As we celebrate Sukkot, the festival of booths, we often focus on the temporary structures we build, the sukkahs, to remind us of our ancestors' dwellings during their journey through the wilderness. But today, I want to share a different tale, "The Shack," a story of compassion, remembrance, and the enduring message of Sukkot.

Once upon a time, in a land ruled by a good-hearted king, a remarkable decree was made. The king, driven by compassion, declared that the shacks and slums in his kingdom should be replaced with bright, pleasant houses, and he spared no expense in doing so. The people embraced this generous law, and their land flourished as never before. Gratitude filled the hearts of the citizens, and they eagerly transformed their homes.

But amidst the celebrations of newfound prosperity, the king embarked on a tour of inspection. His eyes fell upon a forgotten corner of his capital city, where a single broken-down shack housed a poor family. Shocked and bewildered, the king approached the elderly man living in the shack and asked, "How is it that you also have not been given a house to live in?"

The old man, with humility and wisdom, replied, "The townspeople have forgotten us!" In that moment, the king realized that even the most benevolent deeds could fade into obscurity, buried beneath the sands of time.

Deeply moved by this revelation, the king knew he had to act. He provided the forgotten family with a new dwelling, ensuring they would no longer suffer in the shadows of neglect. But he didn't stop there. The king had the dilapidated shack transported to the heart of the capital city, where it served as a powerful reminder to all who passed by. Above it hung a sign that read, "THIS IS THE KIND OF SHACK WE ALL USED TO LIVE IN."

Sukkot teaches us about impermanence, the fragility of life, and the importance of community, just as our ancestors did during their wanderings.

In our own lives, we may have experienced the blessings of prosperity, but let us not forget those who remain unseen and unheard in the corners of our world. Just as the king placed that shack in the center of the city, we must bring attention to those who have been forgotten.

As we celebrate Sukkot, let us not only embrace the impermanence of our sukkahs but also remember the impermanence of our lives and the lives of those less fortunate. Let us be the kings and queens of compassion, ensuring that no one is left behind, and that the forgotten are brought into the light.

May this Sukkot inspire us to act with kindness, to remember our roots, and to shine a light on the forgotten corners of our world. And in doing so, may we fulfill the true meaning of this holiday – a celebration of unity, gratitude, and the enduring spirit of compassion. Amen.