

One of the three mandatory Jewish feasts was called the feast of tabernacles, or booths, and was celebrated to remember the deliverance of Israel out of the land of Egypt. The people were to build booths symbolic of the way that their ancestors lived when they traveled through the wilderness. What they were really doing was what we call `roughing it`, you know, camping out. So many have told me that their idea of roughing it is staying at the Holiday Inn. Most people that go camping with me soon embrace that philosophy. What strikes me a little odd about the idea of the Israelites `roughing it` is that we would consider their finest dwelling `roughing it`. They did not have electricity, TV, a refrigerator, or running water; yet what they did have they gave up for a time. And it is a good idea to sometimes do this so that we can better appreciate what we have.

The real purpose of this memorial seems to me to remember the price of freedom; what it had cost to someone else to give them their way of life. We must also remember that someone paid a huge price for our own freedom from the bondage of sin. We read in Phillipians 2 that Christ gave up equality with God so that he could come to earth and give his blood for our cleansing. We simply do not have any idea of what Christ gave up for us. We take communion every week, but the depth of it all seems to escape us. Perhaps we need to `rough it` with this in mind, sitting on an ash heap to symbolize part of the price that Christ paid for our freedom. If we still lived under the Old Testament philosophy, we would probably be doing that once a year. Let us each try to understand in greater depth the cost of our freedom and glorify Christ for paying it.

And let us remember that this was a feast, which means that beyond the sobering meditation of this idea we should be filled with rejoicing that we are free, and that we have been given an inheritance with God in heaven. If there is anyone here that cannot rejoice with us because they are not in Christ, won't you come now as we stand and sing...