ENLARGING OUR TENT
Isaiah. 54:2-3

In preparing for this morning I came across a prophetic word for our church from 18 years ago. It was given by a guest speaker, Matilda Kipfer, who was here for a women’s retreat and afterward shared a scripture with us which she felt was a promise God was giving us as a church.

That Scripture is found in Isaiah 54.

In this passage Isaiah the prophet is prophesying the future glory of Zion. God was promising a day in which He would heal and restore the nation of Israel.

**Read Isaiah 54: 2-3**
2 "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.
3 For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.

Matilda felt strongly in her spirit that God was going to enlarge the place of our tent and she prophesied this passage of scripture to us. This word was given before this sanctuary was built and now we are enlarging our tent again which is a further fulfillment of this word.

Here is the encouragement and challenge I see in these verses.

**When God says ENLARGE YOUR TENT ....**

1. **God is asking us to make room for more people.**

God’s heart is for the lost and for the coming generations. Our theme is “Building for the Generations”.

The reason we need to be concerned about church growth is because people matter to God.

That is the reason we invest our time, energy and finances into enlarging our tent and offering the many programs we do.

That is the reason we don’t pull back and say we are large enough. To say that is to say we don’t care about those outside of our church. Because we do care - we will make room for more people.

**When God says STRETCH YOUR TENT CURTAINS WIDE ....**

2. **God is asking us to be accepting of all people.**

God is asking us to open our doors to people of all ages, ethnic, religious and social backgrounds. Those struggling with sin. Those hurting and in bondage.

- God is asking us to Accept. Love and Disciple them into fully devoted followers of Jesus

We are to welcome them into the full life of the church and our friendships. We are to use their gifts to serve and advance the kingdom.
When God says LENGTHEN YOUR CORDS....

3. God is asking us to reach beyond our walls.

In Verse 3 God is saying they are to lift their vision higher and broader. He tells them to spread out to the right and to the left; and their descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.

To me this speaks of local and global missions. It speaks of new areas of outreach ministry.

I believe God is going to birth and bring to us more opportunities, both locally and globally.

When God says STRENGTHEN THE STAKES ....

4. God is asking us to pay attention to the core areas that keep the tent strong.

Things such as the teaching of the Word, Prayer ministry, Personal worship, Discipleship and our relationships with each other.

I believe there are two types of ground breaking we are doing today. The Natural and the Spiritual.

- We are breaking ground for a natural expansion of brick and mortar.
- There is also a sense in my spirit that we are also breaking ground for a spiritual expansion. God is expanding our spiritual capacity for increase of his kingdom among us.
- Both take effort and commitment. We can do neither in our own strength. Both are dependent on God.

Isaiah 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

- God is doing a new thing among us. He ask if we perceive it? Are we listening? It’s not just business as usual.
- There are some new things ahead. New ways of doing things. New ministries and opportunities.
- If we walk in humility and unity we will be “Simply Amazed” in the years ahead because this is a God thing. The King is going before us.

Micah 2:13 One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the gate and go out. Their king will pass through before them, the LORD at their head."

- Jesus is going ahead of us and opening the way for us. Let’s follow him.

PRAY – Lord as we build this Student Life Center – We purpose to open the doors wide for all people. We purpose to reach beyond the walls of our church into our community and world. We purpose to pay attention to the core areas of our faith. We purpose to follow you as you break open the way before us. We embrace the new things you are doing among us.