

**THE TENT**  
By John F. Hall

Everyone has needs that go beyond the basics of food, clothing and shelter. That go beyond friendships and praise and recognition. That go beyond receiving awards and college degrees and military metals. That go beyond receiving name recognition and being famous and being politically powerful. That go beyond being loved and having family, and extended families, and kin. At some point, some of these needs will lose their



satisfaction and their significance. Oscar Gamboa, Gabriel Gamboa, Abbie Gamboa, and Camarya Avers wrote the hymn, "Give Me Jesus." These are a few of their lyrics: "I don't want anything but You. You're more than every dream come true. All of the things that I thought I wanted, don't come close to knowing You. Now I'm Yours and You are mine; our love is the secret that I find. I'll spend forever in the pleasure; I found looking in Your eyes... More than silver, more than gold, You are the treasure that I hold. Now that I tasted Your goodness, nothing else will satisfy. Just give me Jesus! Give me Jesus! And you can have all this world; you can have all this...".

For the past week, Kentucky has received a historic amount of rain. Parts of down town Hopkinsville flooded. Many places in Christian County had water over the roads. I take Interstate 24 from Cadiz to Oak Grove, and then down Highway 41-A to Fort Campbell. I read a report that KY 117 at the intersection of 41-A was flooded. I called the Oak Grove City Hall to see if it was passable. The Flying J Truck Stop is at that location. I was told that it was passable. When I arrived at that location, I observed three cars on the KY 117 side of the intersection. There was about 12 inches of water over that section of the road. The three cars had flooded out in that low section of the road. A tow truck, with a flat bed, was loading up one of the cars. Water was nearly up to the gas pumps, and to the entrance of the restaurant at the Flying J. My destination was to the Town Center Pharmacy on Fort Campbell, to pick up medications for myself, and for my wife, Paula.

After picking up the medications, I was, with cane in hand, slowly walking back to my car. Out of nowhere, an inspiration came, to write a story about a tent. In 2 Corinthians, Chapter 5, Verses 1-5, are these words: "For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not found to be naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we be unclothed, so that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee."

I could only find her first name, Christine. She wrote the poem, "This is My Tent." These are her words: "This is my tent. I have loved it well. I lay in it under many shies, and took it over many waters. I filled it with many good things. This is my tent, now torn and spoiled. Its canvas slashed, its ropes shredded, its beams broken. Thieves and marauders did this. Greedy for plunder. Trampers of earth, speakers of lies. Lord, have mercy. This

is my tent, spread out for all to see. Birds land on it, insects crawl within it, emptiness lies all around it. This is my tent and I love it still. Yet in my grief, I have hope, that heaven will house here the bounty of hospitality.”

I like the parts of Christine’s poem where she uses words like torn, spoiled, slashed, shredded, and broken, to describes the ravages of what time does to the body. Steve Coyle wrote the poem, “This Old tent.” These are his words: “When I look upon the days gone past, I’d thought this tent was meant to last. For I stood it on some rocky ground where stormy winds couldn’t beat it down. And with my pride and my own hand, I put my tent on shifting sand where pegs pulled loose and my tent did shake, but I was young and I could take the unstable world that I was in, I’d just up and move again. For so many years I went this route, shifting this old tent about. Till one cold day when my mind grew clear, this tent had an end it might draw near. So with much fear (such a heavy load) I looked for the One who had made this abode. Yes, the Tentmaker, He’s surely know, where one rotting tent goes, to have this canvas revitalized, to have these poles and pegs resized. I went to Him on bended knees begging Him, “Oh Tentmaker please! Restore this tent I thought would last, this canvas house that went so fast.” He looked at me through loving eyes and merely pointed to the skies. Please don’t grieve over some old tent, canvas walls that have been spent. For this mansion that’s been built by Me will last you all for all eternity.”

When I was a 17-year-old paratrooper, living in the barracks on Fort Campbell, which was a long time ago, I remember being issued one three-pole section, five pegs, and a section of rope. I would pair up with another soldier who had the same things. We would put them together to make a two-man “pup tent”. I sent my oldest granddaughter, Andrea, a text with two pictures. The first picture shows us sitting on the front porch when she was five. The second picture shows us sitting on a Civil War cannon when she was nine. I told her to stress less. She texted back and thanked me for reminding her not to stress. She also texted her favorite Bible verses. In Matthew, Chapter 6, Verses 33-34, are these words: “But seek first His kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of each own.” To family and friends, wherever you may be, I wish you a Happy Easter. Praise the Lord! He is risen!

John F. Hall

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