

"Entering into the Presence of God"

Part 2

Exodus 19

Introduction: As we return to Exodus 19, we are looking at Israel at Mount Sinai. It is here that God will give to them the Mosaic Law. There are 57 chapters of the Bible devoted to what took place here at Sinai. In this text we are looking at Israel's requirements for approaching the Mountain. The common person of Israel was not permitted to enter the presence of God.

Hebrews 7:19

¹⁹ *For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

Hebrews 10:1-4

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

² *For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

³ *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.*

⁴ *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

Israel therefore could not enter the presence of God. They could only approach the Mountain while Moses climbed the Mountain to meet with God.

We have a privilege that Israel did not have in that we can enter to the presence of God. The blood of Jesus Christ washed away our sin and now we are covered in His righteousness and for this reason we can come to the throne anytime.

Hebrews 4:16

¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

As we then look into Exodus 19, we see how we are to approach God as we look at how Israel was to approach the Mountain.

I. The Conditions for Communion

Last week we looked at two attitudes which we should exercise as we come to God.

1. **Be willing to obey.**

Notice Exodus 19:5

2. **Be willing to listen.**

Notice Exodus 19:9

Before we move on to our next point there is yet something here that we need to see.

Notice Exodus 19:5-8

Israel was told to walk in obedience to God's Law, but we know they failed miserably. In verse 8 we see that they were certainly willing. They had every intention but they did not understand the flesh/sin nature.

Application:

When I was preparing this study, my mind went to the Garden of Gethsemane and what Jesus said to His disciples.

Matthew 26:37-41

³⁷ And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

³⁸ Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

³⁹ And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

⁴⁰ And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

*⁴¹ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: **the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.***

This is a needed reminder to each of us. Our flesh is weak, and he is corrupt. We are living in a time when many people feel weary and exhausted just because of all that is happening in the world. We need to recognize what is happening because there is a danger within all of this. The constant negative news and the dark gloomy reporting will wear you down and it will cause you to drop your guard.

Galatians 6:9

⁹ *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

It is very important that we stay strong in the faith.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

² *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

³ *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

The flesh does not like to battle through weariness. He will fight against our spirit's desire to stay strong. If permitted to lead, the flesh will carry us away in search of a life of ease and pleasure wherever it can be found, in an attempt to escape the pressure of staying true to God. WE MUST BE DISCIPLINED! I know from my own life that what ever a man WANTS to do he will find a way to do it. So, if I really want to be true to God, I will exercise the discipline to stay true. If I really want to satisfy the flesh I will find a way to do it.

The battle with the flesh happens every single day and we must be aware of this. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Romans 13:14

¹⁴ *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

3. We must come to Him with consecrated hearts.

Notice Exodus 19:10-11, 14

The word "sanctify" in these verses means "to set apart, or to consecrate". They were to come to the Mountain with clean hearts and clean clothes. We see the importance of this in the command to wash their clothes. Let us remember that water was very scarce in the wilderness and when water is not plentiful then the last thing you would do would be to wash your clothes. You would save all the water you could for drinking. So, when God gave the command to wash their clothes, we can understand how important this was to God.

Application:

When we come to God we too must be consecrated. Our sin needs to be confessed and there can be no practicing sin in our lives.

Psalm 66:18

¹⁸ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

John 9:31

³¹ Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

It is very important that when we come to God we come with clean hearts.

4. We must come to Him with a deep reverence.

Notice Exodus 19:12, 21-25

When Israel approached the Mountain, they were not to so much as even touch the Mountain, or they would die. This is how deep and profound their reverence was to be for their God. His holiness demanded this kind of approach.

Our View of God Today

These last two points need so desperately to be proclaimed and understood within the body of Jesus Christ today. Many in the church have such a cheap view of God today. I had a lady tell me one time that when she gets to heaven, she has some questions for God because of what He has allowed here to experience. She basically said that when she stands in His presence, she will let Him know how she feels. This attitude is nothing but arrogance! This lady and others have lost sight (if they even had it to begin with) of the holiness of God.

Today we hear people talk about God as their "buddy" or the "Great Big Daddy Upstairs". All of this cheapens and degrades the holiness of God. We certainly do not see this view of God in Exodus 19. God tells them, "DON'T CROSS THAT LINE! DON'T GET TOO CLOSE! WASH YOUR CLOTHES BEFORE YOU APPROACH THE MOUNTAIN! BE READY TO OBEY AND HEAR WHAT I SAY! DON'T BE CARELESS WITH YOUR APPROACH OR YOU WILL DIE!"

Notice the words from the hymn "**Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise**":

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,*

*most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.*

*Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.*

*Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render; O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!*

Let us notice Isaiah's reaction when he saw the glory of the Lord.

Isaiah 6:1-5

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

² *Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.*

³ *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

⁴ *And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*

⁵ *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

Let me show you Ezekiel's reaction when he was in the presence of the Lord.

Ezekiel 1:28

²⁸ *As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.*

We see John's reaction in Revelation 1 when He was able to see Jesus in all His glory.

Revelation 1:17

¹⁷ And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

These reactions concerning the holiness of God are extremely rare today. Today God is seen as our "buddy" or "pal". He is treated as though He is our bellboy to get us what we want. He is none of these. He is the Creator God, the Sovereign God, the Eternal God, the Only Wise God, He is Master, and He is LORD!

Let me share with you the words of an unknown writer:

"The heaviest obligation upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him. In all her prayers and labors this should have first place. We do the greatest service to the next generation of Christians by passing on to them undimmed and undiminished the noble concept of God which we received from our Hebrew and Christian fathers of generations passed."

Before we end tonight, I want to consider one more point.

Why Did God Meet with Israel on Mt. Sinai?

The Bible tells us of two reasons.

1. To establish a healthy fear of God.

Notice Exodus 20:20

This is exactly what the church needs today. We need a meeting with God so that we develop a healthy fear because this will keep the church from sin. Any time one of God's children sin wilfully they have blocked out their fear of the Lord. We can all do this, and we all have done it. When we actively engage in sin, we have deliberately put aside what we know to be the Truth about God. We suppress the knowledge we have, and we rationalize by lying to ourselves and saying, "God won't mind".

The healthy fear of God is missing in the lives of many believers today. Let us pray that God will embed this fear deep within our hearts. Let us grasp the Truth that God is holy, and He hates sin. Let us echo the words of the Psalmist:

Psalm 119:103-105

¹⁰³ How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴ Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

¹⁰⁵ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

2. To give to Israel His written Word.

Exodus 24:12-13

*¹² And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and **I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written;** that thou mayest teach them.*

¹³ And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

How wonderful is it that God gave His people His written instructions to obey? This is the first time in all of history that God wrote down His Word. Until the time of Moses, the written Word of God did not exist. Now let us stop and realize that we have these written Words in our hands. But too often we take for granted what we have. I want to close with a story a Bible teacher:

"Back before the collapse of the atheistic Soviet Union, John Van Diest represented the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association at the Moscow Book Fair. The authorities had granted them reluctant permission to hand out a limited number of Russian language New Testaments, and long lines of people waited in line to receive a copy. When the supplies were exhausted, one desperately disappointed man asked if he might have one of the empty boxes that had once held those Testaments.

"But there is nothing in there!" John protested. "The Bibles are all gone!" With tears glistening in his eyes, the man replied, "Then I at least want the box." The Bible was so precious to this man that he treasured the cardboard box that held the Scriptures. May our eyes be opened to the astonishing privilege that is ours to hold the COMPLETE written Word of God in our very hands."

Conclusion:

What can we learn from Exodus 19 that we can carry with us?

- a. **To regularly meet with God, you need a place.**
- b. **We need to be prepared.**
- c. **To hear from God, we need the Scriptures.**