

Camped in Front of the Mountain

5.30.2021

Exodus Series

Message 16

Exodus 19:1–25 (CSB)

19 In the third month from the very day the Israelites left the land of Egypt, they came to the Sinai Wilderness. **2** They traveled from Rephidim, came to the Sinai Wilderness, and camped in the wilderness. Israel camped there in front of the mountain.

3 Moses went up the mountain to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain: "This is what you must say to the house of Jacob and explain to the Israelites: **4** 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. **5** Now if you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is mine, **6** and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.' These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites."

7 After Moses came back, he summoned the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. **8** Then all the people responded together, "We will do all that the Lord has spoken." So Moses brought the people's words back to the Lord.

9 The Lord said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear when I speak with you and will always believe you." Moses reported the people's words to the Lord, **10** and the Lord told Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. They must wash their clothes **11** and be prepared by the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. **12** Put boundaries for the people all around the mountain and say: Be careful that you don't go up on the mountain or touch its base. Anyone who touches the mountain must be put to death. **13** No hand may touch him; instead he will

be stoned or shot with arrows and not live, whether animal or human. When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they may go up the mountain."

14 Then Moses came down from the mountain to the people and consecrated them, and they washed their clothes. **15** He said to the people, "Be prepared by the third day. Do not have sexual relations with women."

16 On the third day, when morning came, there was thunder and lightning, a thick cloud on the mountain, and a very loud blast from a ram's horn, so that all the people in the camp shuddered. **17** Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

18 Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke because the Lord came down on it in fire. Its smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently. **19** As the sound of the ram's horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him in the thunder.

20 The Lord came down on Mount Sinai at the top of the mountain. Then the Lord summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and he went up. **21** The Lord directed Moses, "Go down and warn the people not to break through to see the Lord; otherwise many of them will die. **22** Even the priests who come near the Lord must consecrate themselves, or the Lord will break out in anger against them."

23 Moses responded to the Lord, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, since you warned us: Put a boundary around the mountain and consecrate it." **24** And the Lord replied to him, "Go down and come back with Aaron. But the priests and the people must not break through to come up to the Lord, or he will break out in anger against them." **25** So Moses went down to the people and told them.

1. A Promise fulfilled.

A. Moses' arrival to the Mountain was a fulfillment of a promise.

1. Ex 3:12, when Moses encountered God at the bush, God said that the sign of God's presence and faithfulness would be Moses' return to this spot.

2. Throughout Exodus 19, we are reminded that God is a promise keeping God.

3. He promised Moses to bring him back here from Egypt, and He did.

B. God reminds Israel of how he had provided for them and cared for them throughout this journey.

1. So far, Israel has done nothing to deserve this:
2. This has been all God to this point.
3. It was God's grace that brought Israel to this mountain.
4. It was God's grace that led Israel to God's presence.
5. This teaches us that, **Grace precedes holiness.**

C. One of the dangers of being a Christian for a long-time is it is easy to forget how sinful we used to be.

1. Or for those who gave their lives to Jesus at an early age, it is easy to minimize how sinful we could have been.
2. For myself, I've never drank alcohol, or cheated on my wife or my taxes.
 - a. Julie and I saved ourselves for marriage.
 - b. We have avoided a lot of the big traps that mark many of our youthful years.
 - c. However, I am constantly reminded that I am in as much need of God's grace as the next person.
3. **We must never minimize our own, individual, need for God's grace.**
 - a. It is by God's grace that I can get up in the morning.
 - b. It is by God's grace that I go to work and earn a living.
 - c. It is by God's grace that I live.
 - d. We are on dangerous ground when we forget about Grace.

2. In this encounter with Moses, God summarizes His actions thus far.

19:4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

3-parts to God's actions so far.

A. #1. You saw what I did to the Egyptians.

1. Deliverance from sin is always the result of God's power.

2. We fail ourselves when we believe we save ourselves.

a. Willpower is never the answer to sin.

b. You may break the power of destructive habits and behaviors through discipline, diets, and self-control but you cannot break the power of sin without Jesus.

3. Israel was not powerful enough to free herself from Egypt, but God was.

a. Israel's salvation came to pass because of God's actions.

b. God brought Israel out of Egypt.

c. For all of us, our sin life was our own personal Egypt.

d. And it was not by your striving or working that saved you, it was by the blood of Jesus.

e. Only Jesus can break the yoke of sin.

B. #2. God carried them on Eagle's wings.

1. The eagle is a fierce bird of prey; it attacks its enemies the way God attacked Egypt. It is also a bird of rescue.¹

2. Eaglets stay in the nest for about 100 days before the eagle stirs up the nest, knocking them out so they learn to fly.

¹ Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 493.

3. If the baby struggles in flight, the mature bird swoops down and rescues it by carrying it on its back.

4. Israel was free, but helpless.

a. They still needed God's help, protection, and provision.

b. When we first are saved, we are particularly helpless and needy.

c. Often, God shows up in amazing ways for new Christians, demonstrating His care and help.

C. #3. God drew Israel to Himself.

1. This desiring of a close relationship is God's initiative.

2. It is God who drew Israel to the Mountain and it is God who draws us to himself.

a. No one comes to God unless God invites them.

b. Thankfully, through Jesus, God draws all men unto Him.

c. John 12:32 (CSB)

³²As for me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself."

D. This activity of God is all Grace.

1. What I mean is that it isn't deserved or earned.

2. Christianity is not about what I can do for God, but what God has done for me.

a. He made available the escape from sin.

1. When I was trapped in my Egypt, God delivered me.

2. When I was lost in darkness, it was Jesus who brought light.

3. When I was stuck in the pit, the miry clay, Jesus rescued me.

b. It was God who made access to His presence.

1. Here in Exodus, only certain people could approach God.

2. But through Jesus, we have access that the Old Testament saints didn't have yet.

Hebrews 4:16 (CSB)

¹⁶Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

c. It was God who provides healing, provision, wisdom, and hope.

d. All good gifts come from God.

3. Exodus 19 reminds us that [The Grace of God has purpose.](#)

⁵Now if you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, *you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is mine,* ⁶*and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.* These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites."

A. God delivered Israel on purpose.

1. Long before, God chose Israel for a larger purpose.

2. That purpose would not be fulfilled in Egypt.

3. As long as Israel served Pharaoh, they could not serve God.

B. But now, Israel camps before God.

1. God gives them an opportunity like no other:

2. Listen and obey me, and you will be God's kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

a. This was a unique opportunity, made only to Israel.

b. God intended for the world to know God through the ministry of Israel.

c. God intended to bless the world through the Jewish people.

d. In this way, they would be a kingdom of priests.

4. So how does it apply for us?

C. God saved you on purpose, for a purpose.

1. When we give our lives to Jesus, it isn't so that Jesus will rescue you from hell.

2. Look at how Peter applies Exodus 19 to our lives as Christians:

1 Peter 2:9–10 (CSB)

⁹But you are **a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises** of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

D. We are brought to God, through Grace, so that we may proclaim praise:

1. We are brought to God so that we may represent Him to the nations.

a. This is one of the reasons we take missions seriously here at Licking A/G.

b. God has called us not only to bless America but to bless the world.

2. We are brought to God so that His purposes may be fulfilled in us and through us.

3. When we limit God's grace to a "get out of hell free" card, we miss God's purpose for loving us.

4. God's purpose for bringing Israel to this mountain can be summed up like this:

A. God brought Israel to the mountain so they could know Him.

1. The people of Israel had seen the plagues of God against Egypt.
2. The people of Israel walked through the Red Sea.
3. The people of Israel drank water from the rock and ate bread from heaven.

B. Even though they had seen the power of God, they hadn't yet met Him.

1. Ex. 19:17 ¹⁷Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

2. *It is possible to partake in the blessings of God and the power of God without being in relationship with God.*

a. Jesus told us that there would be people who healed in God's name yet are not known by Him.

b. Our nation has participated in the blessings of God without having a relationship with Him.

c. Scripture teaches that it "rains on the just and the unjust". Both experience God's provision.

3. **God's power is not the same as God's essence.**

a. The other day, I received a letter from the White House, telling me about a check I received 2 months ago.

a. My participation with that letter is not evidence that I have a relationship with the President.

b. In my office are some autographs from famous baseball players, but that does not mean that I know them.

b. Many in the crowds with Jesus heard the words and saw the miracles and yet did not follow Him.

c. Israel saw the fire, heard the voice, and tasted the provision and still disobeyed and rebelled.

d. Participating in God's blessings is not the same as knowing God personally.

4. There are many people today yearning for supernatural power apart from a relationship with God.

a. People are captivated by the allure of horoscopes but do not desire a relationship with God.

b. People are captivated by paranormal and strange science.

c. We desire empowerment without holiness.

d. As we look toward the future, many will be allured by the Antichrist who offers a supernatural power without the relational and holiness demand of God.

C. As I sense God drawing people to Himself, my prayer is that we do not miss this opportunity.

1. Do not waste the access that Jesus' blood has provided.

2. Do not waste God's promises or God's grace.

3. May we not live your days at the foot of God's holy mountain, and refuse to enter into His presence.

a. Has anyone ever been on a long-trip?

b. While on that trip, you came close to a monument or landmark but didn't make the time or effort to visit?

1. Julie and I went to England, but never made it to London.

2. I have been to the gates of both Disney land and Disney world but never bought the ticket to go inside.

c. God is drawing all of us closer to Him, but many of us are refusing to enter.

Close: Today we are reminded:

- A. It was by God's grace that you have come this far.
 - 1. It is not by your goodness, hard-work, or clean-living.
 - 2. God's grace is the source of all good-things.
 - 3. When we forget that Grace precedes holiness, we fall into the trap of religion.

- B. Second, we are reminded that God has given us access to Himself.
 - 1. But are we taking advantage of the opportunity?
 - 2. Are we drawing nearer and closer.
 - 3. Are you noticing moments where you want to pray, or read your Bible, or worship but pushing them aside?
 - 4. Has God brought you to the foot of the mountain, but you are refusing to come any closer?

- C. Today is a great time to respond to God's grace and salvation.
 - 1. If you have never given your life to Jesus, but would like to, I want to pray with you in a moment.
 - 2. Maybe you find yourself not living for God the way you want to or should. I would like to pray for you to draw closer.