



Sermon Discussion Questions  
October 20, 2024  
*In the Wilderness*

## **HAVE TASSELS**

Numbers 15:37-41

1. **Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)
  - a. Anyone who has spent much time around very young children has almost certainly seen them deliberately disobey. While such behavior is certainly always wrong it can nonetheless sometimes be amusing. Describe such a display of “independence” that you have observed. What made it funny? How did the parents react?
  - b. What is your view about capital punishment? When, if ever, is it justified? Are there circumstances that would make it inappropriate even if you feel that capital punishment would be appropriate for that crime?
  - c. Many people put magnets, photos, or other collectibles, including their children’s artwork, on the refrigerator to remind them of special times or events. What is on yours? If nothing, what is the most memorable item you’ve seen on someone else’s refrigerator?
  - d. Have you ever tied a string around your finger (or used some other memory jogging method) to remember something and then forgot why it was there? How did you feel? What did you do differently the next time?
2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**
  - a. God Gave His People Tassels So They Would See, Remember, and Do
    - i. God's people had short memories.
    - ii. The command for tassels
    - iii. See, Remember, Do to Avoid Further Rebellion
  - b. What Are Your Tassels?
    - i. We have the same problem the Israelites did!
    - ii. Remembering and Doing still matter
    - iii. What are your tassels that help you see, remember, and do?
3. **Study/Discussion Points:**
  - a. *Sunday Afternoon*
    - i. As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
    - ii. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
    - iii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
    - iv. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
    - v. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
    - vi. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

**b. Monday:**

- i. To see the focal passage in its context begin this week by reading Numbers 15:27-41.
  1. What is the primary theme of the passage?
  2. The ESV divides this passage into 3 paragraphs (NIV and CSB both have 4). What is your initial reaction to each section? Before studying more, how applicable would you say each was to your life?
  3. Does this initial reading tend to strengthen your Christian faith or does cause you to have questions?
- ii. Read Exodus 20:8-11, 31:12-17, 35:1-3, and Leviticus 23:3 which establish the rules for the Sabbath.
  1. How well do you think these rules would have been known throughout the Israelite camp?
  2. How does Exodus 16:21-30 demonstrate conclusively that the people were all aware of the Sabbath and the restrictions associated with it?
  3. What explanation does Ezekiel 20:12 provide for why the Sabbath was so important?
  4. What results did Nehemiah say had come to the people for violating the Sabbath in Nehemiah 13:15-18?
  5. We worship on the first day of the week, not the Sabbath. Nonetheless, given the importance God attached to the Sabbath how do you think it should, or should not, affect the way we treat Sundays?

**c. Tuesday:**

- i. Read Numbers 15:27–36.
  1. What would determine if sin was unintentional or defiant (consider Romans 3:18)?
  2. Who did Jesus say could make that judgment (see Luke 16:15 and Revelation 2:23)? How did Moses demonstrate his understanding of this in Numbers 15:34-35?
  3. Do you think there is a distinction made between unintentional and defiant sin? Consider what Paul says in Romans 6:11-18 and 7:14-25 as you consider your answer.
  4. Regardless of how you answer the previous question, what is the response we must take to all sin in our lives (1 John 1:9)
- ii. Compare Leviticus 24:10-16 & 23 with Numbers 15:32-36.
  1. What is similar and what is different?
  2. How does God’s response to these two sins compare with other cases in the Old and New Testaments (for example Genesis 19, Exodus 32:27-28, Leviticus 10:1-2, Numbers 14:37-38, 16:31-35, 25:1-9, Joshua 7:20-25, Acts 5:1-10 and 12:21-23)?
  3. What can we learn from these passages about God’s “right” to take a person’s life whenever he wants: Job 34:14-15, Psalms 119:116, 139:13-14, and James 4:15? What justification does He need to end a sinner's life?

**d. Wednesday:**

- i. Read Numbers 15:27-41 again today.
- ii. Before considering tassels think about the entire passage in context.
  1. Why do you think the Holy Spirit places instruction about unintentional and deliberate sin at this point?
  2. What happened right at the end of chapter 14 that would have made such instruction particularly relevant?
  3. Why is it the best place for the account of the man gathering wood on the Sabbath?
  4. And why are the instructions about tassels necessary immediately following the stoning?
  5. Has God ever used seemingly unrelated events in your life to teach you spiritual lessons? How do you feel that Romans 8:28 relates to this discussion?
- iii. Verses 37-41 establish the requirement to place tassels on the four corners of their garments. This command is repeated in Deuteronomy 22:12.
  1. While there is no agreement on what these tassels actually looked like what is the one part of the design that we know? What do you think they may have looked like?
  2. According to Numbers 15 what was the purpose of the tassels? What are modern things that we use to accomplish similar functions?
  3. In view of the events that have occurred in this and the previous several chapters of Numbers and that God's presence was visible at the Tent of Meeting in the center of the camp how much of a reminder do you think the people needed to remember God's commands? What does verse 38 suggest about who was really going to benefit from the tassels?

**e. Thursday:**

- i. Read the verses about tassels, Numbers 15:37-41 again today, from a different translation if possible.
- ii. Scan the design instructions and construction details in Exodus chapters 26-39 looking for occurrences of the word "blue". What does this show about the symbolism of that color?
- iii. Then read these Old Testament passages that describe the use of blue thread or cords: Exodus 28:28, 28:36-37, 39:21, and 39:30-31. In whose garment and for what purpose is blue thread used?
- iv. What does this suggest the blue thread on the tassel *may* have represented or symbolized? How does Exodus 19:5-6 tend to reinforce such a meaning?
  1. Why would it be necessary for all of the people to "remember all the commandments of the LORD, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes" if they were to be "a kingdom of priest and a holy nation"?

2. The role of a priest is to represent man to God. As “a kingdom of priests” who would Israel represent to God (see Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6)?
3. How successful was the nation of Israel at representing God to the other nations of the world (see Lamentations, Jeremiah 5:31, 6:13, Ezekiel 22:28, and Micah 3:11)?

f. **Friday:**

- i. Read 1 Peter 2:4-10.
  1. How does Peter connect us as Christians to what God was using tassels to remind Israel of? Compare the passage to Isaiah 61:6, Revelation 1:5-6, and 5:9-10.
    - a. As Christians what role will we have?
    - b. Priests offer sacrifices. What do Philippians 4:18 and Hebrews 13:15 tell us about what some of those might be?
- ii. As you saw in the passage at the end of Thursday’s study, the Israelites, particularly their priests, failed to live as God commanded. What do 1 John 2:1-6 & 15-17 tell us about how we can avoid the same fate?
- iii. We believe, correctly, that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
  1. What does 1 John 5:1-3 tell us is a necessary result of that faith?
  2. Where did John learn this (see John 14:15-17)? Where do we get the strength and ability to obey?
  3. How does Paul amplify this principle in Ephesians 2:10? Why did God create us and save us?

g. **Saturday:**

- i. Reread the entire focal passage meditating on how each section applies to you and how it should influence your life.
- ii. Spend time in prayer asking God to show you any sin, unintentional or deliberate, in your life so that you can confess and accept His forgiveness.

**4. Application:**

- a. The most important point we can gain from this study is the importance of avoiding sin – and when we do sin immediately confessing it. Find a “tassel” that will remind you to do this daily or even more often.
- b. Possibly the best “tassel” we can have to remind us of our special relationship with God, because of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, is to commit His Word to memory so that the Holy Spirit can call it to our attention when we need it. Commit to a plan to memorize passages of scripture regularly.

**5. Prayer Points:**

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications –Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19