

Just God is not giving light on what those beings are. And a very thorough description anyway of them. But this is the most important piece. It is probably undoubtedly the most costly piece.

[10 : 27] The most precious. The most ornate and magnificent of all the pieces of the tabernacle is this ark. It later on is called the ark in the covenant.

But then later on it seems to settle in in 1 Samuel. Throughout all of that it's called the ark of God. And it's a special piece. Not to mention, as I said, a very heavy piece. And I tried to just get a little guess here.

I understand the figures of what this may have weighed. It just caught my attention thinking gold is so heavy. That if there's this much gold. If the top piece has got to be that long.

And it's got to be that wide. It doesn't say how thick or tall it is. But for cherubims to be coming up. That's all beaten gold. One piece of gold. Not to mention golden rings enough to hold the staves.

It's some serious weight to this. And there's been suggestions of several hundred pounds. And then some say, oh that's not right. Because the priests have to carry this.

[11 : 27] And they're holding it for a long time. In one place we'll look at later. Or, I don't know. I don't know. But I know it's heavy. If that top is that wide and long. And it's covering that whole thing.

And it's all made of gold. It's heavy. One non-biblical expositor said, well it probably, the mercy seat was probably made of wood too.

And then just overlaid in gold. Because it's way too much weight. And it helps to believe your Bible. It was one piece of beaten work. That's what the Bible says. And so, there's the ark as a special piece.

A very special piece. Now it's also in a special place. This piece is so sacred. Or maybe we'd say that because the presence of God dwelt upon it, that made it sacred. But nevertheless, it was located in its own sanctuary on the inside of the sanctuary.

It's called the most holy place. Or elsewhere, it's called the holiest of all. And I'd like you to turn to the book of Hebrews. And I think Hebrews here says some things. In just a less wordy way, that we could get what we need here about this place that the ark was put in.

[12 : 40] Hebrews chapter 9. And let's look at the first couple of verses here together. Hebrews 9 and verse number 1.

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary.

That's what Moses is building, a worldly, earthly sanctuary. Verse 2. For there was a tabernacle made, the first wherein was the candlestick and the table and the shoe bread, which is called the sanctuary.

And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all. So inside of this tent, when you go through the first veil, you're in a small little room that carries these items mentioned in verse 2.

And if you could go through, there's another veil into what he calls the tabernacle. It's called a tabernacle, that inner sanctuary, also called the holiest of all.

[13 : 44] Verse 4 says, Amen.

So inside of the tabernacle, that's off limits to anybody but the priest. And they got some service to do, as it mentions in verse number 1, divine service, ordinances of divine service that needs to be taken place in there.

Nobody gets to go in there except those priests. And they have to be anointed and there's a process for that. But that further tabernacle, that inner one, the holiest of all, that was completely off limits, perpetually off limits, save one time.

A high priest goes in once a year and he doesn't go in empty-handed. Continue reading in Hebrews 9, verses 6 and 7. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the heirs of the people. So this is a special piece and it's located in a very special place.

[15 : 11] Now let's learn something else. Go back to Exodus 25 and know that this ark has a special purpose. A special purpose to this piece of furniture.

Verse 22, the last verse we read says, And there I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims, which are upon the ark of the testimony.

I will meet with thee. I will commune. God is going to communicate to man from that location, from that piece of furniture.

So when this place is set up, when the tabernacle and the sanctuary is built, God himself will have his own sanctuary on the inside of that to dwell in.

He's still set apart from his people. They cannot come nigh to him. And so he doesn't have to relinquish his holiness to come down and to dwell among sinful men.

[16 : 14] And from there, he's going to commune with them. No more burning bush out in the wilderness. No more trips up and down Mount Sinai once this place is built and established because God said, That's the spot that I'll meet with you.

That's the spot I'll commune with you. From here forward, this is how God's going to do it. So wherever the journey takes them, God will be among them and can get their attention as needed.

He can meet and communicate. And let me show you this a little bit. Come to the end of the book that we're in, at chapter 40, is when they put all of this furniture inside the tabernacle.

And at the very, very end of Exodus 40, you'll see the last part of verse 33 says that Moses finished the work.

Verse 33, He finished the work. Everything is set up. Everything is in its place. It's all ready to go. And then the Lord shows up. In verse 34, Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

[17 : 23] Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the tabernacle. So God shows up. And He even talks there, when they're time to move, the cloud goes up. And when it's time to stay, the cloud stops and He returns.

And maybe we'll see that in a minute. Now look at the next book, the very first verse. Leviticus chapter 1, verse 1. And the Lord called unto Moses, not from a bush, not from the cloud up on top of the mount.

He spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation. Why is that? Because the Lord's now dwelling there. This ark has a special purpose. Look at the next book.

Flip to Numbers chapter number 1 and look at the very first verse. The same thing. Numbers. The Lord has something to tell Moses about numbering the people and about them bringing their offerings before the Lord.

This is God further instructing and He's doing it from the mercy seat. Numbers 1, verse 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai in the tabernacle of the congregation.

[18 : 31] Offer the mercy seat. From the mercy seat. The voice of God comes forth. Stay in Numbers. Look to the chapter 7. Look to the very end of chapter 7.

After each tribe brings all of their offerings and sacrifices before the Lord. The very end of this chapter. Look at what it says here.

In verse 89. The very last verse. Verse 789. And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony from between the two cherubims.

And he spake unto him. Not only is God speaking to Moses, speaking to man from that location, but also later on as the ark makes its way, they can communicate and seek to God.

I'll just save the time here. I'm going to turn and just read this to you from Judges chapter 20. There's a kind of a... I don't have time to talk about the context of this battle and why they're going against the children of Benjamin and so forth.

[19 : 51] But at any rate, the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin. And it says, let me find here, verse 23, The children of Israel ran up and wept before the Lord until even, and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up against...

to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother? Should I go up again to battle? And the Lord spoke back. He answered him and said, Go up against him. And it didn't go well, so they come back in verse 26, Then all the children of Israel and all the people went up and came unto the house of God and wept and sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening and offered burnt offerings, peace offering unto the Lord.

The children of Israel inquired of the Lord, and here's a parenthesis that says, For the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days. And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days, saying, and now he speaks, and shall I go up?

So that ark has a special purpose. It's not only where God will speak to man to give him instruction and commandment, but where God or man can come before God and ask questions and get some information.

And this special purpose of the ark is that God is accessible, is that God is approachable within the bounds of his regulations and his holiness, that God is now approachable by man through a high priest.

[21 : 26] We read that Eleazar stood there and spoke. Any man, anybody in Judges 20 or anybody back here in Exodus 25 can't just say, I got a thing I want to ask God.

There's something I don't understand. And just walk right in and then holler through the veil to the mercy. No, nobody has the privilege or the right to do that. They have to do it through the high priest. And so, God could be approached through a high priest.

We might want to table that. The ark and the mercy seat is a picture or a type for us of what takes place over our heads in the third heaven where God sits upon his throne and where our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, according to Romans 8, makes intercessions for us.

And so the ark has a special purpose. Now, another thing about it, the ark had a special presence. And I don't mean the presence of God upon the ark. That's true.

But I'm not referring to the person of God when I say the piece of furniture had a special presence. What I mean that the piece of furniture itself and all of its design and all of its intentions and purpose, it had kind of an atmosphere about it, an aura, a bit of a certain quality that that piece of furniture was special, had its own special place that they could not go near.

[22 : 50] It had a perfect, God spoke off of that thing. It was a very, very important piece of furniture in their culture. Look at Numbers, the book of Numbers again, and find chapter number 10.

The ark had a special presence. The people came very fond of it, almost trusting in it, maybe to the wrong degree.

But let's just learn a few things about some of the characteristics or some of the ways that the ark is mentioned in the scripture here. In Numbers 10, they're about to take a journey from Mount where the tabernacle was built and it was all set up.

Now it's time to leave. And so they pack it all up according to the way the Lord said. Verse 33, it says, They departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey to search out a resting place for them.

And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass when the ark set forward that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

[24 : 07] And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel. And now the cloud is what was taken up and what led and then what stopped and kind of came back as he's calling for the Lord after they set that tabernacle back up to return to the many thousands of Israel.

And so it was the ark that led the way. The entire nation followed the ark. You may remember in the book of Joshua when this next generation came on and the others had passed away, the 40 years are accomplished, and now it's time to go across the Jordan River.

And the priests were commanded to bear the ark and to walk into the Jordan River and to set themselves firmly and the waters would stop and they'd rise up on a heap and they stood there holding that ark as the people passed.

You know how many people passed across? I mean, this is a time frame I can't really get a hold of. But those priests stood there until they got out and they built an altar and so forth.

Then the waters came through. But the ark of the covenant, it was covered by the way. People show that thing always, I believe, every time you see it getting packed up, it's covered with the veil.

[25 : 24] And so, I don't know that anybody saw that ark the way they think they did or the way certain artists portray it, but I could be wrong about that. But anyway, so they go into the new land and it's the ark that leads them at the Jordan River.

Then they come up upon Jericho right there at the beginning of Joshua. And what happens there? The priests bear the ark and the people follow and they go around the city one time and you know the story about Jericho.

There's the ark being taken around. This is a remarkable thing. They're following or being led or being in the presence of this piece of furniture, carrying it around as proud as could be, like that's our God?

Kind of. But you see, it has a presence. Like the presence of God was in the cloud going up, but they carried that furniture around because it had some certain quality about it.

Today we like to talk and people sing songs and say, you know, we're beneath the banner of the cross and it's the bloodstained banner that leads the way and we follow and we're marching on.

[26 : 30] Well, these people didn't have a bloodstained banner of a cross that they followed and held high. They had an ark. Understand the significance a little bit now. That's the piece of furniture that they looked to, that they were excited about, that did it for them.

The ark of the covenant. Alright, so that's Numbers chapter 10. Look at Numbers chapter 14. I'm going to, just backing up to, we've already kind of in your mind crossed over Jordan but now I need to rewind those 40 years and find this is the place they sent the spies in in chapter 13 and they, they decided, no, we can't take these people of the land.

We can't do it. And some of them, two of them said, no, you can. We can go. The Lord's with us. And the people though did not exercise faith. In verse number 40, they rose up early in the morning and got them up into the top of the mountain saying, lo, we be here and we will go up into the place which the Lord has promised for we have sinned.

So God said, I'm going to kill you because you're not going into the land now because you didn't have faith and they said, no, no, no, okay, we sinned, we messed up. And Moses said, wherefore now do you transgress the commandment of the Lord? It shall not prosper.

Go not up for the Lord is not among you that you be not smitten before your enemies for the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you and you shall fall by the sword because you are turned away from the Lord. Therefore the Lord will not be with you but they presumed to go up unto the hilltop.

[27 : 58] Nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the Lord and Moses departed not out of the camp. And the Amalekites came down, the Canaanites dwelt in land, smote them, discomfited them even unto Hormah.

So this is a significant element, the ark is, in their success and it's notably missing in their defeats. It gave them a confidence. It gave them an assurance.

For time's sake, I'm not taking you there but if you'll read 1 Samuel chapter 4, the Lord was against his people and he was allowing the Philistines to come in and wage war against his people and God was seeing to it that the Philistines would overcome them and destroy them and punish them.

This is part of that cycle that was going on in the book of Judges and it carries on in the 1 Samuel. And so, the Jews get this idea, oh you know what? Let's get the ark.

And so they go to Shiloh and they go to where Eli, they get the ark and they take the ark out there to battle and now the Philistines are afraid.

[28 : 59] You can read that in chapter 4. They're afraid when the ark shows up and they rally to each other and they say, quit you like men, like die like a man, we'll never be servants to the Israelites.

And so they decide they're going to fight to the death and they didn't need to because they won. That ark did nothing. Matter of fact, the Philistines took the ark and then they went and placed it in the house of their god, Dagon.

Do you remember what happened to their god? Their god was falling down flat on his face before the ark and then they got him up and then the next day they go in and he's got his hands cut off and his head cut off and there's just a stump that remained because he put the ark of God in the house of a devil.

And so the people though see how they took this as this ark will save us. They became reliant upon it and it's a special piece, yes, and it belongs in a special place definitely not in the house of Dagon.

It belongs in the sanctuary, the holiest of all. It's got a special place and as we saw it has a special purpose where God will communicate and meet with his people and then on top of that it had a special presence about it leading the way and carrying it forward and even relying upon it and trusting that this will save us.

[30 : 23] It did. It had something they looked to, a quality. Now let's relate what we've read in Exodus 25 and this piece of furniture. The ark was positioned in the innermost sanctuary of the tabernacle.

Virtually invisible to all of the millions of Jews that lived and pitched their tents round about it. It was unique.

It was a precious piece of the tabernacle. Now in the last few weeks we were looking at specifically that God calls us to make him a sanctuary and that in the New Testament your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you which you have of God.

And last week drove that point home of making your life a sanctuary for God to dwell in. I think the most important piece that dwells or that is on the inside in the innermost part of your being that is unseen is your heart.

Not the organ that pumps the blood but that that innermost person where your will operates.

[31 : 43] where your affections lie where your where the thoughts and intents of the heart come from. You the real you the nucleus of your will.

I think that's what we're looking at here in relation to your life. Let me say a few thoughts about your heart. Your heart is a special piece of you.

There's only one. You're the only one in the world that has it in the sense of who you are. There's only one of you and God made you and knows you by name and probably only about 30 other people of all the billions on the planet.

Could you think of it like that for a second instead of like I know 30 or 50 people by name and God but rather God knows me by name and then a couple others.

Do you understand the significance that God knows you the person not the hair not the clothes not the shoes not the job not the house not the friends but the the person the special piece down inside the who that you are not the what I think this is a special piece it's the most valuable impression precious portion of your existence the construction of your heart is in such a manner that there's a vacant place in everybody's heart right between the cherubims a vacant place that nobody can dwell in nothing can fit in there and sit in there except the maker of that heart you've heard this said and it's a common thought of a lost man seeking to fulfill desires and just can't quite fill that hole in his heart that's the hole it's where the mercy seat is it was it was reserved and designed for the presence of God there's a part of every man and woman that only Jesus

[34 : 03] Christ can fill it's a special piece your heart is in a special place it's invisible it's in a part of you that nobody virtually nobody gets a true pure full on glimpse of not even your spouse or your children or anyone the closest person to you in this life can never see all the way down into your heart they only can make their judgments upon what you let come out upon your mouth upon your actions man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart and deep down inside of you in a special place resides the real person and you'll allow that real person to get to be displayed to certain people the tighter you get with them the more you let see but the truth is you've never told you've never borne all of your heart and you don't have to don't start wondering about what your husband's not telling you or what your wife's not telling you don't worry about that because God looks in that that's a place for God this is the way he set us up that heart is a special purpose too it has a special purpose when God dwells on the mercy seat of your heart he speaks to you he

I will meet you there I will commune with you there in the inside you have a different opportunity now where you can commune with God and fellowship with God and now he's accessible where he wasn't before he's approachable you have a relationship with him and you don't have to yell and get your voice to get outside of this atmosphere to get past the stars where he might hear your cry you don't have to cut yourselves and leap upon an altar to get the attention of God as they did back in Elijah's day but no he'll never leave you he'll never forsake you he's right there he's right there and you can commune with him you can approach him because of your high priest and the ark is not only a special piece and your heart being that same way a special place with a special purpose but it also it has a special presence just like this ark your heart leads the way your heart directs which way you're going to go in life you can tell people what they want to hear but the truth is you're going to do what's in your heart you can be led by your parents you can have good people or bad people in your life influence you but it's in your heart you're going to decide which way to go for good or for evil but when the Lord Jesus Christ dwells in your hearts by faith you have a different presence about you because of his indwelling spirit you now have a confidence an assurance dwells in your heart that you are a child of God that you can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me you have this assurance and confidence that you can be an overcomer that you're a new creature in Christ Jesus and that you're an heir of God and so much more that ark is something special and your heart is something special and back look back in

Exodus chapter 25 below that mercy seat was an empty box an empty box and it has space for many things many things can be put inside of that box but there's something that God wants to see inside of that box would you notice in verse number 21 thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee for Moses he's referring to those two tables of stone wherein originally the finger of God wrote his commands to his people and he said put that inside the ark can you think of a verse of scripture that would match this anything I mean there's a couple of them about right upon the table of your heart that's a good one but the easiest one

Psalms 119 thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee God's looking for the word of God to be placed on the inside and he's looking for a place where he can dwell and speak to you from the beginning he said make me a sanctuary I want to dwell among you it's going to start with the heart oh Christian there's space in that heart of yours for a lot of things are you given this thing priority this book you have a book where God will speak to you out of this book where he's guided you all the way everything you need to know is in the book seeking an answer you'll get it from the book have you put the book in the ark have you put that one in there because that's the one he's asking for as we studied in Sunday school with those thorns that choke the word and don't let the word become fruitful there's a lot of other things inside the heart and what it was was the lust of other things the careful or the deceitfulness of riches the cares of this life all of that stuff gets down into our heart it needs to be emptied if we could turn that ark over and dump it all out and then just put the word of God in boy we'd have a chance then in the Proverbs

Solomon says in speaking spiritually on behalf of God he says my son give me thine heart just give me your heart I didn't ask for your money I didn't ask for your friends I just want your heart could I have your heart would you give me your heart would you give me a place that I could dwell and speak to you from man has given himself over to many things that are of no profit giving himself over to many things that when he looks on it it's regretful and it brings remorse but Christian you will not regret giving your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ and saying here's my heart take and seal it for thy courts above you will not regret surrendering your heart to him giving him your will giving him your days your energy your thoughts and your intentions in this life your desires what do you want to accomplish

[41 : 17] God here you take it you lead me into accomplishing something for Jesus Christ give him your heart the Lord wants to meet with you and he wants to commune with you and he wants to do it from the very place that he reserved for himself so when God has your heart he'll dwell with you and he'll walk with you and he'll be your God and you'll be his people he'll speak to you he'll lead you forward he'll never leave nor forsake he'll give you the same confidence the same assurance that everybody had about that ark all of that comes if you'll surrender your heart to the hand of God we're looking at an old piece of furniture way way back there years and years ago thousands of years ago but really we're looking at the inside of you we're seeing that this is the most important thing I have my heart a place that's so special that God knows all about it and he wants to meet with me and he wants to speak with me from my heart

I know that might sound confusing to you because the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked and so the heart needs something that can wash it the heart needs to be sanctified by the word of God a cleansing that takes place wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word the word of God can cleanse a heart the word of God can sanctify your will and mind and thoughts and intentions the book can do all of these things that's why it needs to be inside so this morning we're looking at the most important thing and it's your heart and if God has your heart I've said it before he'll have everything else he'll have everything else and he deserves it let's bow our heads together this morning we're going to conclude here in just a moment with your heads bowed I just want to I want you to be to be thoughtful and to be in prayer and to consider this question that

I ask have you ever surrendered your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ have you ever said God take my heart search me know my heart I don't trust myself I want you to have me he made you he knows you and he deserves to have what he made he's not necessarily going to put anything heavy on you he's not necessarily going to say alright I want you to sell everything you have and give it to the poor I want you to move he may not do anything he just wants to know he has you but if he does have you then anything he asks of you will be easy it'll be easy to say speak Lord for thy servant heareth anything Lord and I'll do it here am I Lord send me all of that will become easy when he has your heart you don't have to be afraid you don't have to hold back give him your heart father this morning please deal with each person this morning you know them you know them better than they know themselves certainly better than anyone else knows them would you please speak into each individual those words that they need to hear from you give them some instruction give them some guidance answer their questions give them direction in life of decisions that they should make speak to your people

God show us our sin show us where we're not surrendered speak in that still and small gentle voice in a way that we can hear help us to know your voice God please remove all confusion from your people give them liberty let them know it's you help us to be obedient to your voice help us to commune with you draw us God to the word of God please put in our hearts a hunger and a thirst for righteousness and have your way with our hearts and lives we ask this in

Christ Jesus name amen amen I'm not going to keep you any longer one