***Recapturing the Big Picture* – Bible Conference 2015**

**“The First Gospel & the Second Advent: *Sanctuary*”**

Devotional presentation – second session

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Prayer –

Introduction

My family had a cabin at Glacier View Ranch during the meetings there in 1980.

Some of you are too young to remember 1980...

But perhaps you’ve heard of Desmond Ford, and the Glacier View Sanctuary Review Committee.

Dr. Ford, then a teacher at Pacific Union College (in California), had some views about the Adventist doctrine of the Sanctuary that some church members and leaders found troubling.

So a committee was set up of church scholars and pastors and administrators.

They met at Glacier View Ranch in Colorado.

They were to listen to Dr. Ford’s views and determine whether or not he could keep teaching at an Adventist College.

At the ranch, our family and the Fords had cabins. Ours was closer to the lake, the Fords’ cabin was up the hill a bit beyond the swimming pool...

I believe everyone else stayed in the lodge, closer to the meeting rooms and the cafeteria.

My Dad was presenting a paper on A. F. Ballenger. I had no idea who Ballenger was...

My Mom was Richard Hammill’s secretary at the time. Elder Hammill was the Vice President of the General Conf responsible for the Glacier View Committee. Their office made all the arrangements for the meetings, duplicated and distributed all the materials, and, when everyone arrived, my mom was the liaison between the delegates and the one phone in the camp.

My brother and I didn’t really care about the meetings, we were excited about a family vacation to Colorado, the furthest West we’d ever been!

That attitude about the meetings changed during the week, when I began to see men–delegates to the meetings–walking around the lake shaking their heads, clearly upset, some even crying...

Then, one night in our cabin, my dad cried. He really cried. In fact, that evening was the first time I’d seen him cry like that.

Q What *was* this week all about?

13 at the time, it was difficult to get an answer I could understand.

At night I tried to stay awake as my parents discussed the day’s events in the safety of our cabin.

As I drifted off to sleep, I sometimes heard references to “the sanctuary”...

I knew they weren’t talking about the space in which we worshiped back at our local church.

“The sanctuary” had something to do with Adventism and being right and these meetings...and the weeping men I saw walking around the lake.

As I reflect on it now...35 years later...I think the sanctuary also has something to do with that cabin our family stayed in the week of August 10-15, 1980.

Historic Adventism & Sanctuary Symbols

It’s really difficult for me to imagine being an Advent believer in 1844...

To really believe that the Second Advent would take place before October was over.

Ellen White expressed it this way:

“Those who expected soon to stand face to face with their Redeemer, felt a solemn joy that was unutterable.... As they felt the witness of pardoning grace, they longed to behold Him whom their souls loved” (GC, 402-403).

Imagine October 22, 1844!

Imagine the anticipation... any minute, Jesus would return.

Imagine the children looking up into the clouds... the teenagers...the adults...

...all really believing they wouldn’t sleep again before seeing God!

Those struggling with illness were convinced that their pain would soon cease and their bodies would be healed;

My great-great-great grandmother, Belinda Loveland, believed she would be reunited with the three daughters she had lost to tuberculosis. What a day that would be!

We call Oct 22 the “Great Disappointment”...but that was actually October 23...

October 22 was a day of wondrous hope!

“Those who expected soon to stand face to face with their Redeemer, felt a solemn joy that was unutterable...”

Then came the early morning hours of October 23...

Trying to express the sense of loss and absence, Mrs. White goes to the disciple Mary Magdalene who, when she can’t find Jesus’ body in the tomb says to the two dressed in white:

“They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him” (Jn 20:13).

Hiram Edson will write: “we wept, and wept, until the day dawned...”

Faced with their experience, the Advent believers did theology...

That is, they tried to understand God in light of their current experience...

They tried to understand God even as they experienced God’s absence.

It makes sense that one of the theological insights of their wrestling would emphasize the Sanctuary...

...a set of symbols used in the Hebrew Bible to depict God’s presence with God’s people.

Perhaps a better understanding of the “sanctuary” would make sense of an absent God.

Jesus had not come down to cleanse the earth—sanctuary

But, instead, he was going about the business of cleansing a heavenly sanctuary.

Even with this delay, Jesus was entering a new phase of ministry that moved him closer to earth...to Advent.

They were wrestling with their understanding of God in light of their experience of God’s absence.

Weeping at all that was wrong in their world, including them! ...they found renewed hope as the sanctuary became a reminder of God’s continued presence...as priest...as mediator.

From the book of Hebrews, a key New Testament work for those Advent believers:

“Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:19-25).

The theology that emerged from the sanctuary symbols emphasized a God who was still Immanuel... “God with them” even as they “wept and wept until the day dawned...”

Q In what ways might our current weeping be comforted by the sanctuary symbols?

Q What might *a God* who *mediates* mean for people performing acts of mediation in our world today? Mediating between church members? Family members? Mediating between tribes? Nations?

Q What might images of *cleansing* mean for a world of contaminated soil and water?

Q If Christ’s *blood* is somehow sufficient, how dare we let any more be spilled?

Q What might *sanctuary* mean in a world where children are abused in the filth and darkness of brothels?

Q in our contemporary disappointments, including our disappointment in the delay of Advent, how does our sanctuary message speak?

As we consider the set of symbols surrounding the sanctuary...

As we consider this aspect of Adventism in our contemporary contexts,

what might it mean to embrace a heritage that holds these sanctuary symbols close to the heart-breaking experience of disappointment and bitter weeping?

Weeping and sanctuary seem to go together...What might that mean when *we* do theology?

There’s a story in Daniel 10 that must not be skipped over when trying to decipher the rest of this prophet’s pages:

Daniel is weeping for three straight weeks. And a being in human form comes to him and helps him *up* to his “hands and knees” (how he had been)... and then, later, another being in human form renews Daniel’s strength and says to him:

“Do not fear, greatly beloved, you are safe. Be strong and courageous!” (Daniel 10:19).

When we forget the weeping part... the temptation of the sanctuary symbols is to shift from the beautiful insight: “Immanuel” “God is with us”... to “God is with *just* us...”

Instead of “do not fear, greatly beloved, you are safe. Be strong and courageous!”

It becomes: “fear a lot, favored Adventist, you are never safe from heresy. Resist error!”

Suddenly the sanctuary shrinks... into who is in and who is out…

* Which groups may come into the courtyard, and which must stay outside the gates;
* Who can come into the sanctuary… be the priests, represent the prayers of the people before the altar of incense;

Adventists dealt with delay of the advent by focusing on the sanctuary.

What significance does the sanctuary continue to have for us 171 years after the GD?

The First Gospel - Mark might be able to help us.

Mark was living during the time of struggle for the sanctuary – the temple in Jerusalem.

I’d like to focus on two of Mark’s insights into sanctuary – as I read Mark, it seems clear to me that his insights are a God-thing; that Mark is inspired by God as he shares these amazing ideas:

First – the sanctuary is cleansed by Jesus.

Although the gospels place the story at different times in Jesus’ life, all four canonical gospels include what has been referred to as “Jesus *cleansing* the temple.”

From Mark’s gospel:

11:15 Then they came to Jerusalem.

And he entered the temple and began to

drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple,

and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves;

16and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.

17He was teaching and saying,

‘Is it not written,  
“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations”?  
  But you have made it a den of robbers.’

Fascinating scene. Three times in this short scene the temple is mentioned...

As young children, most of us learned about this story as the time when Jesus got upset...

...when he went into his “church” and people were being noisy and disruptive. (Didn’t our Sabbath School teachers first use this story to keep us in line?)

Most of us learned later in life, how the temple leadership was using the sanctuary system to take advantage of the poor...by insisting that people from the surrounding areas, actually even Jerusalem, exchange their money for currency only used within the temple courts. Temple guards (police) were present to make sure everyone went along with the system.

Also, with merchants giving the priests a kick-back, priests declared animals insufficient that had been brought by peasants for sacrifice....thus forcing them to purchase new ones with the new coins...

It was a scam. Everyone knew it. And it made Jesus mad.

If that weren’t enough, the location of this market-place was the court of the Gentiles... making it impossible for Gentiles to worship.

It is no accident that Matthew, Mark and Luke all have Jesus quoting Isaiah 56 as he addresses this awful scene.

“My house shall be called a house of prayer [for all people].”

Isaiah 56 has been called Scripture’s most inclusive picture of the sanctuary.

Isaiah 56 begins with the command from God: “Maintain justice, and do what is right” (56:1), then proceeds to describe all those who will experience God’s presence there:

* Eunuchs (who, according to Deuteronomy would definitely not be allowed into the sanctuary) are invited in!
* Outcasts are welcomed!
* The sick and injured and the hurting are healed!
* Foreigners are mentioned repeatedly!

This “cleansing” by Jesus is in harmony with Jesus’ ministry throughout Mark’s gospel… as Jesus ransoms and releases from bondage those in the shadows…

* bleeding women (Mark 5), poor widows (Mark 12);
* The elderly who are protected by Jesus’ reinterpretation of the law (Mark 7) and children who are treasured (Mark 10);
* Jesus’ cleansing of the temple on earth means that those hiding in the shadows may enter the presence of God—the demon possessed, the poor, the outcasts, the dirty, the foreigner, the sick…

The sanctuary *is* cleansed by Jesus!

Second, the sanctuary *is* Jesus…

In Mark’s gospel, just before Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple, a widow brings her two small coins and places them into the temple treasury (12:41-44).

This scene is an indictment on the corruption of the temple system, since the temple is supposed to take care of such people, rather than have them give to the temple.

But Jesus affirms her gift and self-sacrifice.

Immediately after Jesus discusses the destruction of the temple, another woman comes with a gift… only this time, she doesn’t give into the temple treasury.

This time, the woman gives her gift of costly perfume to the feet of Jesus.

One way of considering these three scenes (Mark enjoys putting three scenes together):

* Widow gives coins to the temple (12:41-44).
* Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple (13).
* Woman gives her gift to Jesus (14:3-9)…

… is to see Mark replacing the temple with Jesus.

Jesus is the temple…

Mark, writing during the war with Rome – is recapturing the big picture a generation after Jesus…

Christians need not fear if Rome destroys Jerusalem and its holy sanctuary, because Jesus has come – God with us. The very meaning of sanctuary as the experience of the presence of God has occurred in Jesus… who quotes Isaiah:

“My house shall be called a house of prayer [for all people]” (Mark 11:17)

For Isaiah, the sanctuary is not only a place to be safe from the world...

But it is a place to *bring* the world!

For Mark, that means to bring people to the feet of Jesus.

In Isaiah’s prophetic poetry of inclusion, all people experience the presence of God at the sanctuary!

As Jesus enters the temple in Jerusalem, he draws on this part of his heritage and proclaims:

“Maintain justice, and do what is right...” then...

“My house shall be called a house of prayer”

Otherwise, it isn’t really a sanctuary.

“God is with *just* us” may be tempting, but it isn’t sanctuary.

It is impossible to have sanctuary if social injustice rules the courtyard.

Jesus embraces the symbols of the sanctuary and the sanctuary expands to include the entire world!

When Kim Davis was 22, she and three other young Vietnamese women were working at Saigon Adventist Hospital.

On April 4, 1975, they decided if anyone asked them to carry children onto the World Vision Flight, they would walk past the guards, carry the children onto the plane, and stay there.

They became stow-aways, arriving in Seattle with only the clothes they were wearing—their nurses uniforms.

Kim told me how terrified the four were through the experience. Someone in the airport got them each two blankets and they shivered under them, holding onto

each other.

Keith and Rosa Ross went to the airport that day thinking they were going to adopt one of the 407 children...instead, when they saw the four terrified young women huddled together, they took them home (for several days).

When word got around that four workers from Saigon Adventist Hospital were in Seattle somewhere, Tracy Teele, then VP of Student Affairs at LLU, went looking for them. Mr. Teele took them to S. Cal and to the La Sierra campus. According to one press release on the stow-aways: “the women are ‘settling in well and are less frightened.’”

Initially Kim and her friends needed sanctuary—a safe place to deal with all they had gone through.

Several weeks after arriving in Southern California, Kim heard that the Loma Linda community had agreed to sponsor hundreds of refugees from Vietnam that would soon arrive.

Kim was eager to help with setting up cots in Gentry Gym.

She offered to help with translation...and her expertise as a nurse.

Her sanctuary was expanding...

Instead of a place for her to huddle... safe from a violent world...it was a place that was

welcoming the world.

In eager anticipation, she helped with the preparations.

Q How many would get out?

Q Would she recognize any of these precious souls?

As the gym filled with men, women and children...

Two ways of understanding sanctuary merged:

the gym was a safe place for people who had experienced horror...

and the gym was a place where Isaiah’s vision lived anew...

—a place to begin missions that transform multitudes, that save lives, that heal our world

“After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count,

from every nation,

from all tribes and peoples and languages,

standing before the throne and before the Lamb...” (Revelation 7:9)

Suddenly, in that multitude in Gentry Gym, Kim saw her brother, sister-in-law, niece and nephew...

“and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

They will hunger no more,

and thirst no more;

the sun will not strike them,

nor any scorching heat;

for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,

and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,

and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:15b-17).

When weeping is no more...

When the world is renewed...

When the nations have been healed...

Sanctuary is no longer necessary.

Revelation 21:22 - “I saw no temple in the New Jerusalem, for its temple *is* the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.”

In the meantime, we need the safety of cabins and churches and campuses.

In the meantime, may our courtyards and gymnasiums welcome the world.

Amen.

Prayer:

Holy God, thank you for longing to be with us.

We look with joy to the day when sanctuaries/temples are no more, because you are our temple. Amen.

(note: a version of this sermon was published in *Spectrum*.)