

A Terrifying Rip and What it Means

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the concept of the invisible border between God and man, originating from Adam's rejection of God in the Garden of Eden, leading to a separation that persists to this day. It explores the two kingdoms of light and darkness, emphasizing God's unwavering redemptive plan and the significance of the tabernacle as a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice. The tearing of the temple veil symbolizes Jesus' ultimate sacrifice, opening the way for all to enter into God's presence and experience intimacy and worship with Him.

Scripture: Exodus 25:8, Hebrews 8:5, Leviticus 16:2, Hebrews 10:19, John 17:21, Hebrews 4:9

Topics: "Separation from God", "Redemption through Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Well hello, Fred Tomlinson here. Before I get started in the message that the Lord has laid on my heart, I want to tell you that as of yesterday I have my own YouTube channel. Now if we were talking about one of my grandchildren and they were telling you that, well they'd say, well of course what's so unusual about that? But this is me I'm talking about and as I thought about it a few minutes ago, I thought the kind of closest parallel I could compare this with would be to some kind of newscaster giving an announcement that, well yesterday we landed on Mars.

That's how far out it is for me to have a YouTube channel. I can't even say it, look at that. But I'm very grateful for my friends and those that have helped me and continue to help me and support me in practical ways and in prayer in this particular venture.

But ultimately I thank God for this, it's just wonderful. For those who are interested in that YouTube channel, its name is Turn to the Scriptures with Fred Tomlinson. You might want to take a look at it, it's new, we're just getting going, maybe you'd like to subscribe and you'll also find a link there to the Mackenzie Christian Fellowship and there'll be some reference to our weekly Zoom meeting which you're all welcome to join if you wish.

And I'd like also just to say at this point how much I and those who are with me really profoundly appreciate your comments, they mean the world to us and we thank God for you. Amen. Let me just pray.

Father I pray with all my heart here this morning that you will hide your servant and that you Lord will be the speaker here, that you Lord will reveal yourself in some unique way and speak your word in some fresh way to every listening heart and I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. The message that I want to share probably I'll have to have a part two to it but we'll see how that goes.

If you have your Bible open you could open it to the book of Exodus chapter 25 I'll not be staying with just a single text this morning but I want to unfold to you a story. You know just half a mile as the bird flies from where I'm sitting right now there is the border between Canada and the United States of America and as a point of interest that border is the longest land border in the world it's 5520 miles wide but today I want to talk to you about a far more consequential divide. It's a divide which is the result of Adam's rejection of God in the Garden of Eden.

When that occurred instantly a line of separation was created, a separation between God and between man. It's a separation that exists unto this present day, this present moment. Now to be clear in speaking of that separation we must understand it as in no way compromising or hindering in any way God's omnipresence, meaning God is everywhere.

Nor does this separation in any way interfere with God's engagement with men and women. However this separation does, did and continues to create consequences and as I perhaps already indicated it severed the fellowship between God's initial creation, I'm thinking of Adam and Eve and all of those that have followed as the result of him and that action and it brought into play that which is described variously in scripture but the most succinct statement I have that can refer to this would be sin and death. As the fellowship being broken and the consequence of sin and death becoming such a part, an integral part of human experience and it left men and women utterly and completely helpless to redeem themselves and the message that I want to share with you on this occasion, it centres itself around this invisible border, this invisible frontier if you like, this invisible point of separation.

At its roots it is an issue that arises from the fact that there are two kingdoms, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness and in that beginning moment that we are very familiar with from the opening section of the book of Genesis, we know that man chose to exit from the kingdom of light and he in that moment became a creature of the kingdom of darkness. But God had a plan and nothing about God's plan was in any way reactionary, it wasn't a plan B because things went so terribly wrong in the beginning. God's plan is not some kind of contingency plan B, it's not some alternative arrangement just in case things didn't work out the way he planned them or intended them to work out.

The fact of the matter is and let's be clear about this, nothing, just nothing at all can ever overturn God's eternal purpose, God's redemptive plan. As a matter of fact his redemptive plan even in this very moment in which I'm speaking is just continuing to unfold perfectly. Everything, every particular, every detail of his pre-ordained purpose and plan and intent is unfolding perfectly right on schedule depending on where you live.

And God in the unfolding of this plan and purpose, he pre-determined a moment in time when he would speak and say certain things. Just let me catch one verse from Exodus chapter 25. You will notice as I pick out some verses as we go through that the surrounding context is incredibly important but I couldn't possibly read more widely and comment more widely in a 40 minute talk.

So I'm looking just at one verse, God is speaking and he's speaking to Moses and it's verse 8 and he said, let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. If you've been following the line that I've been taking here then you will recognize that God has ordained in his heart before time was a particular plan and purpose. And in the chapters of scripture we find it opening up and developing.

And I sought to remind you that there's no accidents that change his mind in any way or diminish anything that he intends. And so in the fullness of time, there's a phrase we find in different parts of the Bible, but in the fullness of time God spoke to Moses and this is what he said. He said, Moses I want them to make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.

You will know that at this particular point in time the children of Israel having exited from their slavery in Egypt, they've crossed the Red Sea, they're now in the wilderness and they're living in tents. Their tents are spread around in a very orderly fashion which is described elsewhere. But God looking down upon them speaks to Moses and this statement has a very particular reference to the moment and setting in which he is speaking and to the people he's speaking to.

But his word as always is his eternal word. There's always more significance to anything God says than we can ever comprehend. And this was certainly the case here.

If you like we can refer to it as a prophetic statement, although he spoke specifically to Moses here. But God looks down on these multiple tents, on this group of people that he has sovereignly chosen as his people. And basically he's saying, Moses I want to come down there and live in the midst of you.

Make a tent for me. In a nutshell that's exactly what he's saying to Moses. And so the tent that he wants them to make is not something that they can just decide upon, just come up with themselves.

But God gives very explicit directions as to what this tent was to be made from and what it was to look like. And all of the finest details of it God will direct to Moses. And the particular tent that we're thinking about here will be known as the tabernacle.

The tabernacle was a predecessor to the temple which would be erected ultimately, as we know well. But at this particular time as God gives the designs out, he says this, I'm just turning over, you needn't turn here with me, I'm turning into Hebrews chapter 8 of course in the New Testament. And in the fifth verse I read, who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle.

For, he said, thou see that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount. And we'd need more than 40 minutes, we'd need more than 40 sessions maybe, but we've done this in the past with some of us, but perhaps I don't know if we'll get a chance to do it again, but we've looked at the tabernacle and we've examined all of the particular features of it and we're reminded of this in the eighth chapter of Hebrews here, that everything would hold significance. It would all in one way or another point forward to the Redeemer who would come and to God's great redemptive plan and purpose.

That's about all I can say about it at the moment, except perhaps to remind you that the outward perimeter was, if you like, a fence. That's a gross understatement, but it was a fence, a rectangular shape, its actual size and detail was given to Moses. And within that context, there were a number of things.

I won't mention everything by any means just now, but there was a smaller rectangular tent that would be deliberately situated in a certain spot predetermined by God. And that smaller rectangular tent, that would

be covered, whereas the open yard was not, of course. And the smaller covered area would be divided into two.

There would be an entrance into the first and that first section would be known as the holy place. And the second place would be entered through a veil and that would be termed the holiest place or the holiest of all or the most holy place. Every detail, again, I'll say once more, would hold tremendous significance.

In the holy place, there would be a lampstand, there would be a table of showbread on the other side, and there would be an altar of incense. And the priests would have responsibilities to those things. But beyond the second entrance or the second veil, there would be just one item of furniture, it would usually be referred to, but that would be the Ark of the Covenant.

A box containing certain items that we won't take time to talk about just now, but on the top of this box, which was made of wood, but covered with gold, was a solid gold lid. And formed into the lid were two angelic beings who looked toward each other and both of them looked down onto that lid as I'm referring to it. And that would be known as the mercy seat.

And it would be there that the high priest would sprinkle blood for his own sins and for the sins of the people once every year. Let me just read a little about that. If you're still in Exodus, turn over the page to chapter 26.

I'll read a couple of verses here from verse 31, where God says to Moses, and thou shalt make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen of cunning work with carabins shall it be made. And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of chitin wood overlaid with gold and their hooks shall be of gold upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the veil under the tashes that thou shalt make and bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.

And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. Tempting to read on. This is the Old King James translation, some parts of it a little awkward perhaps for some.

But the fact is God was giving to Moses some very explicit instructions concerning this area of this tent that he wanted them to make for himself. And in particular I'm looking at this veil, this second curtain if you will, the entrance that divides the holy place from the most holy place. Let me digress or pivot off just for a moment with something which I hope doesn't sound frivolous or trivial in any way, I don't mean it to be.

But many of us will have seen at one time or another on perhaps on the television an imaginary camera somewhere in outer space somewhere and the camera zooms in through you know the space and there in the distance there's that little green planet and the camera continues to quickly zoom in and soon we recognize continents and we recognize oceans and then as it zooms in further we recognize cities, a particular city is focused, it zooms in further and we see streets and then we come to a house or whatever it happens to be the purpose of the exercise, maybe the house is white for example, I don't know. But I want you to think in your imagination for a purpose of another kind of imaginary camera, a camera that exists somehow somewhere in some other world, somewhere in the timelessness of eternity that this camera begins to zoom in and it zooms, it zooms through galaxies and zooms on until it once again sees the little green planet I've referred to and it zooms in on that planet, it zooms in on a brown area of that planet, it zooms in on a desert and it continues to zoom and as it zooms in we see hundreds of tents gathered around in this wilderness area, this brown area and the camera continues to zoom in, it zooms in

on a particular tent and further zooms in on a particular item, it zooms in on a curtain, that's what we're talking about and wanting by these illustrations to try to emphasise to us the absolute wonder and amazement of a God who is omnipresent and omnipotent and so much more could be said to describe him, words that we understand but concepts that beggar our imagination but this is our God and our God has a redemptive plan and purpose for men and women and he's going about it, he's unfolding it progressively as time elapses and on this occasion we find ourselves in this particular context I'm describing to you and here is this curtain which has been described and its construction has been given in such detail it stands there in this place or hangs there in this place as a symbol, as a barrier dividing two distinctly different worlds, let me read to you a verse from the book of Leviticus, I'm turning to chapter 16 and verse 2, it reads like this and the Lord said unto Moses speak unto her and thy brother that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat which is upon the ark that he die not I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat that veil is dividing between the world that we're familiar with and another world if you like another kingdom altogether symbolically and with some tangible evidence that God has ordained he will abide there upon the ark between the cherubim the place where the blood will be sprinkled and in the form of a cloud which would be spoken of and described by some as the Shekinah, the outshining, this material or semi-material evidence of the holy presence of the almighty God what an awesome awesome thing you know every every year the Jewish people would reread Exodus chapter 12 as well as some very other very relevant sections and not least from the book of Psalms when it was recorded they would read about God's instructions for an event which would be known as the feast of the Passover and let me someone needs to turn off their mute somewhere but let me just say this let me take you to one such feast just to make the point I want to make everything which would take place in that feast had been pre-ordained by God and in successive years as it annually is celebrating everything will be will be so familiar its context will be familiar to those who participate in it this particular feast that I'm thinking of this particular year would have been I can't give you the exact date but it was about the 1500th time that this had happened about 15 centuries had gone by as we go into this particular feast but the routine was different the setting of course was different from the tabernacle we're now in Herod's temple at this point in time this huge stunning temple but we're inside this temple the routine is more or less the same routine with some differences that we're not talking about today but the imagine coming into this temple at this time of Passover and the atmosphere is charged it's so special it's so unique it's so it's so holy and sacred to this devout people that are gathering there today and while everything was familiar certainly for those who had attended this routinely they would have to have admitted that there was something that was particular and distinct on this occasion that they'd never experienced before and that was this kind of an eerie darkness that had descended on the whole area and it was almost three hours now since this darkness had descended there and entering into the temple we find the crowd assembled in the sacred courts and the singers are worshipping and there's this strong aroma of incense and it's the ninth hour or to help us it was three o'clock in the afternoon it was the time of the evening sacrifice and just as the the priest was about to apply his knife to slay the Paschal Lamb or the Passover Lamb there was a terrifying ripping sound that echoes through this cavernous temple temple and immediately pandemonium broke loose and people were shouting the veil the veil this huge thickly woven heavy veil thicker heavier greater by far than the veil that was made for the tabernacle those many centuries earlier but but somehow spontaneously this enormous veil had had ripped in two and it rent from the top of it right down sizes such as 70 feet have been mentioned for the size of it but I can't speak with authority on that but this huge heavy veil is torn from top to the bottom and the holiest of all is exposed that stories for next week but just imagine just imagine this imagine I imagine the priests and they're all they're yelling and they're running and the word is just rushing through the crowd that the veil in the temple has

just been ripped from the top to the bottom it's it has to be supernatural there's no rational reason for this to happen no human hand has been involved in it what could this possibly mean that would be the question I believe it's quite to be understood that the crowd would now spill out from the temple area and I'm using my imagination slightly but only slightly I'm sure that this took place as the crowd spilled out into the open area of the city they they would be met with another crowd of people these were not in the temple this was a crowd of people who were returning from the hill of crucifixion just outside of the city and they would talk together and the story would be exchanged and it would emerge as the conversations were shared and as they began to think about these things that at the exact moment that the man on the central cross cried out it is finished the paschal lamb in the temple was being slaughtered and at the same moment this enormous curtain had suddenly spontaneously it seemed ripped into two and opened up the holiest of all this would be without any question a thoroughly alarming event for all who were present in the temple but let me tell you this I believe that very same event I've been describing would have found a transcendent cheer from the entire host of heaven and you know what as that same event is remembered and contemplated down through the passage of time and through the ages the redeemed company of God's people shout for joy and praise outside the eerie darkness had lifted it seemed as though even nature hid in some degree the events that were taking place on that hill outside the city you know the question is what then is the timeless meaning of this ripped veil you see the man on the center cross was not just some any man he he was the incarnate son of God he was Jesus with his flesh torn and with his blood flowing that man on the central cross ripped open a far greater curtain than the one in the temple that day he eliminated the barrier he opened the way where there was no way when the prince of life uttered that triumphant cry it is finished thank God he didn't say I am finished that cry signaled the very floodgates of God's mercy to open wide and as a great hymn writer put it grace and love like mighty rivers flowed incessant from above heaven's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love the apostle Paul I believe it was who wrote the book of Ephesians of Hebrews rather he said this I recorded this in Hebrews 10 verses 19 and 20 said having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us through the veil that is to say his flesh Charles Wesley and you know how much we appreciate the words of Charles Wesley but he has our hearts leaping when he writes the veil is rent in Christ alone the living way to heaven is seen the middle wall is broken down and all mankind may enter in it is finished the messiah dies hallelujah my dear friend can I ask you where are you in this this epic drama I wonder if you will allow him by his holy spirit to destroy the veil of sin and unbelief that perhaps holds you captive for some of you you need to know that there is a way back to God we used to sing this when I was a boy there's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin there's a door that is opened and all may go in at Calvary's cross is where you begin when you come as a sinner to Jesus for others listening to me you've made that initial response to salvation's offer but you've never really or fully understood that you can leave the bustling courtyard of religious worship and you can enter into the holiest by his blood and discover the wonder and the glory and the joy of intimacy and worship with God do you remember Jesus praying John 17 he says father that they all may be one in us that they may be one as you father and I are one this was his prayer this was his prayer because this was his intention and this is what he accomplished as he went to the cross last week I talked about another verse from Hebrews chapter four these words there is a rest that remains to the people of God this is that rest it's that rest in his presence in his holy presence a rest of love rest of cleansing a rest of fellowship with God amen this is why the ripping of that curtain really matters and is really significant let me encourage you wherever you are at in your heart or in relationship with God don't hesitate won't you come to Jesus today come right now you know just before Bob sings again let's just take a moment quiet shall we and let's pray our father we bow before

you in this moment as Lord we've attempted in our finiteness with all of our limitations to comprehend something of the wonder and the glory of the heart of God and his plan and purpose to redeem men to himself that we may be one with you Lord in the way that you desire we pray Lord that by your Holy Spirit you will succeed in speaking into the depths of everyone's heart that is listening just now have success Lord speak clearly Lord and pray father that you will find a response from those hearts that invite you Lord to come whether it's for the first time or to come again with a new freshness but Lord may you find that kind of invitation and openness to allow you to become the Lord of every life Lord and bring men and women into that place that you have made available at a price which we cannot even begin to estimate we thank you we bow and we worship and we pray in Jesus name amen amen

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