

Presence or Prosperity?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 January 2025

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Verse 1. Verse 1.

[2 : 48]

As a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this time now to study your word. And I pray that you would come and speak. I don't know of a more important passage for us to consider than the one before us this evening.

And you have much to say to us, much to say to me, even as I preach these words. And we pray, Lord, that by your spirit, you'd come talk to us. That we would see your glory and feel your presence in this place tonight.

And we pray it in Jesus' name. And God's people said, amen. You can be seated. Faith family, would you ever marry someone you'd never met?

[5 : 13] Well, that's... Some of you were quick to answer that. Well, that's exactly what happened a few years ago with the very first Zoom wedding. Meet Aisha.

Aisha Reeves. Aisha lives in the UK. And when she was 26 years old, she met a man by the name of Darren Martin. Darren's a factory worker in Detroit, Michigan.

The two of them met on a Facebook group chat. And it didn't take long for the couple to start talking one-on-one by video. And then very quickly from that became boyfriend and girlfriend.

They spoke online all the time, often for five hours at a time. In fact, Aisha even altered her sleeping schedule to make sure that she would be awake whenever Darren was awake.

Now, over the course of a few months, their love grew. I mean, isn't that sweet? Until finally, on a video chat, Darren got down on his virtual knee and asked Aisha to marry him.

[6 : 23] And all God's people said, aw, right? So, they were soon married online by a priest who officiated the wedding, even though they had never met, even for one moment, in person.

They even had a virtual child together. I'm just kidding. That's a pillow with Darren's face on it. It kind of looks like mini-me. Anyways, all right. I digress.

Now, as you might guess, their marriage lasted a total of, anybody want to guess?

Five minutes. Five minutes. A little longer than that. It lasted three months. It lasted three months.

And when the news outlets heard of this being the first Zoom wedding ever, they learned the virtual love didn't last, and so they reached out to Aisha and Darren, and they asked them why.

Aisha said this, quote, I tried to make things work. I didn't want to be 26 and divorced, but it was too hard to trust long distance. It wasn't the fairytale ending I'd hoped for.

[7 : 39] I know someday I'll meet someone right for me. Listen to this. But next time, they will certainly be local. And here's what Darren said.

He had a similar thing. He said a very similar thing. He said, quote, I'm sad to see it end, but the distance was just too hard.

There is not anybody in this place that's shocked by that, right? Nobody here is like, I'm really surprised that didn't work out. No, all of us understand why that was doomed in the first place.

And here's why. Because we know this to be true. It's very hard to have a relationship without presence. It's very difficult to have a relationship if you're never in the physical presence of that person.

And, you know, that's not just true with like a dating relationship. It's true in other ways as well. Take, for example, your children. It's one thing to be around your children.

[8 : 43] It's another thing to be present with your children. It's one thing to watch a game on television. It's another thing to be present and experience that very moment live.

It's one thing to have a virtual meeting at work. It's very different to actually be in the room with other human beings. I've had people tell me this a lot as a pastor.

They'll say, pastor, I love watching the sermons online. I'm so thankful that we have that online ministry. But there is nothing like being present.

There's nothing like being present. And I hope you say that. You're present, all right? But we know this, right? Every single one of you in this place knows the power, the importance, and even the necessity of presence.

Now listen to me. If that is true for human relationships, how much more our relationship with God? If you acknowledge the importance of presence in human relationships, how much more important our relationship with God?

[9 : 56] That is, it's one thing to talk about God. It's one thing to read about God. It's one thing to study the concept of God. God, it's a whole different thing to be in the presence of God.

We are made for presence. The presence of God. And that is exactly what Moses pleads for here in Exodus 33.

Look at verse 15. We didn't read this earlier, but look at verse 15. And he said to him, say it with me, if your presence, God, if your presence doesn't go with me, do not bring us up from here.

For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, that I and your people? Is it not, say it, you're going with us so that we are distinct.

I and your people from every other people on the face of the earth. Now, before we deal specifically with what's going on here in Exodus 33, I want to take us back to something that we talked about.

[11 : 03] It was actually just a few weeks before we took the break around Christmas time. And one of the things that we talked about was that we as human beings were created to be in relationship with God.

Do you believe that? You exist. I exist. The very reason that we are on planet earth is to be in relationship with God. We were made for God's presence.

In fact, we talked about, remember our little chart here? We reviewed this again. The very, very beginning of the Bible. In the Garden of Eden, God creates humanity and he dwells with them. He walks with them. They are in God's presence. Sin banishes them from the garden. And what happens at Mount Sinai? God comes down and he's meeting with his people.

The whole establishment of the tabernacle was that God's presence would dwell in the middle of his people. That he would be right in the middle of the camp.

[12 : 05] And so they took that with them until they established the temple. And once again, God's presence would come down and meet with his people there in the Holy of Holies with the high priest.

All of that leads to Jesus because the ultimate tabernacle, the ultimate dwelling of God with man is found in Jesus Christ. Amen?

Emmanuel, God with us. The Word was with God. The Word was God. And the Word was made flesh. God has come to dwell with us.

And we can dwell with God in the person of Jesus Christ. And now through the church for those united to Jesus Christ by faith, we are able to come together and be in God's presence until one day we will be home forever.

We will dwell in the new creation. We will dwell in new Jerusalem. And we will dwell with our God forever and ever and ever.

[13 : 08] That's the whole biblical story. The whole theme of the Bible is the presence of God with the people of God.

Now one other thing that the Bible teaches is that sin separates. Sin pulls apart. You know this from the very beginning. Even with Eden, you've got Adam and Eve, right?

And they sin in the garden. They are in the presence of God. They are dwelling in the midst of God's presence. But because of their sin, they're separated from God. They're cast out.

They're no longer able to enjoy God's presence. Now the reason why I say all of that is because the same thing is happening here in Exodus 33.

Now listen, are you with me? God had come down at Sinai and He's dwelling with His people. He manifests His glory and His presence for the people of God.

[14:04] But the people of God sin. We looked at this the last two weeks with the idolatry of Israel in Exodus 32. They make the golden calf. So what happens as a result?

This is important to understand what's going on in Exodus 33. What happens as a result of their sin in chapter 32 is they're now separated from God's presence in chapter 33.

In fact, look at it here in verse 1 of chapter 33. You'll see this. God says to Moses, Depart. So get up. Get your things. It's time to get to the promised land.

You and the people who you brought out of the land of Egypt. That's the land that I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Saying to your offspring, I will give it. And I'm going to send an angel before you.

And they're going to drive out all your enemies. The Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites. All of them. And you're going to have the land flowing with milk and honey.

[15:00] You're going to have everything I promised you. I'm giving you the land. I'm defeating your enemies. I'm going to do everything I said I would do. There's just one difference.

I will not go up among you. You're going. But I'm not going with you.

Your sin has separated you from me. I will keep my promise. I will defeat my enemies. I will make you prosper. I will give you the promised land. But I won't go with you because your sin has isolated you from me.

And the text calls that reality disastrous words. There's no more thought that's frightening than to be separated from the presence of God.

Amen. This is the most disastrous thing that Israel could face. And God even goes further to say, hey, I'm going to put a system in place because of this.

[16:10] Look at verse 7. Moses is going to take a tent. He's going to pitch it outside the camp. Where? Outside the camp. Say this phrase with me.

Far off from the camp. Do you see that separation? That distance that's now happened? And he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who seeks the Lord would go to the tent of meeting. Which is where? Outside the camp. Whenever Moses would go to the tent, all the people would rise up. And he each would stand at his tent door and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. And Moses entered the tent. The glory of God would descend. And the Lord would speak with who? Speak with Moses. And when all the people saw the glory of God standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship.

Each at his tent door. In other words, here's what God is saying. God is saying, Moses is going to have a tent outside the camp. I'm going to meet with Moses. He will talk to me on your behalf.

[17:14] And so that's how it's going to be. You're separate. You're distant. And so I'm going to deal with Moses alone. In other words, here's what's going on. God promises to defeat their enemies and give them prosperity.

Any time that they need God, they need something from him, they can go to a religious professional. His name is Moses.

And they can get all their questions answered. Now there's a lot of people that would say, that sounds like a pretty good deal. I'm going to get prosperity.

I'm going to get victory over my enemies. I'm still going to get the promised land. And if I need God, if I need something from him, if I've got theological questions, I've got a paid professional.

And I'll just go to Moses and he'll just go to God on my behalf. That sounds pretty awesome. That sounds pretty easy. That sounds like Catholicism. And a lot of practicing Protestants.

[18:20] Here's what I mean. It's kind of like Batman. God's going to be in his cave, distant from the people. And hey, if you find yourself in trouble, just go to Officer Gordon and he'll shine the signal and he'll get Batman on it.

But you don't actually have to deal with it. You don't actually have to be in God's presence. You don't actually have to have any interaction with God.

In other words, in short, instead of God being in the middle of your life, his presence will be outside the camp. Now remember that because we're going to come back to it in just a moment.

But I'm going to stop here and just ask. Have you settled for that kind of religion? I can't call it a relationship, right?

Because remember this? It's hard to have a relationship without presence. And yet this is what most people have. Oh, somebody say preach preacher because I feel the preacher rising up in me right now.

[19 : 27] This is what most Christians settle for. God is not in the middle of your life. You only go to God when you need something. You settle for paid professionals like me to meet with God and then come out here on Saturday night and tell you what to do.

But you don't actually spend time on your own in his presence. That's disastrous. And it is something you should never settle for as a child of God.

You should not be content with religion when you could have a relationship. And yet the very reason why so many people do is because you're busy.

I don't have time to hang out with God. I got deadlines. I got text. I got things at work. I've got things with family. There was several years ago at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, there was an exhibit called The Artist is Present.

Now, to be clear, it was organized by a very controversial artist, someone that I do not endorse at all. I'm just referring to the impact that the event had.

[20 : 41] And the event was that they had these two chairs in the middle of a room. Some of you maybe have seen this before. And they would just sit there. And for about four minutes or so, they would just stare at each other.

No speaking. No talking. They would just gaze into each other's eyes. This exchange took place with 1,500 people totaling over 700 hours.

The whole point of the exhibit was to protest the lack of human connection in society. And the response was overwhelming.

The curator was just telling me, you have to be ready that in the front of you will be empty chair most of the time. Because nobody could imagine in New York, the most busy place in the world, that anybody would take time to sit and just engage in mutual gaze with me.

So it was a complete surprise for myself, to the entire staff of MoMA, and to everybody else. This enormous need of the humans to actually have a contact.

[21 : 51] How we are so alienated from each other. How the society makes us really distant. You know, we are texting each other messages without seeing each other.

And we just live around the corner from each other. So many stories of loneliness. And the people, not that just occupy the chair.

There was no one second when this chair was empty. They start sleeping outside of the museum. And they start waiting for hours and hours and coming back. And what is happening there?

I'm looking at you. You're photographed. You're filmed. You're observed by everybody else in this atrium. So there's nowhere to go but into yourself.

People were moved to tears. Some left this event and got tattoos just to remember the moment. One person, when asked, said, quote, it was the first time I felt human.

[22 : 49] The whole experiment revealed something about human beings. We were made to be present. And all of the busyness of life, we were made to be present.

Listen to me, faith family. But you were not made just to be present with one another. You were made to be present with God.

And I pray you don't ever settle for God outside the camp of your life.

When you can have Him right in the middle. In fact, notice Moses' response, verse 15. And he said to him, if your presence, God, if your presence will not go with me, then don't even bring us up from here.

Do you hear what Moses is saying? I don't give a rip about the promised land if you're not with us. I don't care about a land flowing with milk and honey. I don't care about victory over our enemies if you're not with us.

[23 : 57] For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight? I and your people. Is it not in your going with us? Is it not your presence with us that makes us distinct?

I and your people from every other people on the face of the earth. In other words, Moses is saying this. God, you can keep your prosperity if it comes without your presence.

Oh, somebody just say preach, preacher. Listen, this is a sermon. And not because I'm preaching it. Because this is something the people of God need to listen up to.

There are so many Christians and all they want from God is prosperity. When what you could have from God is presence. And Moses is saying, what's a promised land if God doesn't go with us? In other words, God, I don't want you outside the camp. I want you in the middle. And even Israel says a similar thing in verse 4. Look here, when the people heard this disastrous word, what did they do?

[25 : 10] They mourned. And no one put on his ornaments. In other words, why would we want God outside the camp when we can have a relationship with Him?

Because listen, there is nothing more valuable in life than knowing God. Nothing more valuable in life than knowing God.

Look at what Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 9 verse 23. Thus says the Lord, let not the wise man boast in his wisdom. And let not the mighty man boast in his might.

Let not the rich man boast in his riches. But if you're going to boast in anything, boast in this. That he understands and knows me.

What does it matter if you've got might? And you win all your wars? And you go undefeated in your season? What does it matter if you're rich? And you can buy anything you want in life?

[26 : 09] What does it matter if you're wise? And a straight A student? And everybody thinks you're brilliant. If you don't know God. Because there is no greater treasure in life than knowing God.

Prosperity is nothing if it comes without presence. That's what Moses is pleading here. I've quoted this before, but it's so appropriate for this particular moment.

It may be one of my favorite quotes from John Piper. John Piper writes this. The critical question for our generation, every generation is. If you could have heaven with no sickness.

And all friends you've ever had. And all the foods you've ever liked. And all the leisure activities you've ever enjoyed. And all the natural beauties that you've ever seen. And all the physical pleasures you've ever tasted.

And no human conflict. And no natural disasters. Could you be satisfied with heaven if Christ were not there? And then he says, I think appropriately, those satisfied with heaven without Christ will not be there.

[27 : 24] Because what good will the promised land be if the presence of God isn't with us? Faith family, do you want prosperity from God?

Religion? I just want God to give me a good life. And I'll just listen to paid professionals and keep God somewhere in the distance. Or do you want presence?

The kind of presence that Moses had. Look at verse 11. Oh man, this is great. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face.

As a man, say it with me, speaks to his friend. God had the kind of relationship with Moses that was face to face.

Now this is a figure of speech. Because if you read verse 20, It talks about how no unredeemed man can fully see God and live. And so it's intended here to describe the access that Moses has to God.

[28 : 31] That is the kind of intimate relationship that Moses had with God. In other words, Moses and God were friends. I'm just going to let that sink in.

Moses and God were friends. They were pals. And there are a few of you that struggle with this. Because you want to kind of push back. Because you grew up probably in a very liturgical setting. Where your idea of coming into God's presence was, Am. Am.

Very distant. And I'm going to say the chants. And I'm going to repeat the liturgy. And I can't come very close. And I'm always kind of bowed and afraid. And you kind of want to ask the question like, Wait a minute.

Wait a minute. I thought God is so holy that He's unapproachable. Here's what's... Oh man, I love this. I love this. Can you tell I love it? I love this. Look at this on the screen.

[29 : 30] God is so holy. He is to be feared. And yet God is so gentle. He can be your friend. God is so holy.

Oh, I'm not taking away at all the righteous fear of God. That is very, very evident in the book of Exodus. God is so holy. He is to be feared.

And at the same time, He's so gentle like with Moses. That He can be your friend. He can terrify you in His righteous fear.

And He can have a friendly conversation with you. And I would advocate. I would advocate to the people of God that God has called me to pastor. I would advocate the people in this place to avoid the extremes.

Avoid the extremes. What I mean by avoiding the extremes is that you become so afraid of God that you're always distant from God. Or that you become so friendly with God that you're too casual. [30 : 35] There's a danger, I think, in both extremes. And so the Bible holds, I think, a beautiful tension. Which is God is to be reverently honored and righteously feared.

And at the same time, He's my friend. He's my friend. We actually have a real relationship. Like, He's not outside the camp. He's in the middle.

And we hang out. And I'm in His presence. Because it's hard to have a relationship without presence. Do you see? Do you see? This is the kind of relationship that God has with Moses. And it's the kind of relationship you can have with God as well. I want to take a moment just to look at the characteristics of Moses' friendship with God. This kind of being in His presence.

It's beautiful. Number one, they spent time together. They spent time together. Every time in Exodus 33 where the word presence is used, it's the Hebrew word panem.

[31 : 36] Panem. And this word means face. So every time you see the word presence, it means face. Now, it's kind of the idea of FaceTime. That God has FaceTime with Moses.

I don't mean the app on your iPhone. I'm not talking about that kind of like they video chat. That's not what I'm talking about. Like, they're face to face. That is, they're in the physical presence of one another.

And you know this. If you say to somebody, like, hey, we need to get some FaceTime. What you mean is, we need to hang out. We need to actually get in a coffee shop and be at the same table and look at each other face to face and actually have some presence.

Because we know there's just times that a screen doesn't work, right? The screen just isn't sufficient. You can't really have a relationship that way.

You actually have to be present with one another. And Moses was present with God. They spent physical time together. Now, some of you might ask, help me understand what this whole presence of God is.

[32 : 44] How do I know when I'm in the presence of God? Because everybody's still with me? You still having as much fun as I am? That's not possible, by the way. But you're thinking, like, what does it mean to actually be in God's presence?

Because God is spirit. I mean, like, I know when I'm with my friend and we're in the physical presence of one another because I can, like, see them and touch their arm. But God is spirit. So how do I know when I'm in the presence of God? And obviously, it's something the Bible talks a lot about. It's something that can be somewhat difficult to illustrate. But I'm going to do my best, okay?

My best is I intellectually know that sugar is sweet. I intellectually know that. So in my mind, like, one of my theological categories is sugar is sweet.

However, when I take a bite of bread pudding, oh, my. And all God's people said, just, can we just take a moment and praise him?

[33 : 52] Just praise him. Lord, I just want to thank you before these people tonight for bread pudding. In Jesus' name, amen. Right? Now, here's my point. Sorry, that was, it's my own little selfishness there.

But it will be served in heaven. I'm just telling you. Anyways. Now, what happens, what happens, what happens when I take a bite of bread pudding? Sweetness is felt.

What I intellectually knew was true, sugar is sweet, becomes felt in my senses. Oh, does it?

And I feel what I know. And here's the best way for me to understand it is I intellectually know that God is holy.

But there have been times when, like, his holiness penetrated my heart. There have been times I've theologially known that God is gracious.

[34 : 53] And then there's been those moments I have felt his grace. And then what I know becomes felt is the presence of God.

I know I'm in the presence of God because what I know about God becomes truly experienced. My senses.

And I'm not suggesting we're led by our emotions. It's got to be based on truth. Amen? But it's like I move from this category of just knowledge of God to what I know about God becomes felt in my soul.

And in that moment, I am in the presence of God. I am face to face. And you are face to face with God.

And let me tell you this. Let me tell you this. Let me tell you this. When you taste it, you're going to want more.

[36 : 05] You're going to want more. Oh, man. I mean, you think bread pudding's good? It ain't nothing on the glory of God. Listen, listen.

Notice this. Notice this on the screen. I love this verse. I want to read the verse first. I skipped it. Okay, look at verse 11. Look at verse 11 on the screen.

Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend. And when Moses turned again to the camp, his assistant Joshua, I love this, would not depart.

From the tent. In other words, now notice this. Moses had to go deal with the people. But Joshua would not leave God's presence.

I ain't going nowhere. This is too good. Why would I ever want to leave? When you have spent physical time with God face to face, I don't mean that physically he's there in your face.

[37 : 18] You know what I'm saying. What I've just described is that what you know about him becomes felt in your very being. What you want to say is, God, I don't ever want to leave the tent.

I don't want to leave church tonight. I don't want to leave that sunset. Because I am in your presence. And there is nothing more of which I was created to be in than your presence.

I don't want to leave. One phrase that's always stuck with me in Mark chapter 3 was the very reason why Jesus called the disciples to follow him.

Notice this. And he went up on the mountain and he called to him those whom he desired. And they came to him and he appointed the twelve. He named the apostles. Would you all just say this phrase with me?

So that they might be with him. Jesus called the disciples so that they'd do a whole bunch of work for him.

[38 : 24] Well, he goes on to talk about calling them out to preach. But do you know why he ultimately called the disciples? He called the disciples to be with him.

To be in his presence. To spend physical time with him. Because there's nothing like FaceTime with God.

There is nothing like FaceTime with God. I don't ever mention my books because they're not worth mentioning.

But in the book I wrote All Sides of the Savior. I wrote a whole chapter on how Jesus frequently had FaceTime with the Father.

Jesus would often do what? Withdraw away from the busyness of life to do what? Just be with Dad.

[39 : 24] Face to face. Physical time. And I will tell you, Faith Family, that this kind of divine connection is going to require your utmost attention.

Because you are living in a world of distractions. Amen? Can I get an amen? Like, are we not distracted all the time? I mean, it's emails.

And it's phones going off. And it's traffic. And it's on and on and on and on life goes. And yet, we must give this divine connection our utmost attention.

You say, Pastor, well, what does it look like? It could look like a lot of things. Prayer. Meditating scripture. Writing. A great meeting with Mark this week.

Talking about the journaling and just writing things out. And just, you know, letting our minds and understanding of God being written out through journaling. Could be singing songs.

[40 : 24] Could be taking a mini retreat for the day. Could be a technology detox. Could be a place that you just frequently go to because you just feel like you can kind of get away and focus.

And I hope it means this right here. On a Saturday night or twice on Sunday morning. Coming into the house of God.

To be in the presence of God. Well. I got to hurry up. No, I don't.

Not only did they spend physical time. I'll be quicker on these. They had real conversation. They had real conversation. Here's what I love about the relationship that Moses had with God.

It's the kind of relationship that I advocate for frequently that you have with God. Let me give you the example in verse 12. Now Moses said to the Lord.

[41 : 21] See, you say to me, bring this people. Bring up this people. But you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, I know you by name.

And you also find favor in my sight. Now, therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways. That I may know you in order to find favor in your sight.

Consider too, by the way, God, that this nation is still your people. What's going down here? What's happening here? Moses and God are hashing it out.

Moses and God, they're talking it out. Do you know why? It's what friends do. Moses is so secure in his relationship with God.

He has no problem saying, God, I got a question for you. I've got some questions I need you to answer. In other words, God and Moses not only spend time together, they talk and they communicate and they share.

[42 : 21] And sometimes there's even a little bit of conflict between them. I love how Moses has no problem telling God how he feels. In fact, Abraham, another man who was called a friend of God earlier in the Old Testament, went to God on behalf on the issue with Sodom and Gomorrah and hashed it out with God about that.

In other words, listen here, come on, come on. Somebody just say, preach, preacher. When you're a friend of God, you don't have to be polished. You can be very, very raw.

You know how you would talk to your friend? You know how you can just be like, hey, I know that maybe this isn't comfortable, but like, I just got to talk. Because we're friends and I trust the security of our relationship.

And so Moses spent physical time with God, but he and God had real engaging conversation. Moses didn't just hum for an hour.

And maybe that does something for somebody. That's fine. But at some point, you might just want to talk to him. And let your heart out. And tell him what you're really struggling with.

[43 : 36] And let him know what questions you have. Because newsflash, he already knows it. So talk to him. If you want to be his friend.

They spent physical time together. They had real conversation together. And then lastly, they stuck with one another. They stuck with one another. After all of this back and forth.

And all the conversation with God. And all the questions that Moses had. Look at verse 14. And God said, My presence will go with you.

Moses, I'm not going to leave you. I'm not going to forsake you. God, as he always has done throughout this exodus, proves his faithfulness.

And the Lord agrees to renew his covenant with the Israelites. In fact, look at what it says in verse 1. The Lord said to Moses, Go up, you and the people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land which I swore to what?

[44 : 46] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob saying, To your offspring I will give it. Come on, here it is, here it is. Notice on the screen. You know, the great thing about having God as your friend is you will never find anyone more faithful.

You need a friend? One that will truly never forsake you. You will find no greater friend than God. And what is absolutely amazing to me is that you can be his friend. You really can. You can have this kind of relationship with God.

You don't have to settle for God outside the camp. You can have him right in the middle.

Regardless of prosperity. If you really want presence.

So Exodus 33 shows us the importance of God's presence. That I want presence over prosperity. It shows us the intimacy of God's presence.

[45 : 56] That Moses is a friend of God. And so I close with this question. How can we, Because I've been repeatedly saying that you can have this same kind of relationship. That you can be a friend of God.

And maybe you don't believe me. Maybe you would ask, How can I be certain that I can have that kind of relationship? That God would be present in my life? Because the truth is, Pastor, Like Israel, I have sinned.

I've worshipped other things instead of God. And so how would God, Or why would God be my friend? Well that's why you need the gospel that is found in Exodus 33.

Can anybody see the gospel in Exodus 33? Have I trained you to start looking to, Where is the gospel in Exodus 33? Where is in Exodus 33 the gospel just shouting?

Like coming off the page. Here it is. Here it is. Here's the good news of Jesus. Here's the good news of the gospel. Look at verse 7.

[47 : 01] Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it, Say it y'all, Outside the camp. Far from the camp.

And he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, Which was where, faith family? Outside the camp.

Does that sound familiar? Does that ring any language in your mind? I don't know. Like Hebrews chapter 13 verse 12. Jesus also suffered.

You're kidding me. Outside the gate. Outside the city. And why did Jesus die outside the city? To sanctify his people through his own blood.

Listen, faith family. Why was the tent of meeting outside the camp? Because of Israel's sin. Because of their idolatry in Exodus 32.

[48 : 05] It separated them from God. Why was Jesus crucified outside the city? Because he was crucified for your sins. Jesus was taken outside the camp.

So that the presence of God would always be at the center of yours. Jesus was taken outside the camp.

So that the presence of God would always be at the center of your life. In other words, Jesus faced separation from God. So you could forever be present with God.

Which means, come on, I really am done. Almost. Listen, please, please, please let this land on you. What Jesus did on the cross means this.

Here it is. That in Jesus, you are not only forgiven by God. You are a friend of God. You, you, and me.

[49 : 12] We, we can be friends with God. Because Jesus was taken outside the camp for us.

Faith family, you and God used to be enemies. Because of your sin. But because of Jesus, you have friendship with God.

So you can spend time with Him. And you can have a conversation with Him face to face. And He'll never leave you. He will always be true to the covenant of the cross.

He won't go anywhere. So, faith family, I ask you. Is your relationship with God like I say's and Darren's?

You know a lot about Him. You've known Him. You've known Him from a distance. But you've never personally met Him. Today, that can change.

[50 : 21] And I hope it will. Because if you, yes you, are willing to trust by faith in the work that Jesus did outside the camp.

You can not only call God your Father. You can call Him your friend. And all God's people said, Amen.

Let's pray. Father, I don't know better news. I don't know better news.

Than the good news of what Jesus did outside the camp. That purchased for us the promise forever.

That we can dwell with you. That we can be friends. That we can have a real relationship.

[51 : 25] In your presence forever and ever and ever. We don't deserve you in the middle of our life.

But Jesus was taken outside the camp. So that you could be in the middle of our life. Right this moment. And I pray.

As we enter into a time of communion here in a moment. I pray there is no one in this place that would be settling for religion. Just give me prosperity. Defeat my enemies.

And just give me a good preacher that I can learn stuff from. But never actually meeting you.

Those are disastrous words. And I pray.

[52 : 25] It would not be so. And here we have this moment as we enter into communion. To be in your presence as we remember.

The purchase of our sin. And the promise. Of our friendship with you. So may this moment not be wasted.

May it be a moment where we sense your presence. Lord where we know you are gracious. Oh that we would feel your grace. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen.