

**Friday, April 7, 2023 • Read Exodus 33:1–6**

*Questions from the Scripture text: To whom does Yahweh speak in v1? What does He tell him to do? With whom? To which land? Whom would He send before Moses (v2)? To do what? What sort of land is it (v3)? But what (Whom!) will they not have? Why not? Who heard this (v4)? What kind of news did they consider it to be? How did they respond? What did they refuse to do? Why (v5)? What had Yahweh said about them? What had He said that He would not do? What does He tell them to do? For what purpose? So what does Israel do (v6)? Where?*

**How should people respond to material prosperity without spiritual prosperity?** Exodus 33:1–6 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **material prosperity without spiritual prosperity is such a pitiable condition that the one who is in it ought to mourn.**

There is a great miracle of grace in these six verses. The people who had just been unrestrainedly (cf. 32:25) giving themselves to self-indulgence of pleasure (cf. 32:6) now grieve over the idea of having material prosperity alone.

The Lord is still promising them a land flowing with milk and honey (v3a) that He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v1). But now that He says that He will not go up in their midst (v3b), the people actually grieve. What a mercy; such a spiritual response certainly did not come from them! May the Lord grant to us to value His presence, to value spiritual prosperity, so much that we would consider it piteous and grievous if we were to prosper in all other ways but lose fellowship with Him.

The putting off of the ornaments at very least indicates that they refuse to celebrate or be celebrated if they will not have the Lord Himself. These particular ornaments are "cousins" to the golden calf (cf. 32:2–3), and the verb for stripping them in v6 is the same as used for "plundering" the Egyptians in 3:22 and 12:36. They are recognizing that they have been as wicked before God as the Egyptians had been and that they deserve the same end.

This brings the "that I may know what to do to you" into sharp contrast. For, the Lord shows them mercy. Not because of anything in them (they deserve just as the Egyptians did). He just displays mercy.

How do your habits show the relative value that you place upon material prosperity vs. spiritual prosperity? What is revealed by the way that you have responded to when you lost the sense of the presence of God?

*Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving us enough sensitivity toward You to desire Your presence. Forgive us for the self-indulgence in which we are often happy without it. Go with us, we pray, throughout all our life in Jesus Christ, AMEN!*

ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH73C "In Sweet Communion, Lord, with Thee"

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Exodus 33 verses 1 through 6. These are God's words. Then you always said to Moses depart and go up from here. You and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt. To the land of, which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob saying to your descendants, I will give it and I will send my angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites and the Hittites, and the Perizzites from the land.

Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. I will not go up in your midst. Last, I consume you on the way. For you are a stiff-necked people. And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned. And no one put on his ornaments. For you all had said to Moses say to the children of Israel.

You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now, therefore take off your ornaments. That I may know what to do to you. So, the children of Israel, stripped themselves of their ornaments. By Mount Horeb. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent word.

A word in which there is really a great miracle of grace. Because the people of Israel, who have been living by sight and not by faith, who have been indulging themselves and glad to have other things. Rather than the Lord himself or to have the Lord, according to their imaginations, in the way is that they have even invented rather than having the Lord himself in the way that he actually gives himself to us to really have him.

In this passage. They are actually unwilling to have everything else. If they cannot have the Lord himself, His word. Has come. By Moses and that has rebuked them and the Spirit is making it to penetrate their consciences. There's a little bit of a warning there for us to because we know what these people are going to be like even after they leave.

Mount Sinai. And that they are all going to end up falling in the wilderness. For their sin. And so we see here, a work of God's grace. A way in which that grace worked and penetrates, and then a warning. That there are works of mercy that God does.

That may accompany those who either perish eternally in their sin, or perhaps, or saved eternally, but have a little effect. Temporally something that we're going to. Consider not next week. But in two weeks time, also in second Kings. With manna. Who's conversion is not described in second Kings, although it is in second Chronicles.

And one of the reasons is that although he himself, is brought to faith and makes reforms. The people still are not restrained. And his son who had grown up with, in the days of his wickedness. Um, that sun is as wicked as he was before his conversion. But, Israel is a reminder here to us, the God's, great mercy to them in these six verses as a reminder here to us.

Of. How, how far? A people how far a person. Individually. Also, uh, can slide or even. Having had. His conscience quickened, but not having come. To genuine saving faith. How? How that will testify against him at the end? There's no doubt it did for many of those who fell in the wilderness.

So let us see the work the way of that work. And, once I was introducing it, I gave you more of the third point. Um, the warning. The work. The Lord gives them. Uh, soft hearts towards himself, he tells them he's going to give them everything else that he has promised.

That is going to give them the land. He's going to expel. The the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, it's gonna accept expel, the the wicked from the land.

He's going to make the land productive for them. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. Just go ahead.

Have everything that Uh, that your heart's desire in this world. Um, and there are, of course, a great multitude of them. So, all of the promises that the the three great promises to To abraham while the fourth is that old nations would be blessed. And then But the the three great promises were that he would multiply him and they are multiplied.

That he would give them the land. And the Lord is saying, i'm gonna give you the land. Um, but the the great promise of all As i will be your god and you will be my people. And that one, they are not. That they are not having. Here, when he says, i will not go up in your midst.

And they do not say, oh, that's wonderful news. Not only are we going to have? The, the people that we are now and the land that is flowing with milk and honey. That is able not only to sustain us, but to give us earthly comfort and pleasure. But even god is not going to be in the middle of us so that we won't be consumed along the way.

There are many, who Don't like the presence of god. Because they like their sin. And they would rather not be bothered by the word of god and by the the awareness of their guilt or the awareness of their uncleanness, They're quite happy to have. Distant ideas of god if they can just have the stuff of this world.

But god in his mercy. To a people who just a moment ago in the passage just a couple days ago. Were full of idolatry and wickedness. And now they're saying If we can't have God. Then all the rest of it doesn't matter to us. What does it profit us if we gain the whole world?

But lose our souls.

And there are many. Who live and, and attend church their whole life and they never come to that conclusion. Not only do they not get converted? But they, they never think about how. If they have everything else but they don't have god, then they have nothing. And so this is this is a great mercy.

To the nation of israel, that they are thinking this way. They are a stiff necked people. The lord says in verse 3 and they are more morning. In verse 5, because the lord. Has said that they are a stiff. Necked people. They're actually. Upset at the consequences of their sin.

That the lord will not go up with that now. There is. Some extent of their neediness of his going up with them. After all, if you look at verse, Um, To it says, Uh, That the lord. Must drive out the canadianite and so forth. But he says he's going to send his angel to do it.

So this isn't really the people of israel saying, we need god with us to do all the things. God said he will do all the things.

This is. This is the people of israel. Recognizing that the lord himself. Is the greatest of the gifts. So that's the work. Here is The way of the work, the way of the work is, The lord reminding them. That he consumes the wicked. He uses his word and he uses.

Um his word in a correcting rebuking way, lest i consume you For you are a stiff. Necked people. You are stiff neck people. I could come up in your midst in a moment and consume you And so, the lord Uses his word to rebuke them. He reminds them. That.

It is impossible to be a wicked person. And be in the midst and have the lord. In your presence. Now, this is a problem. Because the lord is everywhere.

And whatever. Whatever we enjoy in our few years. In this world, we will spend eternity. In the presence of the lord, and of his glory. Remember, second Thessalonian one second best Thessalonians one. We wouldn't be in the presence of his favorable glory. We wouldn't be in the presence of a glory that we enjoy.

But everyone, those Who have been justified by christ? Who loves god, infinitely and perfectly and who have been conformed to christ to have his love for God and his enjoyment for god. They will enjoy his glory with christ forever. But those who are hardened. In their rejection of god's glory in their worship of the created thing rather than the creation, their delighting in themselves, they're rejecting of not just god himself but all of his god law.

They too. Will exist forever in the presence. Of the glorious. God. And they will be aware of him. And they will receive that destruction. That comes from him and from his glory, Forever. And so god's word comes. And, Invades. Their self-deceived ignorant way of thinking that had led to that false worship at the base of the mountain, and that's what we need.

If we are going to have god working us, we need that work to come in the way that he does that work. With his word. Invading our false thoughts, our ignorant, superficial self-pleasing thoughts, that ignore him as the great reality. Which we might be able to do for a time of self-deception in this life, but we will not be able to ignore him as the great reality of existence.

When we leave this world. And so, his word comes. And it cuts through, and He gives us light to understand his word as the way he does his work. This is one of the great reasons for you to read the bible and think about the bible for us to have family worship in the bible.

For us to come, especially on the lord's day in the assembly and have the preaching of the word, which is especially attended by his power. And to always be praying, lord. Don't let me hear your word or read your word. The way i read or hear anything else. Use your word to to cut through myself, deception, and my ignorance and my focus on creature, things created things and forgetfulness of you.

Use your word. To do the work in me. So that If, if you could take A. Feast to yahweh. Who brought us out of Egypt before a golden calf and sitting down to eat and drink and rising up to play people with their, with their wicked reveling and dancing.

If you could take, That people. Who before your mountain with your servant on the mountain, getting your word because you have made covenant with them. And they were ignorant of you and said, as for this Moses, we don't know what if you can take them. And make them aware of you, above all things and desire you over against everything else put together.

Surely o, lord, you could do that for me. Because, i know, i haven't been thinking that way, and i know, i haven't been living that way. You're the one who's given me a desire for it? Will you not? Help me by your word. To grow in that desire. To love god.

Himself. There was your addressing god, to love, you yourself, and to lighten, you yourself more than everything else. And so that's the way that he does his work. He comes with a word and sometimes. It's that correcting work. Sometimes we need to hear that correcting word, that cuts us to the heart.

And producers in us that longing for him. That is answered in the gospel.

And then there's the warning. The warning for them was. What has been done to egic? Is what you deserve to have. Done to you. The the word for ornaments here is related to Some of the things that they took from the eject, the egyptians And the word for stripped in verse 6.

They stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount. Horeb is actually the word that is used of plundering the ejections. Once in the lord's, predicting it to Moses all the way back at the bush. And once when it actually happens, As they're about to leave egypt. And so, the, the description here is Basically, of israel.

Plundering themselves of their ornaments. And recognizing that they are no better. Than egypt. And so they feel they're neediness of the lord here. Well, we also i think need to take the same morning Because we saw, Or we will see we have seen because we've read it before, but if we continue We discover that all of these israelites who had this moment of repentance, Who had this?

This spiritual revival as it were and were continued to see that. In the next. Passage. They fell in the wilderness. Their hearts are turned to their grumbling. And we remember the scripture that tells us let him who thinks he stands, take heed, lest he false? And when the apostle says that in first corinthians 10, the primary example that he's using Is israel in the wilderness and israel at sinai and israel.

When? They sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. And you have to remember that when the spirit, when the apostle, by the spirit, Quotes from refers to a portion of the Old Testament. He expects us Uh, to consider it in its context. And we can't rest on previous spiritual experience of god.

Thinking, oh yes, it was. Yeah, it's such a neat thing that that one time when i realized that god has worth more than everything else and then just slouch back into worldly living You remember how that? Passage ends whether you eat or drink, or whatever, you do, do all unto the glory of god.

And that's not just do it the right way. So everyone can see the difference between a christian and a non-Christian, i'm going to give God glory. No, that's not really how it works. God's already glorious, isn't he? And so there's an enjoyment of the glory of god and a dependence on the glory of god every bit as much as there's a devotion unto.

The glory of god. So that it would be he who we enjoy in his goodness to give us food to eat and he whom we enjoy. Uh, in his goodness to give us wine to drink and he whom we enjoy and his goodness to give us whatever labor we have to do in this world.

And who gives us our marriage to our particular wife. If you're a manner, a husband, if you're a woman and he gives me these particular children and who joins me to these this particular congregation And so i see his goodness everywhere and his presence everywhere. And i look to his spirit Uh, not just that.

You know, i don't just do it unto his glory by doing the right thing. I do it unto his glory by the presence of his spirit applying to me the character of his son by whom. And by which I do the right thing. That's doing things to the gory of god.

In a right response to and appropriation of the gospel in my life.

So that we don't rest on. Former works of the Lord or former moments when our conscience was quickened. That the one whom the lord is saving will continue. To take heed, you will watch and pray that he doesn't enter into temptation. He who thinks he stands will take, heed lusty falls.

Always. Refreshing and looking to and needing the presence of the Lord. Not say, well, i had his presence once. Had a great deliverance once. And now he has given me the land and the milk and honey and the defeat of the enemies. And i can be satisfied without him.

They did come to. Come back to their wickedness of Um, Of fleshliness and despising, the lord didn't they? And so there's a warning here. That this is a work that we need God to do by the word, which is the way that he does it, and we need to keep, we need him to keep doing it.

That he who began the work. Will continue to complete it. Until the day of the lord jesus christ. So let's ask the spirits to bless to us. This portion of his word even rejoicing. That this is how he does his work. Our father in heaven, we do pray. Then for the Continued work of your spirit.

We thank you. For your great mercy to israel that you turned them so quickly. And quickened their consciences and made them to perceive. Your comparative worth to everything else that they were desiring and delighting in. When we pray O Lord that we would have the ability to perceive that that we would see you as Uh, better than all of your creation and The one whose goodness we enjoy in anything that has actually good.

So that we would be unwilling to have everything else and everything else. If we don't have you with it, And we do pray that your spirit would use your word to this part of your word, all the parts of your word that we read and hear together and consider together, especially when we come and sit under it preach and i pray.

Oh, lord, that you would help me and couple days time when it comes time to preach this word in the afternoon of the lord's day. That you would work in my family then and the whole congregation then that you would work in us now by your spirit. That we would be able to see and embrace your all surpassing worth.

And that your presence would be that which is good for us. That knowing that there is nothing in heaven. That we have but you or anything else on earth. That we desire besides you. We would define goodness. As having the lord near to us having you near to us oh lord.

And so we pray that you would do that work by your word that you would. Your spirit would be taking the things that we hear and consider. And that, that has work would be living and active in us and sanctifying us by your truth. Your words truth And especially lord that you would make us to heed the warning.

That we would not become. Complacent and unwatchful in our spiritual lives. That if we eat we come and we do it unto your glory enjoying you depending upon you devoted to you and when we drink we come and we do it to your glory. Our work, our recreation. Everything.

Oh, lord. Do this work in us, we ask in jesus name. Amen.