

Tented With Us Third Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, January 24, 2018 8:15 AM
2 Sm 7:4-17; Mk 4:1-20 St. Francis de Sales, bishop and Doctor of the Church
(With Christ, God has now returned, but in an even deeper way, and in a more intimate way, entering into our very humanity, not only our space and our time, but our being.)

“Should you build me a house to dwell in?”

This story from the Book of Samuel is a good reminder that **the whole story of the covenant is really about God’s plans for us and what God wants to do for us.** The Commandments are all about our wellbeing. We don’t keep the Commandments to give God something. **Even the sacrifices are really not for God; they are for us that we learn to let go of what we own.**

Now David got this bright idea, oh, we should build a temple for the Lord of cedar, rivaling the other temples of that time. And God through the prophet takes offense at this. “You are going to build me a house?” Don’t you realize that’s what I’m doing? I’m building you a house. Yes, **the word of God elicits cooperation, but the cooperation is so that God can fulfill the plan God has for our benefit,** for our communion with him and our flourishing, **that we will build a society that is just and honorable for us.**

In this the covenant is different from every other organization and every other kind of religion that the world has known. For example with pharaoh and the religion of Egypt, that was all for the benefit of pharaoh who was thought to be a representative of God, and it was for the benefit of his family, but it wasn’t for the people as a whole. They were just cogs in a machine. God’s idea is different. **God’s idea is that we are all important to him because we are all his image and likeness,** whereas the image and likeness of the gods of other nations were all pieces of wood or stone. So if you want to play along with the idea that there are other gods, these other gods have these images that are in stone and wood, whereas the image and likeness of the living God consists of real living people. And yet we do not worship ourselves or images of ourselves. **We**

worship the one true God who is invisible and yet who tented himself among us, among his people in a tent, which was constantly mobile. He was always going with the people. **Wherever they went, he went, and that was the idea.**

Now David says well let's build a temple of cedar. It will be nicer. It will be more solid. It will be more stable. It will be more noble. It will be more honorable. No, it won't, and furthermore it won't be mobile. It will be at one place. And that's exactly unfortunately what eventually happened. **God got stuck in one place, Jerusalem the holy city.** And then all the psalms and all the hymns praising Jerusalem. That all came after David as a result of this desire to build a temple. But originally God wasn't stuck in Jerusalem. God went wherever.

Now when Christ came St. John says, **"He tented himself among us,"** using that same **image.** The incarnation of the Word of God is imaged in John's Gospel as tenting himself, as he did before the temple was built of wood and stone. So **the desire of God first of all to serve us**, to build for us something wonderful, which is his whole plan to share his beauty, his goodness, his love with others and, thereby, **make something that is really and truly lovable and beautiful and true and good;** that's his whole plan, and to be with, always to be with, **the whole idea of the tent, to be with,** not that we go up to him, as happened in time. It became: now we have to make a pilgrimage to God, but it was not so originally. God was always with us. **With Christ, God has now returned, but in an even deeper way, and in a more intimate way, entering into our very humanity, not only our space and our time, but our being.** Again, God's providence and plan for us is only for our good. But we have to cooperate with God's plan and not create one of our own, as David tried.