



In very large letters, the billboard read, "Can't Read? Call this number for help..." I just scratched my head the same way I do when I order printer ink online and the little box pops up that says, "Print this page for your records" or how the phone books used to list a phone number to call in case my phone stops working. Communication can be a tricky thing.

Exodus 19 and 20 record an exciting event in God's grand self-revelation. He has rescued Israel's children from generations of Egyptian slavery and brought them through arid wilderness to a mountainous oasis. Through his friend Moses, God invites Israel's children to be his own. They react with acceptance and so God reaches down to begin the conversation of fellowship.

But, there's a breakdown in the communication. As God transcends the great abyss between his holiness and humanity's sinfulness to converse with his own, the Israelites, terrified by the static on the line, retreat. Isaiah would later explain that the problem is most assuredly on our end of the connection: "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God."

What follows in the Exodus account is the embodiment of grace in an intricate discipline of approach. Seeing the breakdown in communication, God gives his people the Tabernacle. This physical representation of a great eternal truth serves as an archetypal schematic for repairing the line of communication on our side of the connection. (Exodus 25:40 & Hebrews 8:5-12)

In following, daily, the step-by-step instructions, we discipline our wills to risk trust and thus position our hearts to actually listen and respond to Almighty God. We repair the phone line.

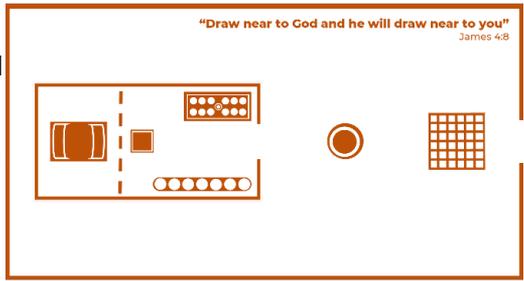
At the Altar of Burnt Offering, we remember that we are sinners and saved only by the miracle of atonement (John 14:6 & 1 Corinthians 2:2). At the Laver, working through the partnership of discipleship, we step out of narcissism's shadows toward the true reflection of who we are and into the daily cleansing of life in Christ (John 13:12-15 & Romans 5:10). Through Christ dwelling with us and us with him we are invited into the Holy Place life of faith where we seek God's kingdom first and he takes care of everything else (Matthew 6:33 & John 6:35; 12:46). Here, poured out as a Drink Offering, life spawned from such faith completes the sacrifice of Christ as sweet and savory to God. (Philippians 2:13, 17 & Colossians 1:24). Upon the Altar of Incense, strange ingredients from all corners of the earth are perfectly blended by the perfumer to be the sweet aroma of Christ before God – called out from the world we gather to be the church. (2 Corinthians 2:14-17 & Ephesians 1:23; 4:1-5:21). Then together, we encourage and challenge one another to enter life in the Holy of Holies, a life of listening, trusting, and responding to our Heavenly Father (Hebrews 12:12-15; Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Psalm 46:10).

God could have given us a sign we couldn't read, a page we couldn't print, or a number we couldn't call. But he didn't. He gave us a tabernacle – a schematic for building life on this end according to the pattern on his. He gave us a discipline of approach that we may dwell with him and him with us in the fellowship of conversation. Today the approach of the Tabernacle is internal and spiritual (Hebrews 9:11-14). Still, it remains the schematic for repairing the line of communication through the discipline of faith. "Today... hear his voice... strive to enter..." (Hebrews 3-4).

The details required in the craftsmanship, maintenance, and use of God's **Tabernacle** call us to consider the magnificent character of God.

EXO 27:1-8 & 35:1-36:38; 1 PET 2:1-10

Such consideration promises the relational context in which we fellowship with God.



At the **Altar of Burnt Offering** we face the great chasm between the brokenness of life lived for self and the immense love of God. Here, our conscience is awakened through Jesus' sacrifice and we surrender to God and his way. 1 JOH 4:10; GEN 22:1-8; EXO 12:1-7, 20:18-21, 29:38-46; LEV 4:32-35, 6:13; JOH 14:6; ROM 5:1-2; 1 PET 1:13-21



By reading, studying, reflecting, and living God's word together in humility and authenticity, we come to our true reflection at the **Laver** and practice the daily washing of discipleship. Our sins confessed, our souls washed new, God transforms us incrementally into the image of his Son who also walked this journey. EXO 30:17-21, 38:8, 40:1-7; JOH 12:3, 13:1-17; ROM 5:8-10; HEB 2:10; 1 JOH 1:5-7



In the **Holy Place**, relentlessly choosing the peace found in God's spiritual and physical provision, we live a life of faith that brings to fruition Jesus' work at the cross. As we learn to wait and watch for the Holy Spirit's provision and direction, we discover the way Jesus lived and enter the fellowship with God we were designed for.



EXO 25:23-40; JOH 1:1-13, 6:32-35, 12:46; HEB 4:1-11; COL 1:13-18; PHI 2:12-18



The blended **Incense** represents God's work in and through his diverse Church. Worldly culture labels and divides. Much of religious culture seeks the shortcut of uniformity over unity. God's children must gather, grow, and serve in harmony amidst diversity.

EXO. 30:1-10, 34-38; 2COR. 2:14-17; EPH. 4:1-5:21



In the **Holy of Holies**, amidst the topography of grace, we approach the presence of God. Our call is to be still and know that he is God, to listen, to trust, to obey, and to live in fellowship with God our Father, Jesus our Savior, and the Holy Spirit. our ever-present guide.

EXO 25:10-22; EXO 33-34; NUM 7:89; LEV 26; HEB 9:2-5; ROM 10:17; PSA 46:10; DEU 6:4-6

We trust in the efficacious grace of Christ's death and resurrection to open the way to the Father. We wash daily in the transparency of God's word at discipleship's laver. We pour out our life into the exercise of faith by trusting that God will provide for our needs both physically and spiritually. We gather as God's church regularly to encourage and equip. All of this is so that we might order our life to be still and listen for the voice of God in the fellowship of relationship. Having heard, we obey.

If you want to continue the conversation, email Pastor Tim at t.walker@fbcrichland.net