

A Sad and Serious Relapse

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: 12 January 2025

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0 : 0 0] Thank you.

Thank you.

Exodus 32. Really, you don't have to clap. You really don't have to clap. You're too much. You're too much, right?

It has been weeks that we've had a break from the book of Exodus, but we return this evening to Exodus, our series that we were in for about 40 years last year.

And we took a break over Christmas, and we are now returning to this book that, Lord willing, the next few weeks, we will bring this book to a completion, at least our study of it, to bring you kind of up to speed from where we last left off.

[1 : 3 8] Last time, we were kind of dealing with God entering into a covenant relationship with Israel at Mount Sinai in Exodus chapter 20.

And then you have a very long section in Exodus 21 through 24. And that was the list of all those like weird rules, like don't boil a goat in its mother's milk and all those things that you have memorized, obviously.

And they're just weird rules, and God is laying out all the rules that will ground Israel as a covenant community and will separate them from all the other nations.

Then you've got another very large section, Exodus chapter 25 through 31. And that deals with all the instructions related to the tabernacle and the priesthood.

We talked about how God is making his home with Israel. He is dwelling with his people. In fact, in terms of like a summary of really the beginning of the Bible all the way to the end of the Bible, you have God dwelling with his people on a mountain in Eden because it is God's desire as he created humanity in his image to dwell with his people, that God would be our home.

[2 : 5 4] And mankind's sins, they're cast out of the garden, we're separated from God. And now God is entering into a covenant with Israel, and you have Eden revisited on a mountain.

Not the mountain of Eden, the mountain of Sinai. And God is dwelling with his people. His presence is with his people here at Sinai. Then he gives all the instructions of the tabernacle.

We talked about how the tabernacle is essentially the Sinai on wheels. God's presence is going with his people as they wander through the wilderness.

Eventually, they will set up the temple, which is what the tabernacle would prepare them for. And it would be on a mountain as once again, God's presence is dwelling with his people.

Then you come to the New Testament. And you remember the woman at the well when she asked Jesus, hey, which mountain are we supposed to worship on? And some say this and some say that.

[3 : 49] And Jesus says, I'm telling you that the day is coming when you won't worship on a mountain. You will worship in spirit and truth. Why? Because Emmanuel, God with us, has come.

The ultimate experience of Sinai, of God dwelling with his people, has now come in the person of Jesus Christ. And so now we as the church who are united with Christ, we have the spirit in us.

And God dwells with his people through his church. And we are longing for that final day when the new Jerusalem will come down.

And we will forever, for all of eternity, dwell with our God. And we will forever be home. That is, that's all the Bible right there, right?

That's like the sermon before the sermon. I'm just getting warmed up, all right? That was all review. And so we're now entering back into this book in chapter 32.

[4 : 53] And so now all the instructions of the tabernacle and the priesthood are complete. And now we pick up the story in Exodus 32. And we're going to begin reading at verse 1 down through verse 14.

And if you are able to stand, if you would please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word. Exodus 32 and verse 1 says, Now when the people saw that Moses was delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said, Up, make us gods who shall go before us.

I mean, as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't even know what's become of him. And Aaron said to them, We'll take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives and sons and daughters and bring them to me.

And so all the people took the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf.

And they said, These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, Tomorrow we'll have a feast to the Lord.

[6 : 08] And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. And the Lord said to Moses, Go down for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.

They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They made for themselves a golden calf and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it and said, These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

And the Lord said to Moses, I have seen this people, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them in order that I may make a great nation of you.

But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people who have brought up out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

Why should the Egyptians say with evil intent did he bring them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people.

[7 : 29] Remember Abraham and Isaac and Israel, your servants to whom you swore by your own self. And you said to them, I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and all this land that I have promised, I will give to your offspring and they shall inherit it forever.

And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people. This is God's word.

Let's pray. Lord, we bow with expectation to hear from you from your word tonight. I pray that you would take this message and you would speak deeply into our hearts.

God, open our eyes to see. Give us ears to hear what you would have to say to us this evening. And thank you for this gift of your grace to be able to study your word with your people on this night.

It is in Jesus' name I pray. And God's people said, Amen. You can be seated. Nick was a lovely child. A good student.

[8 : 49] Had lots of friends. His teachers even called him a leader. He certainly wasn't the kind of kid you'd expect to find marijuana in his school backpack at age 11.

And when his dad found it, it broke his heart. It's the true story of a father and son by the name of David and Nick Schiff.

They became famous due to a New York Times editorial that David wrote entitled My Addicted Son. It was an article about Nick's ongoing struggle with drug addiction.

In fact, this story became so popular, so famous that they made a movie, they made a film based on this true story entitled A Beautiful Boy with Steve Carell.

The story is that of Nick who at age 11 started with marijuana and alcohol and that quickly escalated by the time that Nick was age 17, he had tried almost every drug imaginable.

[10 : 03] What really changed him was one day when one of his friends gave him crystal meth. Nick said he kept going back for more.

He couldn't get enough. He became so addicted that his life went into free fall. Nick stole money from his parents.

He stole \$8 from his little brother's savings. He was arrested. He overdosed more than once. He almost had his arm amputated because of an infection due to a needle.

And then there was that call one night from the ER doctor to David saying, you better get down here. I'm not sure Nick's going to make it. David said, quote, every time I thought it couldn't get worse, it did.

And every major catastrophe would then be followed by rehab. And Nick would go to rehab and David would feel hopeful for a little bit because sure enough, it would work for a while.

[11 : 10] But eventually, Nick would relapse back into drug abuse. In fact, until more recently, the longest Nick ever stayed clean was about 18 months.

But David and Nick's story is not just about Nick's struggle with addiction. It's also about the story of a father who faced the greatest challenge of all.

Listen, Faith Family, how do you show unconditional love to an addict? Do you know how much I love you? If you could take all the words and the language, it still wouldn't describe how much I love you.

And if you could gather all those words together, it still wouldn't describe what I feel for you. What I feel for you is everything. I love you more than everything.

I love everything. Yeah, everything. You think that you have this under control.

[12 : 31] And I understand how scared you are. I understand why I do things that doesn't make me any different. God stood me up and I don't know why I'm attracted to craziness and you're just embarrassed because I was like, you know, I was like this amazing thing like your special creation or something and you don't like who I am now.

Yeah? Who are you, Nick? This is me, Dad. Here, this is who I am. No matter how many times Nick relapsed over and over and over again into drug abuse, his father remained by his side.

David said in the article, quote, anyone who has ever lived through addiction knows that caring for an addict is as complex and debilitating as the addiction itself.

I spent ten years of my life trying to save my son. And that's what I would tell others who are faced with this same struggle.

Just don't ever give up. It's a heartbreaking story, isn't it, Faith Family?

[14 : 10] It's a heartbreaking story to see someone trapped in addiction. And my guess is that there are many of us in this room, oh, there are many of us in this room that know this struggle, whether it is a direct struggle with addiction or whether it was an indirect struggle.

Maybe you were caring for someone in addiction and it might not rise to the, quote, extreme level of drug addiction, but it is a cycle of addiction and relapse nonetheless.

For some of us, you had days of positive thinking and you were feeling good only to relapse into negativity and depression.

You had spent months away from the computer not looking at pornography and then there was that night you relapsed when she was away or you worked so much overtime to pay off all of your debt and it only took one shopping trip to be right back in over your head.

You started out the year doing great with your New Year's resolutions but it only took a few weeks to go back to those old eating habits.

[15 : 29] We are addicts, every one of us, in one way or another. And if you do not think you struggle with addiction, Faith Family, there is one addiction the Bible says that every single person in this room struggles with.

It's an addiction called idolatry. It's an addiction of the heart, a heart that is addicted to created things that clings to and worships the creation rather than the creator.

If you are with me, say yes. Paul describes it this way in Romans 1, verse 21, that although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

They claimed to be wise but they were fools. Why? Because they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

In other words, humanity has an addiction problem. It's called idolatry. Where the heart is addicted to creation rather than creator and it is a sad, serious, and spiritual addiction and the reality is it functions like every other kind of addiction.

[17 : 01] Come on, you know what this is like. You've experienced this. So have I. One moment, everything is fine. You're praising and worshiping God. You're learning new things from God's Word.

You are strong in your faith. You have never felt closer to God in your life. And the very next moment you've relapsed!

In loving the things of the world. God's love is exactly what is happening here in Exodus chapter 32.

Verse 1. Exodus 32 and verse 1. Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain and the people gathered themselves to gather to Aaron and said, Up!

Make us, say it, gods. Make us gods who shall go before us. I mean, as for this Moses, the man who brought us about to the land of Egypt, we don't even know what's become of him.

[18 : 05] And Aaron said to them, We'll take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives and sons and daughters and bring them to me. And all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and they brought them to Aaron.

And he received the gold from their hand and he fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, These are your, say it, gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

First note here, idolatry and its insanity. Right? If you've been tracking with us over the last several months, if you've been with us throughout this series, when you read these verses, you likely have and probably should have some mixture of shock, confusion, maybe even righteous anger.

because you know how insane it is for Israel to suggest such a thing. Right? Are you with me? You read these verses and you're like, how in the world could you do that?

How in the world could you possibly say this? After all, you are the people that saw the Nile turn to blood. You witnessed all the different plagues of Egypt.

[19 : 18] You are the people that were there that night when the angel of death passed over because of the blood of the Lamb. You are the people that were there when the walls of water were being held back.

Do you remember when you passed through the Red Sea? You were the people that were led by a cloud in the day and by fire at night. You are the people that are being fed even currently as we speak daily by manna from heaven.

You experienced the glory of God at Mount Sinai with all the thunder and smoke and lightning and now you have the audacity to claim that the one who delivered you from Egypt was a cow made of gold.

Are you tracking with me? Israel, you must be outside your mind. You must be insane and they are and they are and you might ask the question why a cow?

Why a bull? Well in the ancient Near East a cow was the symbol of fertility or prosperity even strength and oddly enough oddly enough and this is where I get the entire addiction theme for this message if you ever wonder I don't just pull these themes out of a hat I think I just talk about addiction no it's here in the text you say why are you getting addiction from all of this because where does the cow come from?

[20 : 57] Guess what was one of the primary gods in Egypt? A cow named Apis in other words they had for years worshipped this cow and what is happening now is Israel is relapsing back to the things they've been in bondage to they are now merging what Yahweh did with the idols of their past does everybody see that?

say yes they don't just pull cow out of the thin air this is a part of the bondage part of the addiction they were a part of in Egypt and now they're merging that with Yahweh in saying these are our gods who brought us out of Egypt it's something that I told you several sermons ago I know you remember it because you remember everything in the sermons right?

you remember when we talked about this how it only took one night to get Israel out of Egypt but it's going to take years to get Egypt out of Israel that's what's going down here Israel is relapsing she's going back to her addiction she's going back to the bottle she's going back to the needle spiritually speaking she's going back to the gods that made her feel safe she's relapsing back into idolatry and my guess is that there would still be some of you here that would have a hard time reading these verses in other words you would think something like this the people people who had seen what they had seen could never do what they just did are you with me there's just no way there's no way if I saw the Nile turn to blood if I saw the sea part if I saw the Passover night if I was being fed daily with manna from heaven there is absolutely no way I would do something as insane as this and if you would say that it only means one thing you've never been around an addict you've never been around an addict because if you've ever been around an addict here's what you know their behavior never makes rational sense are you with me their behavior never makes rational sense they will gladly trade a great career for another drink they will gladly trade a great marriage for one night of passion they will gladly trade a healthy savings for the empty pursuit of more you say that's insane

I know that's the nature of addiction it isn't about rationalism it isn't about what makes sense because their life is addicted to something and if you think those examples are insane listen imagine substituting the true and living God for idols made with hands imagine trading the creator for created things trading the eternal for temporary things for trading living water for broken cisterns that hold no water faith family this is the nature of spiritual idolatry and every single one of us has it we are spiritual addicts relapsing into temporary pleasures of the world because we cannot imagine what it would be like to set our hearts fully and completely on God alone for a full minute

C.S. Lewis says it this way the very famous quote from C.S. Lewis he says quote we are half-hearted creatures fooling around with drink sex ambition when infinite joy is offered to us like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea we are far too easily pleased faith family listen to me the nature of our idolatry is insanity it makes no sense whatsoever why you would trade the creator for created things amen but not only is our idolatry insane notice verse two again and Aaron said to them take off the rings of say it gold that are in the ears of your wives and sons and daughters and bring them to me and all the people took off say it the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to

[25 : 55] Aaron he received say it the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a say it golden calf you notice the theme throughout these verses is all of this gold which raises a question where did Israel get all of this gold in the first place the the the the pawn shop just outside of Egypt jewelry street in Manhattan where where did they get the gold well let me remind you Exodus chapter 12 and verse 35 the people of Israel had also done as Moses told them for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and say it gold jewelry and for clothing and the Lord had given the people say the word favor that is grace in the sight of the Egyptians so that they let them have what they asked and they plundered the

Egyptians in other words listen Israel got the gold jewelry from the Egyptians are you listening on the very night God redeemed them from Egypt they got the gold because the Lord shown them grace he gave them favor in the sight of the Egyptians in other words let me summarize it here notice it on the screen the gold was a gift of God's grace they had the gold in the first place because God gave them grace in the eyes of the Egyptians and yet this gift of gold that reminded them of God's redemption from Exodus Israel has the audacity to take the gold and make it a God which by the way was a direct violation of their marriage vows at Sinai Exodus chapter 20 and verse 4 you shall not make for yourself a say it carved image and to make matters worse

Aaron who is one of the leaders is leading the way in other words faith family what I'm trying to show you by bringing this out is that this is worse than the Will Smith slap of Chris Rock at the Oscars this is seriously the ultimate spiritual slap in the face of Yahweh amen we're going to take the gold that you gave us as a gift of your grace and we're going to worship the gold instead of God oh man somebody say preach preacher because that'll preach listen this reveals to us what the very nature of idolatry is look at it on the screen idolatry is simply taking the gifts we receive from God and turning them in to God's it's taking the gifts we receive from

God and turning them into God's we take the money that God has given us we take family we take the jobs we have we take the health we have we take the relationships that God gives us and rather than seeing them as gifts of God's grace they become our gods they become the very thing our life is based on and here's how you know that's true wait till you lose one of them wait till they're taken away and all of a sudden you have no meaning in life all of a sudden you've lost all sense of purpose your life goes into total free fall you have no idea how to live and survive because you've based all your life on the gold God gave you rather than God himself notice it on the screen we take the gifts of God's grace and we worship them in his face this is the ultimate spiritual slap in the face

God gives you the money to pay off all your debt but in your spiritual addiction you take it to the spiritual casino because you want more this is the ultimate of insanity the ultimate of insults and why would Israel relapse in the first place why would they be drawn back to their addictions of idolatry oh man this is so revealing verse one when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said up make us gods who shall go before us because as for this Moses you know the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt we don't even know what's become of him listen the entire reason why Israel turns to idols is because Moses is taking too long which ultimately listen faith family is not about

[31 : 26] Moses taking too long it's about God taking too long because the whole reason why Moses is up on the mountain in the first place is because of God meaning if you break it all down you see that the very reason why Israel oh man this is this we'll preach the whole reason why Israel is turning to idolatry is because they don't like the creator's timeline God God's taking too long Moses where are you we don't we don't even know what's become of the guy he's delayed he should have been back by now so since he's not back by now Aaron make us a God the core reason behind their idolatry is impatience in other words idolatry man goodness idolatry is the spiritual quick fix it's the quick hit of the joint it's the quick hit of the needle it's the quick shot of the alcohol spiritually speaking because

God seems to be taking too long to do what I want him to do and so I'll look to something else to give me the fix I need ask any addict as to why they fall back into addiction and one of the things that they will tell you is the difficulty listen the difficulty of waiting on the greater joy of freedom that might take months when you could have another hit tonight are you with me sure I could experience freedom but do you know how long rehab might take oh no I need what I need now in my research and preparation for this message I came across an article that talked about impulsivity with addicts and it said this in the article quote impulsivity is the quality of being oh man talk about preaching is the quality of being easily swayed by emotional or involuntary urges or momentary desires without weighing them rationally in short being impulsive means acting without thinking an example of impulsive behavior is deciding to get drunk or even high even though you know you need to get up early in the morning for work the decision to drink alcohol or use drugs isn't based on rational thinking instead the choice satisfies an urgent desire for pleasure and quick gratification do you see this is impulsivity based on spiritual addiction god is taking too long moses we don't even know what in the world's happened to the guy so let's have a drink now and their heart turns to idols and the reason why

I find this so insightful is because it's so insightful to my own soul what it means is of the many reasons I am an idol worshiper Calvin talked about how our heart is an idol factory one of the reasons there are many reasons why our heart continually runs after created things rather than resting in the creator but one of those reasons is because we are impatient with God fine God if you're not going to give me what I need if you're not going to answer my prayer immediately I'll turn to money I'll turn to my friends I'll just look to my kids to be what I need you to be I mean after all I don't know what's come of you anyways and instead of walking by faith and waiting on God we get another spiritual quick fix from the idols of this world who's with me tonight this is real real real stuff it's happening in

Exodus 32 and it's happening in our life right now idolatry is the spiritual addiction of the heart and it is absolutely insane who would trade the creator for creation they did it and so do we and not only is it insane it's the ultimate insult because God gave you those gifts of creation to enjoy his grace not worship them as gods he's the one that delivered you and saved you and the reason why you do it is because you'd rather have a quick fix than wait and walk by faith so what should God's response be to our idolatry pick it up in verse seven the Lord said to Moses go down for your people now let's just stop right there hold it on the screen go down for your people this is a little bit of humor here have any of you ever been like you know the dog messes in the house and you say honey your dog just made a mess in the house you know what I'm talking about or your son doesn't clean the room honey your son is not cleaning his room like all of a sudden they don't belong to you you know what

I'm talking about that's what's happening here God is saying hey Moses you know your people you know the people that belong to you that you brought up out of the land of Egypt God is in a sense disassociating himself with Israel they've corrupted themselves they've turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them they've made for themselves a golden calf they've worshipped it and sacrificed to it they've said these are your gods oh Israel who brought you up out of the land of Egypt and the Lord said to Moses next verse and the Lord said to Moses I have seen this for let me alone that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them now faith family these are verses that a lot of Christians and even a lot of churches want to tear out of their Bibles because they can't stand verses like this meaning they can't stand the idea that

[38 : 15] God is a God of wrath you know what I mean they want to view God as a God that gracious they don't like the idea of a God that burns with righteous anger to the point that he is saying I want to consume my people and wipe them out but let's be honest even if you don't like these verses even if your initial response is to cringe at them I think if we're honest deep down we know this is the righteous response I mean after all can you imagine a greater slap in the face than having the very people you rescued from Egypt not because they deserved it mind you but all because of your grace a very people that you married five months ago at Mount Sinai the very ones that you demonstrated to that you were the one and true living God when you poured out your judgment upon the gods of Egypt and now they want to substitute you for a cow do you think

God should just turn away and act like that didn't happen golden cow crap I just wanted to say that because I thought it fit right you know that's not the right response you know it's not you wouldn't apply that standard of justice in any other area of your life and you know it this is the righteous response of God in light of Israel's idolatry period and you know it God is fully justified in his wrathful response and here's why notice it on the screen Israel did not deserve to be redeemed as God's people and Israel does not deserve to remain God's people there is nothing of Israel that deserves salvation at all if salvation was at any point based on our obedience we would be wiped out immediately amen

I mean if even a percent of it was based on our obedience it's not based on our obedience it's based on God's grace here's the here's the point here lean in faith family what I want you to see is that God is faced with the tension that David Sheff faced on a much much much larger scale namely listen how do I show unconditional love to an addicted child how do I keep loving Israel when she keeps relapsing how do I keep loving you when you keep relapsing because if there's one thing harder than dealing with the addiction itself it's loving the addict and God here is faced with the divine tension of loving a people who shouldn't be loved now we'll make one note before I finish the story praise

God the story doesn't end here amen we'll get to that in a moment let me say that the just judgment of God is at the heart of the gospel we're a gospel people amen all the time we talk about centered on the gospel centered on the gospel we love the gospel at the heart of the gospel is the just judgment of God namely our sin deserves the judgment of God and Jesus was our substitute for that judgment I don't have the time but I'll just briefly take you there in your minds in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus is sweating drops of blood he's literally almost dying in the garden before he ever goes to the cross because he's in so much agony and what was that agony about I've taught you this before he wants the cup to pass and what is the cup it is the wrath of God

Jesus knows that on the cross what will be the most painful won't be nails it'll be the cup and he will absorb the righteous wrath of God in our place so you may not love verses like this but verses like this are at the heart of the gospel and so if you love the gospel we will not neglect the righteous wrath of God now if we're honest or if we're writing this story the exodus story ends here just make for a shorter series right we just close our bible and say enough enough literally if exodus 32 is not enough to consume Israel and be done with them forever nothing is there isn't a greater spiritual slap in the face than what they have just done to

[43 : 52] Yahweh amen everybody with me the story should end here instead here's how the story ends it is the gospel in exodus 32 are you shocked by now of seeing the gospel everywhere in the old testament you shouldn't be here is a part of the gospel not only God's just judgment but look at verse 11 Moses implored the Lord his God and said oh Lord why does your wrath burn hot against your people stop right there notice Moses has given them back to God God has already said hey your people and Moses is like no no God you're not getting off the hook that easy they're still your people no one here wants to claim Israel at the moment and I don't blame!

them back and forth but anyway back to the story Moses says your people oh Lord why does your wrath burn hot against your people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand and why should the Egyptians say with evil intent you brought them out to kill them at the mountains to consume them from the face of the!

turn from your burning anger and Isaac and Israel that is Jacob your servants to whom you swore remember the promises you made to all of them based on your name based on your character you remember the promises that you made how you would multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and all this land and promise to give you your offspring and they shall inherit it forever!

remember the promise of! Abraham and Yahweh relented from the disaster he had spoken of bringing on his people little note before I talk about what the main point is here note that in Moses prayer at no time does he base God's mercy on what Israel deserves but don't you remember that one time they were obedient don't you remember the one time they got it right no mention of it because Moses fully understands that if God chooses to be gracious because he's not obligated to do so that's the whole nature of grace if God chooses to be gracious it won't be because of Israel it'll be because of God you with me now people struggle with what this means that God relented so I'm going to look at the main point and then we'll be done okay what does it mean that

God relents there's all kinds of bad teaching out there on what it means that God relents from the disaster that he was going to bring upon his people verse 14 first of all what it does not mean is that Moses is not bringing God any new information are you with me this is not what's going down this is not what's happening Moses is not saying hey God remember Abraham and God goes oh no I forgot about Abraham you're right I made that unconditional promise to Abraham gee whiz I guess I can't wipe them out now it's a really good thing you reminded me Moses it's not what's happening here the reason why I know that's not what's happening here is because go back to Exodus chapter 3 and verse 13 Moses said to God if I come to the people of Israel and say to them the God of your father sent me to you and they're going to ask me what's his name what would

[47 : 36] I say to them God said to Moses I am who I am and he said say this to the people of Israel I am sent you and God Yahweh the God of your fathers the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob listen in other words God didn't forget his promise to Abraham because his promise to Abraham was the entire reason he redeemed them in the first place so Moses isn't bringing new information to God here God is well aware of what he promised to Abraham so what does it mean that God relented this is very very important lean in what it means here is remember I've talked about the fact that God is establishing what we're in the second book of the

Bible right sometimes I think we forget because we study a lot in the New Testament there are themes patterns and categories we take for granted that when you're in the second book of the Bible they're just now being developed they're just being introduced is everybody with me say yes and some of those themes that have been introduced in the book of Exodus that are new in redemptive history but they're going to play a major role as you continue through the redemption story are themes and patterns of things like substitution sacrifice sacrifice like the Passover where the lamb is sacrificed and the blood of the lamb that's such a major biblical theme and it's introduced here in Exodus in other words one of the main categories patterns or rhythms in redemptive history that is established throughout the Bible is that of mediation someone someone interceding on behalf of others are you with me so listen listen notice it on the screen you can't establish a pattern of intercession if there isn't anything to intercede for you can't establish a pattern of intercession if there's never anything to intercede for you can't establish a pattern of mediation if you don't have anything to mediate here's the point if God's initial response is grace then Moses would have had nothing to intercede for thus not establishing the role of intercessor notice this on the screen here

God often responds one way the righteous authentic threat of wrath to initiate the response he desires Moses now interceding for his people so that he can respond the way he'd always planned to which is grace does everybody see that he's establishing mediation now why is that so important the reason why that's so important is because there's one theme that is crystal clear not just throughout Exodus but throughout the Bible notice it on the screen here there is no mercy apart from mediation that's a great place for an amen Pat should have said amen because it was his whole sermon last weekend right do you do you remember the verse that was so important in Pat's message in 1st

Timothy 2 verse 5 there is one God and there is say it one mediator between God and man and who is that mediator it ain't Moses it's the man Christ Jesus Christ Jesus the man this is the mediator who brings mercy so God authentically threatens wrath it's the right response in order for Moses to respond by intercession why so God establishes the pattern of mediator from whom mercy comes and that dear friends is the gospel of Jesus Christ in Exodus 32 you want to preach the gospel in the Old Testament preach Exodus 32 here it is you are a spiritual addict yes you are and it doesn't make any rational sense you have insulted

God to his face by loving creation more than creator your heart is addicted to the things of this world and you have taken the gold of God's grace and you have made it into God's and the result is you should face God's wrath you and I should face God's wrath but the good news of the gospel is there was an intervention there was an intervention into your addiction and that intervention is a mediator and the mediator is the man Christ Jesus he interceded for spiritual addicts on the cross and he took the weight of our sin

[53 : 59] God's God's wrath but that God would relent from the wrath we deserve and give us grace oh my oh my would you tonight assess the spiritual idols of your heart would you would you by God's grace and help would you identify those golden cows you keep running back to for safety security identity support satisfaction meaning purpose that you have substituted them for your creator and would you recognize tonight that you stand deserving of the wrath of God but would you even more so stand in amazement at an intervention that took place for you at

Calvary through Jesus Christ who took your place a beautiful boy is a sad story of a son who kept going back to his addictions but it was also the story of a father who would not forsake his addicted son that faith family is not just the story of David and Nick Sheff that's the story of Exodus 32 and that's the story of every Christian in this room and listen to me as I close would you listen look right here most of us in this room have never stuck a needle in our arms but every one of us stuck nails in his and that ought to show you how deep your addiction goes but more than that it ought to show you how far a father went to give you the one thing every addict needs unconditional love and all

God's people said amen let's pray father I and everyone in this place this evening are spiritual idolaters our hearts are addicted to the things of this world and we don't cast a stone at Israel in Exodus 32 because we have plenty we could throw at ourselves and we if we're thinking clearly know that we don't deserve your grace and yet but nevertheless at the cross you relented and you poured your wrath on him that you would forever pour your grace on us and we talk so much about the gospel week in and week out and I don't ever want us to lose that feeling of what it means to pass from death to life of what it means to have said over us it's finished you're free not only not guilty but righteous because he made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we would be the righteousness of God in Christ

Jesus oh my oh my so father we're going to enter as we do each week into a time of remembrance and pray that these moments would be really special as we not out of habit or ritual but we once again remember what we deserve but even more so remember what we've gotten from Jesus forever what we have received by faith in your grace and unconditional love father thank you thank you and God's people said amen