

**SERMON FOR SUMMER:
“GETTING A HANDLE ON
GOD” OR “GOD IS ON THE
GO”**

-based on Exodus

25:10-16

The ark of the covenant had handles.

This is a basic truth about God.
The ark of the covenant had handles.

Modern society is mobile. It has had a destructive effect upon the church. Membership turnover. Folks moving in and out of the congregation as they make their next move. Generations in a family no longer living in the same town, no longer attending church together. Modern people are mobile people.

But let me remind you that Yahweh, the Old Testament God, was a mobile God. The Jews, God's chosen people, were nomads. And so was their God. Yahweh was not tied down. Where the Jews went, Yahweh went.

The ark of the covenant was the symbol of that mobility.

The [ark of the covenant](#) was a sacred chest in [Old Testament](#) Judaism, It contained the [10 Commandments](#), [Aaron's rod](#), and a golden pot of [manna](#). It was a central focus of the Israelites' religious and spiritual life. It was carried by the Israelites during their wanderings in the desert and it was later housed in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple in Jerusalem.

The ark was meant to be a reminder of God's presence with God's people. It was a big box with rings on the side with carrying poles inserted through them. The poles were left in the rings, they were not allowed to ever be removed. Yahweh was a portable God. A God who could be picked up and carried with the people of God whenever they moved from one place to another.

All the other gods of that society, the baals, were immobile gods, assigned to certain towns and

places. But our God could not be limited to a certain location or geographic spot, a God who traveled with the people.

How do you like the idea of a footloose, rambling, gadabout God? Radically different from the baals, those stick-in-the-mud homebodies who stayed put in one place. Yahweh could be anyplace, anytime, anyhow.

Now here's the significance for today's mobile society: God has not settled down yet. We are people on the go, but so is God. We never have to be afraid of going to some God-forsaken place. God is always with us, wherever we are. The carrying poles have not been taken out. The ark of the covenant of God's presence still has handles.

One of the joys of coming out here, of not being in our beautiful sanctuary this morning, is the realization that God is here. God was already here, God beat us out here. God is present wherever we go.

This summer, I hope you travel and enjoy some meaningful, restful, fun time away. Please include God in your travels. On your vacation, instead of pay as you go, pray as you go. Gather your traveling companions together before you begin your adventures each morning and pray together. Seek to find God in new places. God will be there.

While you are away, I hope you take time to find a Lutheran church wherever you may be and worship.

And then come home, ready to re-engage with your church. Please do not take the summer off. The church does not take the summer off. In fact, we are truthfully busier in the summer than the rest of the year. (AFFIRM, mission trip, Vacation Bible School, etc.) We need you here, you belong here.

So be careful, have a great time, but please come home to us.

And wherever you go, know that God is present. Amen.