

# THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, August 28, 2024

Today is Wednesday, August 28 and we are learning what the Bible says about the House of the Lord.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Oh, Lord, my Shepherd, how I look forward to these quiet minutes of the early morning alone with You. Thank You for Your faithfulness and steadfast love. I relinquish my worries, set down my burdens and rest in the stillness of Your presence. Whatever the upcoming day holds for me, I know You will be by my side, leading my heart and guiding my steps. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:1-5, 8***

## REFLECTION

My friends have always enjoyed camping. They like to camp outdoors in a tent. The first time they went camping as a family they took their two young children. Their son was seven years old and their daughter was four. The family spent much time fixing up the tent to make it feel like home, cots and blankets, lanterns hanging to light the evenings. The little girl loved it at first, but after a few days the parents noticed she was very sad, almost despondent. Finally they got her to tell them what was wrong. The little girl said "I like our new house okay, but I sure like the old one a lot better!"

As a four year old child might not understand, this tent, this dwelling is merely temporary. It is not a permanent home. Living in a tent for a week, it may feel like home. There are lots of memories that you share together. You have good times and difficult struggles. Eventually it is time to depart. You break down the camp site and you remove the tent poles and the tent flattens to the ground as the air is pushed out of it. The dwelling place in which you once laughed and worked and shared falls to the ground, empty and lifeless. You go on to enjoy another part of your life.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes our earthly body as a tent. He says, "We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands." This human body of bones and muscle and skin is a temporary dwelling place, it is not a permanent home. We are here for a while to love the

people around us, enjoy good times, share memories, fulfill God's work for us, but eventually the time will come when we must depart. Our spirits leave this temporary dwelling place like the flattening of a tent, and we go on to be with Jesus Christ forever. We go on to enjoy another part of life - eternal life. As David said in Psalm 23, we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. As Jesus said in John 14, In my father's house there are many rooms or dwelling places, and I go to prepare a place for you. Jesus promises us a permanent home!

**Ask:** How can I make the most of my "temporary home" each moment of every day I live here? How might I look forward to my eternal home in heaven Christ is preparing for me?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy and blessed Lord, thank You for providing me a permanent home eternal in the heavens with You. Thank You for making a way for me to get to heaven because of the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior, Jesus. Thank You for the many blessings of my earthly life, the joy I share with the people I love and the relationships You have given me. Help me to live a life of love, spending my time wisely and making the most of every day. Prepare my heart for the assurance You offer of salvation and eternal life - a home in heaven with You forever. Amen.*