

# Sinai & Calvary

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Thank you. Stephen's just fallen over with surprise because I remembered to switch on the mic. Good morning all. Lord be praised that he is with us. We have his presence with us at all times.

He is Emmanuel and he doesn't change his name after Christmas. He's always with us. And we praise his wonderful goodness to us. His kindness.

That's why I really identify with what Carl was saying to us at the prayer time. Kindness needs to overflow among us. Let's be kind to each other.

Because the accuser of the brethren is forever looking for opportunities to divide the body of Christ. And have us squabbling and falling out over nothing at all actually.

When it's all boiled down. Because these things, these big events that are happening in the world, these headline issues, are meant to grab everybody's attention.

[ 1 : 0 7 ]     Because the enemy is a chronic attention seeker. Really. That's really what it comes down to. He's a chronic attention seeker. He wants the attention that belongs to the Lord.

So let's make the Lord our great preoccupation. Let's change the metaphor. We are the bride of Christ. Okay? If you ladies are comfortable with being sons of God, I'm okay with being a bride.

Okay? So, we are the bride of Christ. And we praise the Lord that we are the bride of Christ. And because we are the bride of Christ, what should be our greatest preoccupation?

Should it not be our groom? Huh? Would you not think a marriage is ill-advised if the bride's preoccupation is something other than our groom? Okay?

So, praise his name. Now, chapter 19 here has one or two moments of puzzlement for us.

[ 2 : 0 8 ]     Because with hindsight, with the 20-20 vision that we have, this side of Calvary, we know what kind of God we're dealing with.

We're singing praises. And we don't have any qualms of conscience about praising this great God of ours. Because we know that his kindness is off the scale. We know that his kindness could not be exaggerated.

Amen? Amen. So, then, why on earth does he go out of his way to terrify his people? And he really does.

I mean, this is like, this is heavy stuff. They're trembling here. And they're trembling for good reason. Because God himself, when he comes to visit, you would be much more comfortable if King Charles walked by your house today and asked for a cup of tea.

He'd be a lot more comfortable. But to get a visit in person from the living God is an awesome thing. And, you know, there are two words that theologians love to throw around about God.

[ 3 : 1 9 ]     They talk about his eminence. And they talk about his transcendence. Eminence is just, for us, that's the side of God we're comfortable with.

That's the aspect of God that doesn't really cause us problems. We have churches today where people see God as almost a kind of loving grandfather.

Someone you can cozy up to. Someone you can feel safe with. Someone who is on your side. Somebody who is alongside.

Who is with you. And the eminent God is the God we all love and adore. But the transcendent God.

I mean, transcendence means going beyond. And we don't have any ways of measuring the beyondness of God. We don't.

[ 4 : 23 ] We just know that he's beyond. I mean, when Jesus came in human flesh, He was conceived in Nazareth.

And He was born in Bethlehem. So, He came into the world in Nazareth. And He came in the flesh. Into the flesh in Bethlehem.

But He didn't come into existence at those times. He's before all things. And in Him all things hold together. He's before all things.

We're talking about a Lord who is so great that we run out of adjectives to describe His greatness. And our language is inadequate. So, this lovely, amazing, eminent God is also transcendent.

And to some extent, to a great extent, absolutely terrifying. And I think, if anything, it's going to set the church back where it belongs.

[ 5 : 34 ] As a light to the nations. If anything, it's going to get the disease and the sickness of unbelief out of the church these days.

It's going to be when the church is able to tremble again. In the presence of God. We need to be a people who know how to tremble.

I mean, thank the Lord for all that we were celebrating at Christmas. It is so good to sing and to believe that God came to be with us.

And that He sent His Son. And that He is with us. And He's permanently with us. And that He's on our side. And that He's not against us for our sin.

But for us against our sin. It's so wonderful to think in these terms. But God says, this is the one to whom I will have regard.

[ 6 : 36 ] He who trembles at my word. I mean, when was the last time? Let's just...

When was the last time you opened the Bible and began to tremble? I haven't done it lately. I don't think... I don't know if I've ever done it.

But do we tremble at the word of God? We ought to. You know... People tremble before the word of God for all the wrong reasons.

They don't tremble because it's inaccurate. They tremble because they fear that it is accurate. They fear that it is accurate.

That there is only one God. That there is salvation found in no one else. They fear that all that's true. Many years ago, I did some proofreading for a company in Norfolk.

[ 7 : 42 ] And they had a contract with famous authors like P.D. James and Ruth Rendell. Novelists. And their books have been televised and all the rest.

They're very famous people. And I used to have their books come across my desk. And it would maybe be on the seventh or eighth recension of the book.

They had been through so many different stages of correcting and proofreading and recorrecting and proofreading and revising and redrafting and all the rest of it. And I remember at the time being quite shocked because the boss, the managing director came to me one day.

Because they all knew I had been a pastor. And the M.D. came to me one day. And he was a very homely kind of guy. And he said, could you use some Bibles? And I said, that's a strange question.

They said, well, they said, we've got a skip full of them down there. They had a skip, literally, I kid you not, a skip full of Bibles. And because of commerce and the way it works, they were unable to sell these.

[ 8 : 54 ] So they were just going to lie in the skip until they were taken away to the tip. Brand new Bibles, beautiful Bibles. So by God's grace, I was able to make some arrangement to have them distributed where they would do some good.

But that contrasted for me with all the work and all the effort that was going in to correcting the fiction of P.D. James and Ruth Rendell.

And I thought, what are these people doing? I mean, they're taking so much care over the words on the page. They want to make sure that when I buy this from W.H. Smith, that it says exactly what they want it to say.

And that there isn't a word out of place. And yet, if we listen to liberal theologians, we're supposed to believe that the living God hasn't even bothered to proofread his book.

And that it's full of errors and contradictions. We need to learn to tremble before the word of God.

[ 10 : 02 ] And not treat it as casually as we do. So, this God is for us. He's not against us. And yet, in this chapter, at some points here, it looks a bit like he's got it in for us.

On the third new moon, after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, we're told the third new moon. Now, the new moon was the first little sliver of the moon in the night sky.

The Jewish month begins with that new moon. So, this is the third new moon. So, it's the very first day of that third month after they had come through the Red Sea.

So, in other words, the Red Sea event is only about two months behind them. So, it's staggering to think that this is all happening so soon after they had walked through two walls of water.

And that was after Pharaoh's army had been drowned and they had been delivered by God through ten plagues that came upon Egypt and completely and utterly obliterated that nation's pride and arrogance by which they had abused the people of Israel for 400 years.

[ 11 : 27 ] Four centuries of slavery. And it was payback time as far as God was concerned. When you get to the point here where the Lord says, he's appealing to their own experience of him.

He's saying that Moses is to say this to the people. We're at verse 4 here. The Lord called to Moses out of the mountain saying, This you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the people of Israel.

You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians. There's the testimony. There's the witness. They are eyewitnesses of the glory and the majesty and the terrifying power of God.

You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles wings and brought you to myself. Do you hear the tenderness in there?

I bore you on eagles wings. A mother eagle is not only an absolutely terrifying bird of prey. So this is a symbol of God here. A terrifying bird of prey.

[ 12 : 50 ] But it's also a rescuing bird. When, you know, eagle chicks, as far as I understand it, and I'm no ornithologist, but as I understand it, eagle chicks are very vulnerable in the early stages.

And they can be in the nest for as long as 100 days after they're hatched. So it's like mum has to stir up the nest, and Deuteronomy 32 says she does exactly that.

She stirs up the nest. She gets them all out of the nest, and while they're all falling helplessly through the air, don't know what this new experience is, she swoops down below them with her wings and catches them and rescues them.

And she keeps doing that until they learn to fly. I bore you on eagles wings, says the Lord. He's teaching his people to fly.

He's going to lift his people up. He's going to exalt them. And he's already lifted them up above all the nations on the face of the earth. Not because they're special.

[ 13 : 59 ] Let's just go for a moment to Deuteronomy 7. If you think you know what the chosen people means, then you need to read Deuteronomy 7.

I think in many ways, even the Jewish people don't really understand. At verse 6, You are a people holy to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession. Now that same phrase is here, by the way, in a chapter that we read today.

He's chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession. Out of all the peoples who are in the face of the earth. But listen to this. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you.

For you were the fewest of all peoples. But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

[ 15 : 15 ] So, to be chosen by God as the chosen people is not because God was impressed by the Jews, but because he has sovereignly put his choice upon them.

And we're going to see, I hope, in the next few minutes why he chose them and not some other race on the face of the earth.

But let's get a hold of something that we need to be very clear about as we go through this chapter. As I said earlier, we have this 20-20 vision on this side of Calvary.

So we have a different understanding of things. We have a better understanding of things. And so, before we interpret anything here on this page, let's hear what the apostle of love, John, says to us about God.

God is love. God is love. That's why we need to be kind to each other. If we're going to be like our Father in heaven, then love has to be the distinguishing characteristic among us.

[ 16 : 27 ] We need to be kind to each other. God is love. Now, hold that thought as we go through this chapter. Hold that thought. God is love.

God doesn't cease to be love at some point because we're reading something that sticks in our throats, something that we can't really feel comfortable with. If there's something on the page that we don't feel comfortable with, it doesn't mean that God is no longer love.

God is love. And he hasn't changed at this point. It's we who are deficient in our understanding, not God who is deficient in his love. Can we just seal that for the moment?

Okay. But God is also holy love. God is holy. And because he's holy, and he brings a people to himself, and he chooses this people, that these people have to be holy to be his people.

They can't be unholy and be his people. So that means we need to begin to grasp something of, well, what is holiness? What does it mean?

[ 17 : 40 ] Isn't it true that the world has a completely and utterly deficient understanding of holiness? Isn't that the case? I mean, if you go to the average, say, Roman Catholic, and I don't mean anything nasty by this, but Roman Catholic doctrine would have you believe that holiness belongs to people who will shut themselves away from the world, and they'll join a monastery or a convent or something like that, and they will keep themselves pure and as unsullied as possible by the soiling effects of sin in the world.

Okay? That's holiness, as many people understand it. Well, I'm sorry. That definition is complete and utter rubbish. And the only way that we can really understand holiness is if we let it be defined by the Holy One himself.

And how do we see holiness defined? Do we not see it defined in the life of Jesus of Nazareth?

He was called the friend of sinners. Let me tell you, folks, he did not get that nickname, friend of sinners, by shutting himself away in a monastery and being worried about his own whiteness.

His reputation became soiled in the everyday conversation and intercourse with people in the world.

[ 19 : 09 ] He was always seen around the marketplace, and more than anything, he was seen with the people other people didn't want to be seen with. Hello? What a God we serve, who serves us.

Isaiah says, Since the beginning of time, no one has seen or heard a God besides you who works for those who wait for him.

God works for us. Is it such a big deal for us to be called to work for God? Is it a burden to serve a God who serves us?

And who has served us at such expense to himself? And look at what Moses is told to say to the people.

You have, you yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you in eagle's wings, and I brought you to myself. They have been brought to God.

[ 20 : 20 ] They've been brought to the God of their fathers. He has brought them to himself. Christ suffered for the righteous. Christ suffered for the righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God.

God has brought them to the people. And that was what it took. Now here's a question. How do you understand John 3.16?

God so loved the world. God so loved the world.

How do we say that? I mean, how do we imagine it in our minds? How do we express that? What sort of emotions are in us?

Is it not the case that we tend to sentimentalize the meaning of John 3.16? And we have this kind of, ah, in our voices.

[ 21 : 26 ] You know, oh, God so loved the world. So what we're doing is we're interpreting John 3.16 as, this is how much God loves the world.

Isn't that right? Isn't that our normal way of thinking about it? This is how much God loves the world. He gave his one and only son. Well, you know, the whole Bible is saying this is how much God loves the world.

The whole Bible has that message for us. This is how much God loves the world. But John 3.16 is not making that point. John 3.16 is making a different point.

You can't see it in the English, but if you go behind into the original language, you get a different interpretation. Significantly different. It's not this is how much God loves the world.

It's this is how God loves the world. Not how much, but how. And I want to suggest, brothers and sisters, that we should not be telling people how much God loves them until we tell them how he loves them and point them to Calvary.

[ 22 : 39 ] God loved the world in this way that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish.

God loved the world in this way. God, this is how much God loved the world. Look at Calvary and say, this is what it took to bring me to God.

Now once you begin to see it that way around, suddenly you begin to understand why God has to terrify his people to bring them to himself.

This can't be just anything, something casual. John 3.16 is not a sentimental verse. It's a verse that's giving us a caution.

It's a verse that's saying to us, don't bypass the cross. Don't preach Jesus loves you. That's not the primary message of the gospel. The primary message of the gospel is salvation is found in no one else.

[ 23 : 47 ] For there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. There is no other name.

So when you go to John 3.16, you're looking at God saying, this is what it took to bring you to me. If you had come, if you come to God and try to bypass Calvary, you will kill yourself.

He told Moses that there were to be boundaries put around the mountain. There were to be limits set and people were not to be allowed to just rush forward casually and nonchalantly into the presence of God.

They were to be appropriately afraid before they would meet with God. This is what it takes.

And so he appeals to their knowledge of what they have seen of God at work. He says, you yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians.

[ 25 : 11 ] You are witnesses of these things. Cast your minds back just two months. It's not a big ask. He's not asking them to remember like three or four decades in the past.

He's saying, I want you to remember just a matter of weeks ago what I did to the Egyptians in order to bring you to myself. And there's a contrast here really between the amazing power of Yahweh, the astonishing, boundless, limitless power of Yahweh and the almost boundless unbelief of his people.

my friend who's a pastor in Jerusalem says to me, he says, we Jews are just like everybody else, only more so.

And what he means about, by that, what he means by that is that if we have problems with God, the chosen people have even bigger problems with God.

You need to bear in mind, when you get the chance and you go home, please read Romans 9, 10 and 11. Please read those three chapters and see that God himself has actually delayed the salvation of the remnant of Israel.

[ 26 : 43 ] And he's delayed their salvation for the sake of the Gentiles, for you and me. And he has bound all men over to disobedience that he might have mercy on all.

He's an incredibly merciful God. Look, if you want to know why is God terrifying his people here, let's go back to what we've learned already, God is love.

If you want to understand the motives of God, you have to keep going back to that, those three words, God is love. God's motives can only be loving. He doesn't do anything except that he acts in love.

And he acts, because he acts in love, he's not acting for his own benefit. As Paul said to the philosophers on Athens, on the hill, he said, God has no need of anything from us.

God doesn't act for his own sake. He doesn't act for his own benefit. When he acts, he acts out of love. And therefore, if he's terrifying his people, it's for their sakes, it's not for his.

[ 27 : 56 ] They need to learn to tremble in the presence of their God. Because the nations around them certainly don't tremble in the presence of God. The nations around them have very casual relationships with their gods.

they just trip in and out of a shrine or a temple every now and again and throw a bit of food at their God and then they come out and live their lives to suit themselves.

And it, they don't seriously expect their gods to do anything for them. Because they've made the gods themselves. I mean, if you've made a God, what do you expect that God to do for you?

If your God needs to be carried about, would you rather have a God who's to be carried about or a God who carries you on eagles' wings?

Now therefore, he says, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

[ 29 : 12 ] If you will indeed obey my voice. I think we need to understand when God says if. God's ifs don't always mean the same as we think they mean.

You need to bear in mind here that he's saying this to people he's already saved. saved. He's saying this to people he's already saved.

Now just imagine if he had done it the other way around. What if he had said to them, okay, right, now you're under the yoke of Egypt.

I'd like to be able to help you. I want to get you out of Egypt. I want to end your slavery. But there's a condition. You know, you need to obey me.

Do you think the Exodus would ever have taken place? No, of course it wouldn't. So he saves them first. And through that salvation he brings them to a place where obedience becomes possible.

[ 30 : 22 ] Because they are no longer slaves to the Egyptians. Christians. And this is the glorious thing that the apostles understood. Paul called himself a slave of Jesus Christ. And as a slave of Jesus Christ he was a free man.

He was free from sin. Free to obey the Lord. I wonder how much trouble do you have with self-control?

Hands up if you don't have trouble with self-control. You never lose your rag at anyone. You never get annoyed with the kids.

You never shout at the politicians on TV. You never get frustrated with the guy who cuts past you on a bypass.

self-control is an issue for all of us isn't it? We're so self-controlled that biscuits and cakes just don't interest us at all.

[ 31 : 36 ] Isn't that right? right? But you see God has not given us a spirit of fear that we should fall again into slavery but he's given us a spirit of power and love and self-control.

Who is the spirit who indwells you right now brothers and sisters? The spirit who indwells you if you're a Christian is the spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

Is that good news? Yes, yes. Agnes is well-primed here. The spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead indwells you and me.

He is the spirit of power and love and self-control. But we need to believe God's word. We need to tremble at God's word. We need to dare to believe what's actually on the page.

Since the spirit of self-control dwells within me, there isn't a single temptation I cannot say no to. If I yield to temptation, it's nothing other than unbelief.

[ 32 : 57 ] It's unbelief that causes me to yield to temptation. I don't believe that I'm a new creation in Christ. I don't believe that the spirit of Jesus indwells me.

And so we have to take God's word off the page and we have to call the devil a liar because that's what he is. He's a father of lies. And God is saying to his people here, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession.

What does that condition mean? Does it mean that if they don't obey that he's just going to send them straight back to Egypt and cancel their salvation?

Reverse the rescue? Is that what he means? It's not what he means. He's working through a principle that we see here all the way through scripture that there has to be evidence of salvation.

There has to be evidence of saving faith. He's saying now that I have rescued you, now that you are secure, I want you to keep my covenant and be my treasured possession.

[ 34 : 23 ] I want you to live as though you really are my people. I have rescued you, I have borne you on eagle's wings, I have lifted you up, you are not slaves anymore.

See, the Exodus was about getting Israel out of Egypt, but Sinai is about getting Egypt out of Israel. It's about getting the slave mentality left behind.

they are not slaves anymore. They've got to stop thinking like slaves. They've got to be different from the nations round about. You see, they're going to be a holy people and the holiness, you know, holiness at its root is really separateness unto God so that we are his treasured possession.

We are his. We don't belong to ourselves. We are his. Like the man who gets onto a train and some guys are playing cards and they say, well, that's great.

There's three of us. You can make it a foursome. And he says, I can't help you. I can't play cards with you. I didn't bring my hands. And they said, what are those on the end of your wrists?

[ 35 : 40 ] He said, oh, these aren't mine. These belong to God. I can't play cards with you. So he speaks to them. about Jesus. And by the end of the train journey, they come to faith.

But you see, here we are. We are a treasured possession. We don't belong to ourselves. Because we don't belong to ourselves, we have to think differently about the way that we live.

We have to consider whether holiness matters to us because it matters to him. It matters to him. He's looking for holy children, not so that we'll be sort of like trophies in his showroom, but so that we will spread the light of our father's countenance out into the world around us.

Why did he save Israel? I'll tell you. In a word, he said he saved them out of the world. He called them out of the world. He called them from the world for the world.

That's why they're the chosen people. And the same calling has been given to the church. We are taken from the world for the world.

[ 37 : 02 ] That's the whole purpose. God's not looking for trophies. He's looking for children who bear his likeness. He doesn't want us all concerned about our own whiteness.

If I was going to spend my time concerned about my whiteness, I wouldn't have time for anything else. You shall be my treasure of possession.



That's a lovely phrase. It means a royal possession, literally. It means a royal possession. it means that we belong to the king.

You shall be my treasure possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests. A kingdom of priests.

That's a strange phrase, is it not, to use? I mean, priests don't represent themselves, do they? They represent someone else.

[ 38 : 07 ] Why would God want a whole nation full of priests? Because, brothers and sisters, when Aaron was given the task of being the high priest for Israel, God gave specific instructions that precious gems were to be mounted on his shoulders, and they were to be mounted in gold filigree settings on a breast piece here over his robes.

There were twelve stones with the names of the tribes of Israel, and he was to bear them on his heart, and carry the weight of their sins on his own shoulders.

that's the work of a priest, and God wants a whole nation of priests who will intercede for the nations.

I want men to lift up holy hands in prayer for kings and rulers and those in authority.

Okay, I'm going to throw some names up now. Let's think. Rishi Sunak, King Charles, Joe Biden.

[ 39 : 32 ] Joe Biden. We could go through a whole list of names, couldn't we? When is the last time you prayed for these people?

We can find a whole lot wrong with them. You only have to go five minutes on Facebook and you'll know everything that's wrong with Joe Biden. Or Twitter.

These guys die under a thousand hashtags every day, don't they? Could you do Rishi Sunak's job? I certainly couldn't.

And the tragedy of us, he thinks he can do it without our God. That makes for a very, very sad leader of a country. What a terrible weight to be carrying, the weight of trying to lead a nation when you're without hope and without God in the world.

How sad is that? Do we lift up our holy hands in prayer for kings and rulers and those in authority that we may live godly and peaceable lives for this is pleasing to God?

[ 40 : 55 ] Does that characterize our prayer life? Are we behaving like a kingdom of priests? saints? You see, God has to terrify his people to make them understand that there is no easy way to save humanity.

And we can't save ourselves, we can't wander casually into the presence of God as though we're okay, we're not okay. Our sin is so dark and so hateful in the eyes of God that it took Calvary to deal with it.

Okay, I'm going to ask another question. How many of us believe that God is more intelligent than we are? Okay, are we comfortable with that concept that God is more intelligent than we are?

Okay, so God needs to deal with sin and Calvary is his answer. Can you come up with a better one? Calvary is his answer.

Calvary is what it took. How could we wander casually into the presence of a holy God? Is it not appropriate to be frightened?

[ 42 : 22 ] But the wonderful thing about it is that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So once we've grasped that, when we truly know to tremble in the presence of God, we don't need to tremble in the presence of anything or anyone else.

And yet our doctor's surgeries are constantly awash with people, even Christians, coming in for help because of anxiety, because of fear, because of worry.

Dear Lord, will you please help us to hear your word that says, have no anxiety about anything. Now, brothers and sisters, if you think that's an unreasonable command, you're just making a massive theological statement.

Because if God is being unreasonable to say, be anxious about nothing, then you're saying that God is an unreasonable God, that he's commanding the impossible.

And I'm sorry, but over my ministry life, I've had so many people who have come to me say, I'm just a warrior, that's what I am, I'll never be any different. And I have to say to them, so you think God's command is unreasonable then?

[ 43 : 50 ] Because he tells you not to be anxious. Is it impossible for you to obey that command? Or is it possible you need to look at it round the other way? That because God commands it, it must be possible.

It must be possible. Brothers and sisters, he's calling his people to be a holy nation. A holy nation will be different from the nations round about.

When the Israelites looked like the nations round about and behaved like the nations round about, they ended up in exile in Babylon. That was why they were sent to Babylon, because they were indistinguishable from the Canaanites they had driven out centuries before.

were. They were indistinguishable. One of the holiest people in Scripture didn't even live a Christian life.

Now there's a conundrum. And he couldn't have lived a Christian life. You know why? Because he wasn't a Christian until he was hanging on a cross beside Jesus. There was no way he could live a Christian life.

[ 45 : 06 ] It was too late. But he was one of the holiest people that this world has ever seen. And you know what made him holy? Because in the space of six hours from nine o'clock in the morning till three o'clock in the afternoon, he suddenly found himself in disagreement with the world round about.

And he suddenly found himself in agreement with God about his son. If that's not holiness, I don't know what it is. To disagree with the world and to agree with God, that sets you apart.

That separates you from the world round about. That gives you a testimony. And so he had a testimony. He said to the other thief who was criticizing and mocking Jesus, why are you doing this?

Why are you saying these things? We are receiving exactly what we deserve for the lives that we have lived. But this man has done nothing wrong and he's got a testimony. He's got a testimony.

Because he's become a holy person. He's not the same as the world round about. He's totally different. He's separated. He's set apart. He belongs in God's family and he agrees with God and he disagrees with the world.

[ 46 : 22 ] Folks, that's holiness, pure and simple. That's holiness. holiness. If you disagree with the world round about you and you agree with God and you agree with his word, you are a holy person.

It doesn't mean you're better than other people. It doesn't mean you're superior. It doesn't mean you're more moral. It just simply means that you belong to God.

Is there a hallelujah in the room somewhere? Yeah, she's so predictable. But I do praise God that here in this chapter we're beginning to see that God himself brought his people to himself and yet once he brings them to himself, the first thing he has to do is to make them sufficiently afraid of him so that they don't then have to be afraid of anything else.

but they do need to be a people who have a holy fear of a holy God and nothing less will make them a holy people. So he tells them to consecrate themselves, to get themselves ready.

He says in three days time I'm going to visit you and to the very day right on that morning on the third morning God comes down. Do we realise just how condescending that is?

[ 47 : 52 ] God could have stayed far apart from it all couldn't he? God came down. That's why we're here today brothers and sisters, because God came down.

Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke. the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln. The whole mountain trembled greatly.

If the creator sets his feet on an earth that is out of joint, because the whole creation is out of joint, so God comes down and sets his feet on the mountain and everything trembles.

Brothers and sisters, please pray that we may learn to tremble and to fear God that we may fear nothing else.

Let's pray. Lord, we're talking about you in this world all the time.

[ 49 : 09 ] Most of the time we don't realize that we're talking about you, but our faces are always saying something about you. We might sing Amazing Grace, but we don't often look amazed.

We might sing Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus, but we often look in the shop as though our faces are turned to all the same headlines and fears that everybody else has.

God, our Father, will you please set us apart afresh? Because we know that in reality we are already a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to You.

But we are so that we might proclaim the praises of You who called us out of darkness into Your wonderful light. Father, will You have mercy on us?

Because somehow or other we've learned to treat You like a cozy fireside instead of a consuming fire. Help us to understand, Father, that if we could just open ourselves to You and let You teach us to tremble as we ought to do, we could also enjoy You far more.

[ 50 : 40 ] And the enjoyment of You would show in our faces and people would ask us for a reason for the hope that is in us. God, our Father, may it be so for Your glory.

Help us to look at Calvary and see exactly what it took to bring us to You. let us tremble and rejoice.

In Jesus' name. Amen.