

Series Calling us Out to Call us in Living in the presence of the Most High [Exodus 40:33-38]

We come to the end of Exodus. A constant reminder that God calls His people out to draw them into His presence.

“Now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read; which goes on forever; and which every chapter is better than the one before. –CS Lewis in the Last Battle (final page of the chronicles of Narnia series).

What would you rather have, God’s blessing without His presence, or God’s presence without His blessings? How is your stated preference reflected in your prayers and in the choices you make in life? –Tony Merida

[Exodus 40:33-38]

The Lord calls me to faithfulness (Exod. 40:33)

Ex. 40:33 Next Moses set up the surrounding courtyard for the tabernacle and the altar and hung a screen for the gate of the courtyard. *So Moses finished the work.*

God calls us out of our Exodus (deliverance) to make us faithful. The Lord God does not call us to be people of faith but to be people of faithfulness. In addition, the Lord did not send His Son Jesus Christ as our substitutionary atonement to leave us in our sin, our wilderness, and our pre-Christ difficulty.

Over and over again we see in this passage that Moses was faithful in completion. **Look at the narrative and find the full obedience of Moses (40:16, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32, and 33).** What is the purpose of these oft repeated refrains? Should we not get the overall picture the first time? The Lord is impressing on our hearts that **Obedience > Sacrifice.**

At the age of 21, I was radically saved while lying in Charity Hospital of New Orleans not knowing if I was going to live the next twenty-four hours because of a serious head wound. A deacon of the church I grew up in, put his finger inches from my face and said without apology, “**Boy, obedience is better than sacrifice.** If you were obedient to your mom, you would not be sacrificing your life here in this hospital!” That night I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life and woke up the next morning with a commitment to live the rest of my life as a born again Christian. – Fred Luter

We often make heroes over those who “sacrifice” so much and follow Christ to the bush of Africa. And we pray prayers of the same. We wait for the day that Christ asks us to “sacrifice.” Rather, God is calling us to faithful presence.

Jesus sacrificed for you so you can now live in obedience to Him.

So why is obedience important? **And what does obedience have to do with the presence of God in my life?**

Jesus reminds us of this application. In the Gospel of Mathew, Jesus calls the disciples and those in attendance unbelieving and rebellious. Why? Because of their “smallness of faith.” So they had faith it was just small. So we as people of Christ should not long for just a small faith. **Small faith** leads to rebuke and correction.

Matt. 17:14 When they reached the crowd, a man approached and knelt down before Him. ¹⁵ “Lord,” he said, “have mercy on my son, because he has seizures and suffers severely. He often falls into the fire and often into the water. ¹⁶ I brought him to Your disciples, but they couldn’t heal him.”

Matt. 17:17 Jesus replied, “You unbelieving and rebellious generation! How long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.” ¹⁸ Then Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and from that moment the boy was healed.

Matt. 17:19 Then the disciples approached Jesus privately and said, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

Matt. 17:20 “Because of your **little faith**,” He told them. “For I assure you: If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

I have often heard people say, “just have faith.” Rather, the Lord our God empowers us and delivers us into his presence to be **faithful**. God gives you everything you need to have faith and be faithful. **Faithfulness always follows faith**. And so this morning we must ask Father, what is our work? And let us finish the work you have set for us.

This is the power of Christ in your life. The Lord saves you by faith alone. He empowers you to life faithfully. So that we may finish the work has for us. **Be a finisher!**

The Lord Invites me to enter His presence (40:34-35)

Ex. 40:34 The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

We see in the faithfulness and obedience of Moses this truth. Your **Obedience does not equal uninterrupted access** to God the Father.

We have similar Homophones working in this narrative. The first **וַיִּכְלֶה** means to finish or complete. So Moses way^ekal “completed” the work. And following the obedience of the prophet, we see that Moses

was not able to come into the tent of meeting. So Moses was not וְלֹא־יָכֹל or w^elō'-yākōl. Obedience does not = uninterrupted access to God.

If anyone had a standing invitation it would be Moses.

Strange as it seemed, the tent designed for meeting was the very place where even Moses found he could not meet with the Lord. The title belied the reality. The Lord had come home, but was not 'at home' to callers. (Motyer)

We live with the impression that God just wants us to obey and when we do we get what we want. So, for our flesh, obedience is a form of divine manipulation (legalism). We fool ourselves into thinking that our perceived obedience now requires God to reward or act on our behalf.

However, we see this heavenly truth played out in Scripture, **God is holy and set apart**. So if I am obedient, He is still holy and set apart. My **sin is the separation** that keeps me from the presence of God.

And yet, the Lord Almighty is constantly and consistently revealing himself to us. We have no presence without invitation. And thanks to be to God that Jesus Christ is our invitation.

NPR's radio show "This American Life" ran an interesting segment about a marketing executive from Colombia named Jose Miguel Sokoloff. The government of Columbia approached Jose with an interesting assignment: run a marketing campaign that will convince leftist guerrilla rebels to demobilize and reenter society. At first Jose's firm ran a series of radio ad campaigns that featured testimonials from former rebels. But actors actually read the testimonials so that plan didn't work.

Then in 2010 Mr. Sokoloff tried a different approach—an ad campaign called "Operation Christmas." At nine strategic places in the jungle where the rebels traversed, they strung hundreds of Christmas lights on 75-foot tall trees. When the rebels walked by a motion sensor set off the lights and a recorded message that said, "If Christmas can come to the jungle, you can come home." That campaign helped demobilize 331 rebels.

The next year they ran a similar campaign titled "Operation Rivers of Light." The firm filled over 7,000 translucent plastic balls with small gifts and heartwarming notes inviting the rebels to come home. As the rebels travelled by river, this time they saw the balls, lit up and floating on the river, coming towards them. They couldn't resist; they opened the balls and received the gifts and read the notes. Beauty was the key to this campaign. Sokoloff said, "When you see all these lights floating down the river, slowly floating down towards you, you can't escape the thought of, this is a beautiful thing ... [you're] drawn to it."

Then in 2012 the ad agency ran "Operation Bethlehem." They shone huge skylights up into the night air and ran the following message: "This Christmas follow the light that will guide you to your family and your freedom."

The Lord invites you into His presence. He calls you out (Egypt) to draw you in. Thank God for His invitation of grace.

The Lord Leads me by His Spirit (40:36-38)

If God calls us to faith, if He is inviting his people into his presence, he now is leading his with the Spirit.

Several times Israel “set out” when the cloud and the presence of God moved. The verb ns’ appears both as a verb “set out” and as a noun “travels.” (NIV).

The presence of the Lord was among the people at “all stages” of the journey, day and night.

Exodus ends and the journey remains. What has changed? Well Exodus begins with a pharaoh that does not know Joseph or the God of Joseph. But what has remained is the tangible presence of the Lord.

God is not a divine Butler – Matt Chandler. Rather the people followed the cloud when God moved. God has not called you to comfort in the camp but to move the camp when he leads.

My Response to the Gospel

The Lord calls us out (of bondage) to call us in (to his presence)

What is your golden calf moment? Are you guilty of being in the presence of the Lord (10 commands) and yet you sin? Know that the Lord stands ready to forgive. Maybe you often pray for deliverance in the morning and sin at evening. **Only Jesus Christ can break these chains**

What is your golden calf? Do you believe that you have committed a sin that can never be forgiven? Abortion, drug use, adultery, divorce, gossip, lust, youth – singles have you gone to far in a relationships physically, sent pictures you had no business sending? Have you spent time at the throne of God. The Lord will meet you at the mercy seat not at a judgment seat if you repent.

The reality is that everyone has chosen the golden calf. We have exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

Gospel: Creator—creations – fall short – our conscious – held accountable – Jesus lived a perfect life – died our death – to offer us eternal life and a restored relationship – died/rose/reigns – **calls and invites you into a new relationship into new life. Will you open the door or shut it?**

We have one who exchanges his life for ours (Exod. 32:30-35)

Ex. 32:31 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Oh, these people have committed a grave sin; they have made a god of gold for themselves. ³² Now if You would only forgive their sin. But if not, please erase me from the book You have written.”

Have you responded? Will you choose a golden calf or the grace of Jesus Christ?



Notes

Ex. 40:33 Next Moses set up the surrounding courtyard for the tabernacle and the altar and hung a screen for the gate of the courtyard. So Moses finished the work.

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The cloud covered the tabernacle as God shows His approval for the completed work (TOTC).

The cloud. It is as though the Lord ‘cant wait’ to come and live with his people (Motyer)

Strange as it seemed, the tent designed for meeting was the very place where even Moses found he could nto meet with the Lord. The title belied the reality. The Lord had come home, but was not ‘at home’ to callers. (Motyer)

Moses’ activity is not responsible in any way for God’s dwelling (Fretheim).

These verses are a final reminder of God’s holiness. Access to God, even by Moses, is not something that can be taken for granted. In a manner of speaking, God is too present in the tabernacle and so Moses cannot enter (NIV).

Ex. 40:36 The Israelites set out whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle throughout all the stages of their journey. ³⁷ If the cloud was not taken up, they did not set out until the day it was taken up. ³⁸ For the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and there was a fire inside the cloud by night, visible to the entire house of Israel throughout all the stages of their journey.

Israel’s God now dwells, with intensity and at close range, in Israel’s very midst (Fretheim).

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Application

Stocks—Summons-Spirit

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He draws you in to faithfulness

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God calls you into His presence to trust Him

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Colombian Rebels

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