

What the Torn Veil Exposed

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the significance of the torn veil in the temple at the moment of Jesus' death, revealing the absence of God's manifested presence and the Ark of the Covenant. It challenges listeners to not dwell on past experiences but to embrace the ever-new work of God in their lives, pressing forward in faith and seeking a fresh encounter with Him.

Scripture: Matthew 27:50, Philippians 3:13, Hebrews 4:16, Ezekiel 10:18, Ezra 3:12, Psalm 119:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Isaiah 43:18, Revelation 21:5, John 5:39

Topics: "The Significance of the Torn Veil", "Embracing New Encounters with God"

Description

This sermon delves into the significance of the torn veil in the temple at the moment of Jesus' death, revealing the absence of God's manifested presence and the Ark of the Covenant. It challenges listeners to not dwell on past experiences but to embrace the ever-new work of God in their lives, pressing forward in faith and seeking a fresh encounter with Him.

Transcript

Well Fred Tomlinson here and welcome to my study and I want to say that the Lord has laid on my heart a word to share with you today and I truly am praying that those of you out there wherever you are scattered around will stay with me for the entire message. You know, before I actually start and get to it, I want to just share one practical item. One or two of the people more local know this already but a YouTube channel has been prepared for me which is something I would never have dreamt of either and the address or the name for that is Turn to the Scriptures with Fred Tomlinson and maybe you'd like to make a note of that.

Turn to the Scriptures with Fred Tomlinson and take a look at it and if you appreciate what you find there then maybe I could encourage you to click that subscribe button. Don't worry, that doesn't mean you have to pay. It only means that YouTube will notify you when a new message is uploaded and it tells me that there's someone out there who is engaged with me and if you do go on to that channel and you can find the category About, there's a little bio that I've prepared that you'll find on the Mackenzie Fellowship website which you will link with from that point.

Well having said all of that, my attention is on the verses of the 27th chapter of Matthew. Many of you were with me or listened to me last week and I'll just reflect on that message in a few more moments but in Matthew 27 we read and Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit and behold the

veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. Now in the last session we saw that this terrifying rip that occurred occurred at the precise moment that Jesus who was on the cross cried out those words it is finished which in fact was one word at the time when he said it finished and we saw that the way those two events synchronized was certainly not by some kind of coincidence but the ripping of the curtain in Herod's temple was a powerful act of God that actually declared the triumph of the death now of the Lord Jesus on the cross and as the result of that which took place in the spirit not just the ripping of the veil which was symbolized in so many ways but in the spirit that finished work of the Lord Jesus created a door where no door existed and he transformed God's word to Moses when he God said draw not nigh to the apostle Paul's words when he said let us come boldly to the throne of grace and the truth lying behind those things and I think I read this last week is summed up so well by the words of Charles Wesley when he has our hearts leaping as we contemplate it all he wrote 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 that was the essential message that the ripped veil in the temple declares to us as it is tied with what was taking place on the central cross on Calvary's hill now today I'd like to sort of sort of follow on that message but I'm going to use a different lens altogether we're looking at the same event but with a different lens I want um that with God's help to to to draw a different perspective from that stunning event that took place that that rip that took place that great tear which we talked about and tried to comprehend last week or in the last session that rip in Herod's temple it exposed the holiest of all but the astonishing thing I suppose from one perspective is that when the veil ripped and opened up sight to the holiest of all God was not there and I'm referring now to his manifested presence I am well aware of the attributes of God that he is omnipresent he's present everywhere uh but his manifested presence was not there and that that torn veil revealed that that his glory was not there in the holiest of all it also revealed that the ark of the covenant was not there in the holiest of all there was just just a terrible emptiness if you will uh a terrible darkness in that room a gloom in that place I believe I could say and I'm tempted to try to draw this setting again as all this was happening in the temple but I'm resisting that temptation but I believe I can say with certainty that the priests who served in that temple apart from anybody else that was able to see and realize what was going on there were in total shock I wonder if you would allow me to just have a brief conversation with one of those priests I hope you'll understand what I'm doing but I I approach one of the priests who is again in the state of shock and I say to him excuse me but I am from another time can you tell me what's going on here and he answers I have no idea I have no idea what's happening and I say to him isn't that dark room I'm looking at the holiest of all and he responds yes it is and I said well I was told that within that holiest of all there was the the blazing presence of almighty God and that was his abode there and the priest responds he said oh that left about about six centuries ago there was such persistent rebellion and rejection of God at that time with the Jewish people that that God with his glory he left the holiest of all of course he would go on to say I never saw it personally of course but he said I do know this that we're told that God didn't want to leave he left with great hesitation and as a matter of fact if you read in Ezekiel chapter 9 and through to chapter 11 you'll find that at the time when God having made the decision now to leave the holiest of all he moves progressively from that place and moves to the threshold of the temple and then we keep reading and we find that from that place of hesitation he moves away to the Mount of Olives the idea was that God it's almost as though he was looking back in his hesitation to move out but sin had come into the camp in such a way he must leave I said well what about the Ark of the Covenant and the the priest answers well well that was never here either he said as a matter of fact it's not it's not been present in this temple nor the temple prior to it not since 586 BC when the unimaginable happened when Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon invaded us and he looted Solomon's temple and he tore down the walls of the city and utterly destroyed it and he burned the temple with fire a huge amount of

Jews were taken as a matter of fact into captivity in Babylon where they were in exile for 70 years and the Ark the Ark of the Covenant has never been seen again that was a very helpful conversation for the for the Jews the Ark of the Covenant was without question their most precious possession while that was true they could never have had any idea or understanding of the incredible symbolism that was tied in with that very object they couldn't have known that there was there was prophetic significance in every feature of that Ark suffice it to say here because it would entail a longer session than we have available to explain exactly what I'm thinking about at this moment but suffice it to say that the Ark of the Covenant symbolized the incarnate Son of God and his redeeming work and the glory of God that which was referred to as the the outshining the Shekinah of God rested on the if you like on the lid on the mercy seat that solid gold top to the Ark and it was there between the cherubim that the high priest once a year was permitted to enter into that holiest of all but not without blood he brought the blood of an animal with him and he sprinkled it on that seat it was it was almost as though with that blood he reached into the very presence of God and the blood left its stain on the mercy seat also incredibly significant and of course we do know from later reading in the New Testament about Jesus the incarnate Son of God himself that he himself manifested the the Father's glory you know if we were to fast forward from that point another 70 years so we move to the end of the Babylonian captivity and after the temple's destruction and there were a number of Jews who now had been granted permission I think that all the Jews were granted the permission but only a segment of them made the journey back to Jerusalem others settled down in Babylon we understand but those Jews returning from captivity in Babylon in another great story that unfolds in several books of the Old Testament we find that the foundations of what will be referred to as Zerubbabel's temple were laid you can read about this in Ezra chapter 3 and you'll find there as a matter of fact I could just read it to you in the third chapter excuse me as I struggle with my throat as the group gathered around are looking at the foundations which have been laid I read in Ezra chapter 3 in verse 12 yet many of the priests and Levites and heads of father's households the old men who had seen the first temple wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes while many shouted aloud for joy so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people for the people shouted with a loud shout and the sound was heard far away amazing what we're reading there is that the if you like two categories of men there there was the the old men who as we saw from the text they remembered the first temple that temple of glory Solomon's temple and now as they saw the this that was so minute so limited by contrast that they wept with what they remembered I'll talk about that just a little more in just a moment but the other category of men would be the young men these were people who had never seen the earlier temple and they were just thrilled they were shouting they were singing they were so joy filled because they were back in the homeland for the in that place they weren't thinking about its modesty or what it was lacking but back to those who could remember it was such a grievous thing for them because they knew very well that while so far as the size and structure of the building that was going to be constructed there was far inferior to what they had seen and remembered perhaps the the most heartbreaking issues were the fact that they knew that there would be no ark of the covenant to place in the holiest of all and the Shekinah glory had left from being among the people in that place so to the priests who are standing before the ripped veil this is where we started they they could have no true true idea of what was missing because they had never seen the Shekinah glory of God in the holiest of all or among them they had never seen the ark of the covenant and they had lived and they had ministered in the temple for not all of them for this length of time of course but they lived for 600 years and went through their various religious exercises for a period of 600 years without those items that I've just referred to and again they had they had no experience of either of them all that they knew was the formalism of rebellion of religion what the the apostle Paul calls the the jews religion that they they worshipped but in in so many

ways it was what they knew from history there was such a such a such a such a break between what they were able to talk about and what they were able to say they were experiencing as a matter of fact there's no there's no record left for us as to what happened to the veil after that great ripping and that tearing I can only think that it must have been one of two possibilities either they repaired it and carried on or they just left it wide open which I personally doubt in my mind but let me let me just ask you this can you imagine repairing and maintaining what God has ripped apart what I do know is that the temple carried on functioning it was kind of business as usual if you like for another 40 years after that happened until it was utterly destroyed in 70 AD you know as I as I draw to a close here we must allow ourselves to be drawn into and challenged by this unfolding saga I believe that today the Holy Spirit is continuing to rip curtains different curtains different kind of curtains curtains that in so many ways tend to keep the people who profess to be his in the past there's no doubt in my mind that some listening to me like the priests of old they go through the religious rituals you know like as evangelical Christians in so many ways if we were being really honest we feed on what was with little or no experience of what is still drawing energy from the past what God was doing then but let's remind ourselves that what was fresh then if it truly was of God to us is stale today it's so easy to become blinded by the past with my own ears I've heard people in Wales you know that the significance of that when I go on to say who were praying earnestly do it again Lord do it again but the fact is God it God is not repeating the past again and that's an important principle to recognize in making that statement I am in no ways diminishing for a millisecond the significance of what God has been doing among his people in the past but God's not repeating the past he's a God who is continually moving forward someone once put it this way that it's as though God is in our future which is true and he's calling us he's calling us to him continually it's always involving a forward movement on our past I heard a man a while ago quite a while ago say something which is so ridiculous I'm embarrassed to say it but I remember him saying if we don't go we'll still be here but how that's very true if we don't respond to the call of God and go forward into that which he is doing this ever new constantly continually new thing that he is doing we'll still be where we were and we'll be talking about what we've experienced and what we've seen in the past when the spirit of God is seeking to get our attention and draw us forward into that which he is doing and wanting to do with us and in us today in our present stage in life in our present circumstances he doesn't want us feeding on what today now is stale matter that was fresh bred from heaven when God provided it but it became stale when it was left and neglected and so it is with the precious things that God has done we can document them and we can be thrilled about them and it's wonderful and we rejoice in that in that sense but for us in our own hearts we must be a people who are continually pressing forward we hear the apostle Paul he's pressing toward the mark we hear him this is from Philippians chapter 3 he says in those those timeless words he said that I might know thee the only true God and he continues and I remember years ago speaking about that text and saying imagining that I was saying to him but Paul surely you know him if anyone knows him it's you we remember the Damascus road event we remember and so on and so on and he he would shake his head and say I must know him in a greater and more fresh way today and as I move forward that must be true in each of our lives we must allow him to to wipe away from our eyes the sincere tears of sentiment and refresh our vision and stare us up that there's no place and no room for any attitude of well we've been there we've done that we've experienced this and so we sort of settle down into our comfortable chair especially as we're getting older and feel that we can justify ourselves but the spirit of God is timeless his call to our hearts is timeless he's so long as he's got me still here in this world he still has a purpose for my life and it's true for you as well and he's looking to to bring about that new ever new thing he's the life-giving God his word is a quickening word it's alive his word is alive and relevant in a fresh way to my heart and to the hearts of each of you listening to me as I'm speaking here glories are gone you know I don't I'm thinking of those

men gathered around the foundation of that soon-to-be temple in Jerusalem but I'm being honest I don't even want to hear what men say that they have seen as those in the ancient temple I certainly don't want to hear them trying to teach me about things that they really don't understand but I say in my heart Lord please take me to those men and women be they old be they young who are truly filled with the spirit of Jesus those who know God and are and are gazing upon him today you know it's years ago now that someone showed me there is today a holy of holies beyond the ripped curtain that is not a dark and empty room where God was yesterday but he pointed me to the prince of life whose arms are opened wide to me and he gave me grace that I left all and with boldness I entered into that holy place and ran to him I trust that in this simple talk on this occasion that in some way he has enabled me to point you to him to know him as you have never known him before may God bless you let me pray father for everything that your heart is committed to accomplish in our lives for everything father that your heart desires to accomplish in our hearts we are dependent upon you we are totally dependent upon the operation of your holy spirit to work in our inward being we need you Lord to speak to us that quickening that life imparting word that faith communicating word we would say speak Lord for thy servant heareth Lord I pray that this might be true for everyone under the sound of my voice today Lord and find a response from each and every one of us Lord enable us to turn away from everything that is past no matter how wonderful it was no matter how sentimental we may become about it but Lord we pray father that you will just so open a vision of your great glory to our hearts that there is no hesitation left within us but to run to race towards you Lord and embrace everything that you are and that you have made available for us to know and to experience bring us all to that place Lord where there is joy unspeakable and full of glory in Jesus name amen amen amen indeed

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