

Exodus 33

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. So tonight, Exodus, if you were to have a title for it, you could, you know, it's the Exodus out of bondage.

But the reason it's an Exodus, it's from bondage to worship. And all of Exodus is about worship. From the time, 400 years after Joseph then is off the scene, 400 years of bondage, a maiden lady.

She keeps her child Moses and he's saved there. And then he grows up in the house of Pharaoh there. He leaves for 40 years and he comes back and he tells Pharaoh, I'm going to take my people out of here for the purpose of worship.

Because that's what God wants from his people and he's going to deliver them for it. In Exodus 24, he's on the edge of a mountain. God's speaking to them and he speaks to them about worship. Then we have Moses.

He goes up to the mountain. He receives the Ten Commandments. He brings it down. Tells it to the people when he goes back. And when he does, they make their own God. They make their own calf.

[0 : 5 9] And the tablets are broken. Why Moses is in a 40-day module on what worship is and what God is teaching him. In those 40 days, people in the valley continue to worship because as humans, we don't have a choice of the matter.

We are going to worship. It's just we'll be directed towards the one true God or directed towards ourselves. And they say we're going to worship ourselves. We're going to create an idol into what we like and we will fashion it ourselves.

And then we come down and God says, I'm going to destroy these people. These stiff-necked people. And then Moses makes a plea for them.

And God says, Moses has a glorious prayer. And that's where we ended in chapter 32. The pastor took us through on Thursday night. And he begs the Lord for the sake of his promises, for the sake of his great name, for the sake of his great mercy, for the sake of his witness to the Egyptians and all nations not to destroy his people.

And God in his mercy withholds and restrains his judging hand. And that's where we ended in chapter number 32. And if there was ever doubt that our prayers are heard from God and make a difference, that is a case study in itself that says God listens to the prayers of his people.

[2 : 1 3] And he tells us to come to them. I'm going to destroy the people. But a mediator in prayer, Moses goes to him and he prays. So chapter 33, we're going to divide up into three sections. The first six verses tells us about the withdrawing of the blessing of his presence.

He says, I'm not going with you. You're going to move forward, protection. I'm going to plant you there, but I'm not going with you. And then the second section, starting verses number 7 down to 11, it says that God continues to meet with Moses.

I'm not meeting with this group of people, but Moses, I'm going to meet with you. Take your tent. Take the tent of the congregation. Leave these stiff-necked people. Go outside the camp. I will still continue to meet with you.

And then last, verses 12 through 21, we're going to see this incredible prayer by Moses as he expresses everything in his heart. And he speaks to God with an intimacy, with a transparency that just brings complete conviction to me.

That makes me think when I'm talking to God, it's so robotic. It's speaking to somebody as if he's so distant. But when you look at the way Moses prays there, you'll see that Moses shares his heart.

[3 : 18] He says, this is what I'm feeling, what I'm thinking, and God does the same thing. And in Moses' prayer, he says, I just want to know you. He says, I don't want to just do something for you.

He's like, I beg you, I have to know you, your character, and your nature. And there's so much for us to learn in this passage. Let's read the first six verses, and then I'll pray for us.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Listen here.

It says, Heavenly Father, I pray that our reaction tonight would be as the children of Israel, saying, Lord, we don't want to move unless we know your presence is real and there.

I thank you for the comforter and the Holy Spirit that indwells every believer. I thank you that we live in a time where we have the constant companion, the helper there, the paraclete that is with us, and the work that we do.

[5 : 01] I thank you, Lord, for the time we do not yield to his work in my life, and I feel so distant. Help us decide we do not want to continue about our days unless we're very much aware of your presence.

Thank you for this word. Thank you for what we can learn about worship. And that is my prayer tonight, is that you will be worshipped from what is said. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

So there's the prayer made by Moses, and then you begin to listen as what God says to them. And if you're a first time reading through the Bible, or maybe you're just reading it and you forget it, and you're thinking, all right, it seems like everything is fine.

He says, there's going to be progress here. He says, I'm going to provide, protect the plant. And God says, I'm going to bring you into the promised land, just like I told you. I'm going to take you up into the promised land.

I'm going to send an angel before you. I'm going to drive out your enemies before you. I'm going to prepare the way. I'm going to protect you, and I am going to plant you in the land.

[6 : 05] So everything sounds really good up until verse number 3, and he says, I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee, in the way.

He says, I will not tolerate your disloyal hearts, and you're going to go as I promised, but if I was there in your midst, as I've been so far, I would destroy you, and my wrath would come, because you have been a rebellious people.

And the thing of most promise that we see here in the book of Exodus, is how the children of Israel respond, is that they're just devastated. They say, well, then just forget it. We don't care about the promised land.

We don't want to move forward. If your presence isn't going to be there with us, we don't want to go. He shows the distance here. He doesn't say, my people, but he says, your people, speaking of Moses.

In verse number 2, he doesn't say, my angel, he says, an angel will go. When he says, my angel is an extension of who he is, but he is distant from them. And he reminds them that we will worship God, his way, or not at all.

[7 : 10] Because in Exodus 32, 23, it says, they told Aaron, they said, make us gods, which shall go before us. Remember that? Moses went up there, and when they did, Aaron's down there, and he collects all the gold jewelry, and they create a God, which they would want to make.

And so, every step along the way, he's been warning them of idolatry. If you watch what he says, when they get close to the promised land, he'll say, let me remind you, when you go into that land, don't worship those false gods.

He's always working at protecting their hearts. And as I said about Israel, it's good that they are devastated. It says that they put off their ornaments. These ornaments that they had been taking to make this false idol, they didn't want anything to do with it.

They didn't want anything fancy anymore. They were just plain people. They had taken them off. 32, in verse 6, it says that they had been drinking and playing, even to the point when Moses and Aaron had come down, they're like, what is going on down here?

It sounds like there's a war going on. There's just a party scene happening, a full-blown idolatry. And now it's a sign of mourning as a funeral. They took off these ornaments.

[8 : 18] They have a contrite heart. They are repentant in what they were doing. They realized that they had sinned against the God of heaven. In India, we were walking down an alleyway, which is how all my stories about India start, isn't it?

It's all alleyways. It's the only way you get anywhere. I don't walk in any alleyways in Cumming, Georgia. But we were going down and taking in all the sights, and things were fun and interesting. But we were going down to one of the spots on the river, the Cedad, and to be moved with compassion.

And just walking along the road, everything was fine. And then we took a turn, and I was walking down this alleyway. And as I did, everything began to get real quiet. And I heard this chanting behind me as they were carrying a dead body.

And I knew I was only, you know, 30, 40 feet in front of them. And everything just changed like that. From laughing and jolly to, this is very serious.

That's what happened. Children of Israel, God's speaking to them. You're going to go. You're going to be planted. All the provisions are going to be made. But I am not going to be with you. And it was as if it was a death sentence.

[9 : 22] Because they knew that they wanted His presence there. Can I tell you that I think that the average American Christian would be happy with this arrangement.

There's plenty of people, and some may even be in the church, who are just looking for the Christian version of the American dream. They would like two weeks of paid vacation time, a nice home, a white picket fence, accomplished children who do not embarrass them in public.

If God is part of that dream, that's cool with them, but it's not really necessary. Divorced from God themselves, they don't see any reason to grant Him anything more than weekend visitation rights with His children.

I wrote that as I was thinking about sending, that we're just people that have just separated ourselves. We really don't care. If God would have set up an arrangement with us and said, all those dreams that you have in your heart for your family, all those personal ambitions that you have, I'm going to let you have those, but you're not going to have My presence.

I'm not going to be involved. I'm afraid that far too many Christians would sign there and say, I'll take that arrangement. You give me what I want and you stay out of it and it'll be fine. Revelation 3 speaks about a church that was functioning where He was on the outside.

[10:35] He said He was not even in the midst of them and they were okay with that. So first of all, we see this where they don't even, whether the presence is going to be withdrawn from them and then they're devastated and then Moses is going to, next here, he's going to respond.

Verse number 7. Please follow along with me when I read here. And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp and afar off from the camp and he called it the tabernacle of the congregation and it came to pass that everyone which sought the Lord went out into the tabernacle of the congregation which was without the camp.

And it came to pass when Moses went out into the tabernacle that all the people rose up and stood every man at his tent and looked after Moses until he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle and the Lord talked with Moses and all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door and all the people rose up and worshipped every man in his tent door and the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto a friend and he turned again into the camp but a servant Joshua the son of Nun a young man departed not out of the tabernacle.

Moses made a tabernacle of the congregation also called the tent of meeting. In one verse of the Bible we see the tabernacle proper being mentioned along with this tabernacle of the congregation.

It's not the tabernacle that will be built with the dimensions but it was something that God made remember the cloud was over them his presence was with them all the time at night and during the day and now this is happening he said I'm removing my presence and he tells them go outside he tells Moses go outside the camp.

[12:18] Now let me walk you through in case you didn't catch it as we were reading it so he takes the tent and he sets it up outside the camp and God's going to meet with him and he says he's going to talk to him as a friend would talk to him and above them there would be this cloud that would signify that God was meeting with them but he would get out of his tent and when he would get out of his tent and he would walk along the road there people would come outside of their tent and they would stand there and show respect which is a real change from what we had a chapter before where they didn't even mention Moses by name they said why does this man brought us out of Egypt and they were very disrespectful now they're starting to regain their respect for the mediator which is what Moses is in this story a foreshadow of our mediator and Jesus Christ and so as he's walking there they're standing out and they're seeing the cloud there and what's happening and they're standing in their tent door and they're worshipping as they look on to the tent of congregation so there's two groups there's those that are in the tent then there's a group of people that come out of their tent and show respect but there's a third group it said those of them here in verse number 7 and it says and he called it the tabernacle of the congregation and it came to pass that everyone which sought the Lord went out into the tabernacle of the congregation have you ever heard it said that you're as close to the Lord as the God as you want to be that he does not put any hindrance there he wants you to come to them and you're as close as you want to be and that's said there figuratively that we're as close to the closest there but here that you are literally as close to worship that is taking place as you want to be you can either stay in your tent you can go to the door or you can say hey Moses where are you going oh I'm going to meet with God count me in

I would make sure that I was outside my door every morning waiting for Moses and Joshua there to go by so he made this tabernacle of the congregation people would stand and watch as they walked by the cloud would cover his tent they knew God meant it for the presence of them but it had been moved outside the camp so this is an act of grace that God is still meeting with Moses and them and he did not remove himself completely Moses was their only chance to regain God's presence and this wasn't because Moses was powerful because as I said he's the mediator Moses was chosen of God for this role he was also up on the mountain when he was up on the mountain communing with God is when the sins were taking place in the valley and when he came down God said Moses I'll still meet with you those stiff neck people I want to destroy them but based upon your prayer and your petition I want to keep them not based upon their good works Moses didn't appeal to him based upon his good works or the people but he appealed to God upon his character and his nature he says God

I agree these are some rotten scoundrels they deserve to be wiped off from the face of the earth and let's start all over he doesn't say God I'm such a good person do this for me he said God based upon who you are you must show mercy upon these people because we're watching and it's a quick change in their attitude and God meets on his terms it took faith for Moses to move outside the camp it took submission to God's word when he said pack up and go outside the camp it took grace extended by God where he said I'm going to continue to meet with Moses here and those are all the things that are necessary for worship worship is only possible because God showed grace to people like you and I who deserve to be destroyed because of our rebellion and by faith we obey what he says and we show our submission to his word and we worship him and those are the necessary things for worship that's why worship can happen in a prison cell in communist Russia when a pastor is thrown in jail that's why it can happen in a hard situation at work when you want to be disobedient to what the word says but you decide to do right because the factors for worship are those things right there people chose their place of worship as I said some stood at the tent others they sought after the

Lord and I would ask you where would you stand how hard do you pursue after that you know in the New Testament it's different Old Testament to the Holy Spirit and dwell the believer like we have it now so the question we have is about yielding to the Holy Spirit's work in our lives how aware are we how sensitive are we about it do we live our days not controlled by the Spirit as he would say in Ephesians being not drunk with wine and excess but being filled with the Spirit meaning that we are aware of his work in this world and we're obedient to him is worship something you can watch from a distance and are there things that are too important for you to follow after him I don't know what it's like and I can't read in the scripture but I just don't understand what would cause people to just say you know I'm just going to hang out back here in the tent I know that God's meeting with people over there but I'm just going to stay here verse number 12 we get to the prayer and Moses said unto the Lord see thou saith unto me bring up this people thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send me yet thou hast said

I knew thee by name and thou hast also found grace in my sight verse number 12 he reminds God he says God you told me that I would get to deliver these people now you're saying that it's going to be an angel I need to know are you talking about me verse 13 now therefore I pray thee if I have found grace in thy sight show me now thy way that I may know thee that I may find grace in thy sight and consider that this nation is thy people and he said my presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest and he said unto him if thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence for where when shall be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight is it not in that thou goest with us so shall we be separated I and thy people from all the people that are upon the face of the earth and the Lord that thou have spoken for they have found grace in my sight and I know thee by name and he said I beseech thee show me thy glory and he said

[18 : 28] I will make all my goodness pass before thee and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy and he said thou canst not the past when my glory passes by that I will put thee in the cliff of the rock and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by and I will take away my hand and thou shalt see my back parts but my face shall not be seen Moses expresses his heart to God in prayer and he does it in a very bold fashion and when he has these audacious claims that he could you evaluate your prayer life could you look back and say when was the last time when you just begged out to God and said God I know there's a million things that I could ask of you but if there's one thing right now that

I have is I want to know you I pray I want to do something great for you God I want to understand how to do things verse number 13 Moses wanted to know God his attributes his character his heart far above anything else Moses tells God that his presence is supreme and they do not want to do anything without it it sure reminds you in the New Testament in Acts chapter number 1 there's a group of disciples that are in the upper room and they're praying and they're waiting and they're told until the Holy Spirit ascends upon the earth do nothing there's really no reason to do anything because nothing of any value will be accomplished until the Holy Spirit comes and they waited and Moses says I don't care that we're getting that promised land I don't care that we're going to get out of this horrible wilderness wondering if your presence isn't there

I don't want it what brings our missionaries the comfort have to leave the presence of God what is it that has you step out and do something of faith when God calls you to do it is that you know in the midst of this you can learn something about God that not stepping out of faith would ever teach you it's always interesting to talk to somebody that went through something whether it was the disease in the family or whether it was a term in North Africa with Aaron it seems that they know something about God that often I don't because in the midst of all of it they're seeing God and they're understanding him and that's our highest pursuit in life is to know him we're told in Philippians is to know God everything else is just a side effect of it that knowing him is what we desire Moses got your minds to God he says your presence is supreme how can there be proof if

I found favor in your sight you don't go with this how are you going to validate that I'm the mediator if you don't come with us people aren't going to know that I was really the mediator that you said that I was in God's response God responds in verse number 14 there he says and he said my presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest and Moses still continues to build his case isn't that interesting that in the middle of it God says Moses I've heard you I'm going to continue to be there but Moses doesn't catch his breath he just keeps going he says God it's so important you ever had that before maybe as parents your kids come to you and they say I really want to do this and you say alright you can do it but they keep going and they're like oh you said that I could do this that's what's happening here with Moses God says in the middle of this Moses I've heard you and I'm going to abide there with the people God promises rest to them he says I've heard you and looked at people and said your sins are forgiven when he says

I can give you rest everybody got aggravated because they said only the God of heaven could do that and he reminds them that I can give you rest nobody else can but I can give you rest a real reminder that he can provide and he alone can and Moses says if that's not good enough that he says God we want your presence it's the most important thing that Moses says show me your glory he says I have to know it and this is how God responds to them he says God says I want to show you all my goodness he says I will bring before you and I will show you all my goodness to pass before thee and Moses is reminded time and time again of the goodness of God despite how you may read into the circumstances God is good what did God want Moses to remember during this time is that God was good and he was going to bring that before the people secondly it says here that I will proclaim my name is that God is going to preach about God is what he says here he says let me tell you about myself and could there be who he is and we have

[24 : 02] God who communicates not only truth to us but he says I let you know who I am he didn't give Moses a manual of how to get out of it he didn't give him a self help book he says Moses I'm going to tell you who I am and all of this and God goes on to say I show mercy on who I want to show mercy to whom I want to show mercy to and this scripture is a great example here to us that God says I'm going to destroy people and then a mediator comes to them and says God don't destroy these people because your character is good and loving and you love these people and you want to be glorified and he says I heard your cry I've heard your prayer and I will show mercy Jonah goes before the Ninevites and they hear the message and when they hear the message they repent and Moses says I knew that if they heard about you they would repent and

I knew if they repented you would forgive them because that's the kind of God that you are you are the kind of God that forgives people that repent and he shows mercy and our God gets to show mercy to whom he wants to show mercy to but we know that because of our mediator in Jesus Christ that when people hear the God's message and they repent he will show mercy to them and you may not like it and somebody who writes many books may not like it but it's his choice to show it that way and we get to be involved in it and so then he goes on to say here that what he is incomprehensible look at verse number 20 it says and he said thou canst not see my face for there shall no man see me and live he says I am good and I want you to remember this I will show mercy to whom I want to show mercy to and then he says

I am this incomprehensible you cannot of who I am you cannot handle me and as a sign of mercy I am not going to show you more than you can handle man how in the world as Christians have we got to a point we think we know enough about God that we can go anywhere we can read our Bible and say I got this if you got it all figured out your head would have exploded because know God but you don't know God you know God like you know the president you know some press releases about him you know his name and you know a few things but you have an opportunity to know him personally to have him as a friend that is closer than any other and to commune with him and we forfeit it so many times for other things Moses last audacious prayers here as he says show me your glory and how does this happen here it's incomprehensible the angels they shield their eyes before the throne is what it says that when they fly around

God they shield their eyes because they are not able to handle it the beatitude says those that are pure in heart those that have believed in Christ we will get to behold his glory 1 Corinthians 12 so we see dimly through a that his glory was veiled in flesh and as we saw Jesus we saw the glory of God and I want to remind you here before I pray that Moses foreshadows our mediator Christ in those days if you were not extremely grateful and extremely respectful to Moses you did not know what just happened you did not realize that you should have been destroyed but there was a man of God who was chosen to be a mediator that went before God and boldly put himself at a place where said God you either destroy me right now or you keep your presence here but I can't live without it that's what he says at the 32 he says if you might as well blot my name out he says if you are not going to abide with my people just blot my name out because

I can't live without your presence Moses loved his people in Hebrews 11 24 and 25 we're told that Moses he chose rather to suffer affliction with his people than enjoy sin for a season he could have lived his life as the son of Pharaoh his daughter but he decided I love my people too much Acts 7 23 it says and he was 40 years old and came into his heart to visit his brethren that God had done something in his heart to take him back he had the nice peaceful life out on the ranch where he was a shepherd but it was in his heart to go back and do something had there been no Moses to plead their cause Israel would have perished Jesus heart and his necessity for his people in John chapter number 17 we hear our mediator praying for us and there's a necessity Hebrews tells us for 9 24 Christ has not entered into the holy place made with hands which are the figures of the true but into the heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us that

[29 : 23] Jesus Christ our mediator went to God in our place and because of that we can enjoy his presence and continue worshipping him Hebrews 7 25 says seeing he liveth to make intercession for them for he ever liveth to make intercession that our savior is our continual mediator for us that he stands there before God and what is his heart let's look at the words of Christ in John chapter number 17 Jesus is there before he goes to the cross the disciples are there he looks up to heaven letting the disciples know that he is talking to God and they are getting to overhear it he says neither I pray for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word which means not just for these disciples in front of me but for George Mize and Paul Deamer and Brett Johnson I am praying for these people Jesus prays that we will get to behold his glory 24 father I will that they also whom thou have given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory which thou has given me for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world he says

I want my people to behold the glory of God and to know you verse 21 that they all may be one as my father art in me and I in thee and also may be one in us he prays for reconciliation as the children of Israel were separated from God and they deserved the wrath of God and the mediator stood there and pleaded for them and he gave the plea and there is reconciliation because God said now I will go with them in verse 14 there is now reconciliation for me because of my mediator Jesus Christ and our reconciliation vindicates the role and the necessity that the world may believe that thou hast sent me Jesus said God if you do not Jesus is praying to God and he says if you don't forgive these people and there is not reconciliation if they can't see your glory then people are going to say that I live my life in vain that I shed my blood and it was of no use and that it had no saving power vindicate your mediator and Moses says the same thing he says God that if you don't do something here you said

I was your mediator I didn't want to do it back in chapter number one I was excited about you delivering the people but I didn't sign up for this job you chose to make me the mediator to foreshadow someday Jesus Christ and we live most of our weeks as if the presence of God makes no difference so when we read in our Bible when we find out that God will not listen to our prayers if we don't have the relationship with the wife that we're supposed to we don't really care because we didn't have anything to say to him in the first place are we devastated by the idea that we would live our lives not enjoying the presence of God if thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence as we pray here would that be your prayer would you say God I don't even want to move from this seat if there's something in my life that is keeping me from enjoying your presence and knowing that the Holy Spirit is working in my life and

I'm not yielding to it and letting you control my life I don't want to move from this seat I don't want to move from this altar unless you can say I will go with you what a poor life we live when we are satisfied to live lives as if we have no mediator Jesus Christ he gave this plea to God and because of that we can have his presence if you knew you had lost the presence of God but you would still reach all the goals you had for your family would you be devastated and I sure hope you say you would be devastated so here practically how do you know if you desire the presence of the Lord in your life as I said we're not in the New Testament where he's moving around in the cloud of fire we're in you can't separate us from the love of God the Holy Spirit lives inside of us you separate us out and we start 120 new vision baptist churches wherever we go and we preach the word because we are equipped with the

Holy Spirit but you have high respect for the mediator do you give your life to talking about Jesus and what he has done for you to provide your reconciliation do they don't realize that Moses was the one that stood between God and them so evaluate where is Jesus in your life where is in your conversation do you have great respect for the mediator and what he has done for you and evaluate your prayer life what is it that fires you up do you desire to see and know God as Moses did is that your driving force would you ever be so audacious and say God I'm flipping through your word and I'm listening to you teach and I see you and it's wonderful and I just want to know you so much God I want to see you that's how the apostle Paul could say I'm kind of caught between the two I enjoy doing ministry here but I can't wait to see God in his full glory when I get out of this body and I can see him and it's not dimly anymore how much do you work at being at places where you know you can learn more about the nature of

[34 : 43] God whether it's at your kitchen table in the morning with an open Bible at a coffee shop over foundations with a friend whether it's in services at the church in conversation with somebody are you talking to them and say what is it you know about our God that you learned from the Bible that you can tell me when Christians get together we ought to be like when you bring somebody in and you're questioning them that's how we ought to talk and say brother Ty what is it you know about God from his word that you can teach me because I'm giving my life to knowing him out the day I would not be devastated because I was too used to living as if there was no Holy Spirit in my life would we be as the children of Israel and say God I do not want to move unless I am fully aware of your presence in my life and we have such a wonderful mediator show respect unto the mediator tonight and thank him for the reconciliation that he gave you and thank him that you do not have to live a life that is void of the presence of

God heavenly father thank you so much for your word thank you for Moses as a mediator we thank you for Jesus as a mediator thank you that we have been reconciled and that we don't have to live lives void of your presence forgive us how we be willing to live such a meaningless life that would not have your presence there and that we would not be aware of it so I ask that you remove sin in the hearts of my brothers and sisters Lord in my life Lord so we can be controlled and understand what it is that you want to do in and through our lives location contact information and more audio and video recordings