

## The Promise of God's Presence

Exodus 33:1-3, 12-19

9/28/08

### Intro

We now move to chapter 33 of Exodus. One of the keys to understanding chapter 33 is that it follows chapter 32 where the people of Israel thought that Moses was taking too long on the mountain so they asked Aaron to make them a god to go before them. They hadn't heard anything from God for forty days and decided they needed another god; any god would do, apparently.

So Aaron told them to tear off their gold earrings and he fashioned an image of a golden calf and the people then said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." They then held a great feast and began to dance before it in a lewd way. When Moses and Joshua came down from the mountain, Joshua said, "There is the sound of war in the camp." But Moses replied, "That is not the sound of triumph or defeat, but the sound of singing is what I hear."

Moses then became angry and threw down the tablets of the Law which God had given him, ground the golden calf into powder and made the people drink it.

Then in chapter 33, God told Moses to get the people moving from that place and go toward the land He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

### **I. Presence More than Presents**

- God was faithful to his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and told Moses to, "go up to a land flowing with milk and honey."
- He also said that he would send an angel before them to drive out their enemies, but that he would not go up in their midst because they were an obstinate and rebellious people, lest He destroy them along the way.

## A. God is faithful to His promises

- Every person here has failed at one time or another and therefore we understand that if God gave us what we deserved, we would be in great trouble.
- This was certainly the low point of Israel's relationship to God thus far. They were in fact a rebellious people and so God said that he would send an angel before them to destroy their enemies, but that he himself would not go up in their midst, lest God destroy them on the way.
- I don't believe that God was saying this for any other reason than mercy. He is holy in every way and He knew that if they were going to continue in being stiff-necked that He couldn't be in their midst or they would be destroyed.
- The scripture says, "Our God is a consuming fire."

**Illus- Some people take on an attitude and say, "God if you're real would you show up right here in my bedroom?" They don't know what they're asking, because if God answered their prayer they wouldn't last very long in his presence.**

- The amazing thing is that God remained steadfast to his promises and told them to go up to a land flowing with milk and honey.
- This is a powerful statement about God's faithfulness to do what He says.

**2 Timothy 2:13, If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.**

**Romans 3:3, What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?**

**B. We need a mediator**

- Moses then intercedes for the nation of Israel.
- In verse 11 we see the depth of relationship that God and Moses have as we see that God spoke to Moses as a man speaks to his friend.

**App – As a side note, this becomes a powerful example to us in how God would want us to speak to him as well.**

**John 15:15, “No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”**

- When Moses heard that God would not be in their midst, He appealed to God and interceded in their behalf. “Consider,” Moses said, “that this nation is your people.”
- This is very important to see in this passage that as a result of Moses’ plea, God said that His presence would go with them and that he would give them rest.
- But why did God say this? The answer is because Moses was a mediator for Israel.
- In chapter 32 Moses even interceded by saying, “Please forgive their sin, but if not, then please

blot me out from your book which you have written!”

- Moses is a type for Christ Jesus in this story. The scripture tells us we have a mediator in Christ Jesus. In fact, if it were not for what Jesus has done for us before the Father, we would also be in desperate trouble.

**Romans 8:33-34, Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.**

**Hebrews 7:25, Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

C. Cherish God's presence more

- In verse 15, after God said that His presence would go up with them, Moses responded by laying out his heart before the Lord, “If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us from here.” In other words, “Unless You go with us, we don't want to go anywhere.”
- God promised them a land flowing with milk and honey. Moses was essentially saying, *I don't want the land without you. I don't want milk or honey or any other blessing unless you're in the midst of it.*
- This is absolutely powerful! In verse 16 he made a tremendous statement when he asked, “how then can it be known that I have found favor in

your sight, I and your people? Is it not by Your going with us so that we, I and your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are on the face of the earth?”

- This is what Israel needs today, by the way. Israel has been reinstated on to their land, but what is still lacking is their relationship to God.
- This will be fulfilled in the last days when God will send their Messiah to them in the flesh, but it will be Christ Jesus and then there will be a revival like no other revival in their history.

**Zechariah 12:10, “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.”**

- It’s the presence of the Lord that Moses cherished more than the land, or the blessings that came with it. The same should be said of us, may we also cherish the presence of the Lord.

**Illus – When Jacob, the heel-snatcher, had deceived his brother to the point that he had to run for his life, he stopped at a place to rest for the night. There in his sleep, he saw a ladder from heaven to earth on which angels were descending and ascending. In the morning Jacob said, “Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not.”**

**Can access to heaven be located with a map and a GPS? Is it not true that Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no man comes to the Father but by Me.” We are the house of God and Jesus dwells in our**

**hearts through faith and His presence in our lives is what we should value most high.**

**Isaiah 41:10-15 Fear not for I am with you.**

**Psalm 139:5-10, You enclose me behind and before**

<b>II. Desire More of God</b>
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- When Moses was interceding to God in behalf of Israel, he also asked God for something personal. He made a request for which God was pleased.
- What we see in these verses is Moses seeking a deeper spiritual life. He had seen God destroy Egypt, he had seen God part the Red Sea and bring forth water from a rock. He had seen God provide manna to provide food for all the people. He had received the Law and commandments and spoken to God as a man speaks to a friend, but still he asked for more.

A. “Let me know your ways”

- Moses asked to know the ways of the Lord for a particular reason, “That I might know you, so that I may find favor in your sight.”
- Moses wants to know what God is like. He wants to know His ways. Clearly God ways are not the ways of man, they are higher.
- Let’s start with the fact that our ways are not always the best. Sometimes we do despicable things.

**Illus – I was golfing with a friend who likes to do practical jokes. This is the same friend who gave away all my socks when were together in Africa...**

- But God’s ways are distinctly different than our ways. “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord...

**Isaiah 55:8-9, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.”**

- Some people come to receive salvation and that is enough for them, but there are still others who seek after a deeper spiritual life.
- Moses is an example of a man who wants more and we should desire more by asking to know the ways of the Lord.

B. “Show me your glory”

- In verse 18, after God promised Moses to fulfill what he desired, Moses dared to ask for more.
- Have you ever come to a place in your relationship with God where you start just coasting?

**App – Is your relationship with God summarized by the simple phrase, “The good ol’ days”?**

**Illus – Being satisfied with the fullness of God is a key to not looking elsewhere to be satisfied.**

**If you're really hungry even a hot dog looks good and everyone knows what they put it hot dogs.**

- Moses wanted more and dared to ask God, “Please, show me your glory.”
- Philipp asked something similar when he said to Jesus, “Show us the Father.”
- In verse 20, God said that no one could see the face of God and live, yet we know that when we stand before the Lord in heaven, we will see Him face to face.

**1 Corinthians 13:12, For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.**

- The write of Psalm 73 has the right heart exactly when he writes...

**Psalm 73:25, 28, Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth... But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.**

- Paul also encourages us with his heart...

**Ephesians 3:14-21, to know the length, the height, the breadth**