

Day 71 – May 8

What began as a Tabernacle, mobile and simple and humble, has become the Temple, stationary and elaborate and proud. And God has allowed both to be His dwelling place among His people. Yet as we read, we see again and again God warning against Kings and Temples and Empires. It is almost as if God would rather His people had remained nomadic wanderers, carrying the Tabernacle with them wherever they went. This Nation of Israel, with its monarchy and Capitals and Temple, while blessed by God, does not seem to be His first choice.

When Jesus comes to explain God's will and character, He takes us back from this Empire-building, back to wandering and simplicity and humility. The Kingdom of Israel is changed as Jesus says the Kingdom of God is within you. The Temple is changed as Jesus first "tabernacles among us" (John 1), then says that He is the new temple, and then Paul says that we too are temples of the Holy Spirit. And the stationary life of the Empire is changed as God is no longer stationary in this world but is within us, goes with us, and is to be brought by us into the world.

Today we still lean more heavily toward Empire building than nomadic wandering. We want Mega-churches (or at least bigger churches than we have, no matter what size our church is), and facilities, and a place where we meet with God. My father-in-law used to call this the church's Edifice Complex. What might the world be like, what might our church be like, if we truly lived into the wandering nomadic spiritual life to which Jesus called us? What if we traveled not to see the sights but to bring the gospel to places around the world? What if we spent less on a building, an edifice, and more on supporting congregants who would take the message and God Himself to their workplaces, their gyms, their schools, and their neighborhoods?