

With or Without God

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[0 : 0 0] You may be seated. Please open your Bibles to the book of Exodus.

We're in chapter 33. I realize it's been a few weeks, maybe you've forgotten, but chapter 33 of Exodus. And we'll be reading verses 1 through 11.

It's 33, 1 through 11. The Lord said to Moses, depart. Go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, To your offspring, I will give it.

I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey, but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-neck people.

[1 : 3 2] When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the Lord had said to Moses, say to the people of Israel, You are a stiff-neck people.

If for a single moment I should go among you, I would consume you. So now, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.

Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward. Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp.

And he called it the tent of meeting, and everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent.

When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.

[2 : 4 9] Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Let's pray together. Father, we ask that you would teach us from your word. Lord, that you would work in our hearts, that we would worship you today.

Lord, may we love you in your presence. Grow that love in us through the preaching of your word today, we ask in Christ's name. Amen. So as I said, it's been a few weeks.

And just a reminder, at the end of chapter 32 was the incident of the golden calf. Israel had made a false god to worship.

And God had warned as a result. Now you may remember there was even the fact that the bull was ground down, melted ground down.

[3 : 55] They drank it. They were speared through. There was a plague that came upon them. God's words in Exodus 32, 34. Nevertheless, the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.

And so that's how we had left off. And we're still left wondering, how will God respond? What does it mean that in the day when he visits, he will visit the sin upon them? It may well have been the plague that he sent upon them.

But is there more? Is there still a relationship with God? What hope can there be after they've sinned in such a grievous way against God?

And so how will God respond? Well, in our text today, I think we see a few things. But we're going to see there's some good news. And of course, when there's good news, there's always what?

And there's some bad news. And then we're going to see, in light of the good news and the bad news, how do God's people respond? All right, so let's look first at the good news in verses 1 through at least the first part of verse 3.

[4 : 59] The Lord said to Moses, depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, to your offspring, I will give it.

I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Go up to land flowing with milk and honey.

So the good news, this is good, right? God's telling them to move on now from where they've been, Mount Zion and then Mount Horeb, but move on toward the promised land and that God will give them the promised land.

Think of even the purpose of the Exodus that we've seen. Exodus 3.8, going further back. And I have come down to deliver them out of the land of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Almost the same wording as we see here. This was God's purpose, and the good news is God's purpose stands. He's still proceeding with his purpose, even though they sinned with the golden calf.

[6 : 19] And it's not just that God has told them this, that he's purposed this for them. It goes even further back. We see reference to that in our passage, but this is part of God's faithfulness to his covenant.

Look in verse 1. To the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, To your offspring, I will give it.

So God has sworn. God has made a covenant. You may remember Genesis 12, where God makes covenant with Abraham. Then the Lord appeared to Abraham and said, To your offspring, I will give this land.

So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. You may remember a little later on, Abraham has this dream, and he's cut these pieces.

And he imagines he's going to go through it, but the Lord passes through in the theophany. God has sworn to Abraham that he will keep his covenant, and that he will give this land to his offspring.

[7 : 21] And so even though they've sinned, and we've seen they've broken the Mosaic covenant already, But they've sinned against God. They've broken that covenant, and yet God's remaining faithful to the Abrahamic covenant.

Faithful to his promises, even though God's people have sinned against him. And so the good news is, everything's going to work out. Even though they sinned.

They would still receive and possess the land. They have sinned against God, and yet God's still going to give them a land flowing with milk and honey. He's going to defeat their enemies. They're going to walk into a land that has already been prepared for them.

And God's just going to hand it over to them. And it seems as though, perhaps, their sin with the golden calf has done nothing to change God's plan. God is faithful to his promise.

So that's the good news. And then the bad news. We'll see picking up in verse 3 and going through verse 5. But I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-net people.

[8 : 33] And when the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the Lord had said to Moses, say to the people of Israel, you are a stiff-net people.

If for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you. So, God has progressively grown closer to his people.

He's brought them out of bondage and slavery in Egypt for the purpose that he might be among them. They've already received the plans for the tabernacle that would be built and would rest in the middle of all of Israel.

God's presence would be there. He would be among them. And so God is getting closer and closer to his chosen people. With the express intent that he would dwell among them, that he would make a home with them, that he would tabernacle with them.

He's pledged by covenant that they are his people and that he is their God. And we can even view the golden calf as a sinful or distorted way of seeking to bring God closer to them.

[9 : 54] You may remember the situation. God is up on the mountain meeting with Moses and the people are afraid. If anyone even touches the mountain, they're going to die. They get far away from where he is.

They hear thunder. They see lightning. Smoke consuming the mountain. The earth trembles. And they're scared. They don't want to be that close.

But perhaps even the making of the golden calf is an attempt to be close to God in a way in which God would be approachable to them. This is what the Egyptians did.

They had idols. Why don't we make an idol of, even if it's the true God, we make an idol of this God that we might be closer to him. But Phil Rikens says, this is what happens when we worship other gods.

God's, especially gods that we can see and touch. Rather than bringing us closer to God, our idols take us further away.

[11 : 00] And so, seeking to make a God that we can touch doesn't bring us closer to God at all. It takes us further away. And so, the bad news is, God will not go with them.

He's been drawing closer to them. And again, they may have even attempted to be close to him in wrong ways. But now he's saying, he will not go among them. He will not go with them. Verse 3, even we see, he says, but I will not go up among you.

That up among you, or with you, is literally in your midst. Which, again, is the point of the Exodus. The point was that God would be in their midst.

That he would dwell among them. And now he's saying, I will not go up in your midst. I will not be there with you. This is what God had purposed.

I think this is also what they've longed for. They've wanted to be in God's presence and to worship him. But God will not go with them now. In fact, we see several instances of distancing language.

- [12 : 11] The way God speaks. Remember, we've seen some of this as well. The people of Israel, when they said, that Moses, whom you sent to us. And we've seen God as well respond and say to Moses, your people, instead of God's people.

And so, again, here in this passage, we see some distancing language. Look at verse 1. The Lord said to Moses, depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt.

So, the people is a form of distancing. He doesn't say, my people. He says, the people. So, God is removing himself from them.

They were his people. Now, they're just the people. And he says to Moses, whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt. Again, he's giving them over to Moses.

God's the one who brought them out of Egypt. There were miracles, pleads that struck the people. And now, God's saying, you can have them. Look at verse 2.

- [13 : 27] I will send an angel before you. Now, if you've been following in our series, maybe you catch that already. But do you notice the distancing language?

How have they been led so far? Well, when we've seen references to an angel, it was, and the angel of the Lord led them. And the angel of the Lord, in all likelihood, is a pre-incarnation of Christ.

It's some form of a theophany of God. It's God's presence manifested to them. There are instances in which people bow to the angel of the Lord, and they're not rebuked. Whereas they are every other time with other angels.

And so, no longer is it the angel of the Lord that will lead them, but I'm going to send you an angel, some other angel. But not me, not my spirit, not a part of the Trinity there with you.

At other times, God has even led them with his Shekinah glory. The pillar of fire and the pillar of smoke has led them. Now there's no mention of that, even though later on he does meet with Moses in that way.

- [14 : 32] But where does he meet with Moses? We'll talk more about this, but outside the camp. And so, an angel rather than the angel of the Lord now will lead them.

So God's distancing himself from them. And as I've just mentioned, the tent of meeting is moved outside the camp. Now this is a little bit confusing because they have been given instructions for making a tent of meeting that is the inner tabernacle.

The holy place and the holy of holies, the most holy place, would encompass what would later be called the meeting place. But that has not yet been built. And yet there's a tent in which God would meet with Moses.

But for God to meet with Moses now, that tent has to be moved outside the camp. If God were to come down and meet with Moses at the tent of meeting inside the camp, the implication is the people would be wiped out in their sin.

And so, Moses moves the tent outside the camp. God will still meet with Moses, but not anywhere close to the rest of the people. And in many ways, this is for their own protection.

- [15 : 50] It's mentioned twice in this passage that they are a stiff net and rebellious people. Stiff net, I mean, maybe, I think we probably have some concept of what that means.

It's an agrarian term. You think of plowing a field, and you have, maybe it's a pair of Autzen. If they're stiff net, they will not turn the way you want them to turn. They go whichever way they want to go.

You can't steer them. Maybe you can even imagine if your car, let's hope this never happens, but you're driving your car, and maybe the steering goes out, and you try to turn it, it won't go where you want it to go.

That's not a good thing, is it? If we said a stiff steering car, maybe we have an idea of what's being communicated, but they're stubborn. They won't go the way God wants them to go.

They're going to do their own thing. They want to be their own God, their own master. They want to call the shots. And God is holy. And so the natural response, the only response possible for a holy God in the presence of a stubborn and rebellious people is them being consumed.

[17:00] Them being wiped out that they cannot stand in his presence. So God is really being merciful to them. It's for their own protection that he won't go among them.

Because if he did, there could be no other result than they be wiped out, that they be killed in God's righteous judgment. It's interesting.

At 751, we see the same thing being repeated of the Jewish people shortly after Jesus' ascension. You stiff-knit people, uncircumcised in heart and ears.

You always resist the Holy Spirit as your fathers did, so do you. And so your fathers being referred to is this.

Them in the book of Exodus, as they're leaving out, their stiff-knit. And so the same language is used in Acts 7, but notice also it says you resist the Holy Spirit. And so we get there a better sense of that stiff-knit.

[18:01] It's the Holy Spirit that's seeking to lead them. And they're saying, nope, I want to go my way. Think also what this means. If God will not go among them, does that mean no tabernacle?

I mean, I think that's the obvious conclusion. God cannot go among them, so what point is there making a tabernacle for God to dwell among them, since God will not dwell among them? Or a place to meet with God, among God's people, a Holy of Holies, if God's never going to show up there?

Remember the words in Exodus 25, verse 8. And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst.

The purpose of the tabernacle was that God would dwell among his people. And God's saying, now that's not going to happen. And so that means all the plans for the tabernacle, maybe you're going to tell me we could have skipped those seven chapters we spent on the tabernacle, that year maybe we spent going through the tabernacle.

We don't need those instructions anymore because God's not going to be with them. As I've just demonstrated, they've had, just received, detailed instructions about the tabernacle.

[19:19] And in terms of our reading, no sooner had they received instructions of the tabernacle that they've already messed it up before the building even began. And so in some way, this sin of the golden calf has undone all that we've seen so far in the Exodus.

The point was that God would dwell among them, the tabernacle, and now that's not going to happen. And so what are we left with? Well, God's still going to keep his promise to Abraham. He's going to give them a land.

But what is the land apart from the presence of God? God's going to give them possessions without his presence. The whole point of the book of Exodus and all that we've seen so far is for God's presence to be among them, for relationship, for communion, for worship of God.

And if that can't happen, what's the point? What good is the land apart from God? And so just imagine, God is offering to bless them apart from any relationship with them.

And we're going to look at a second at the response. But I think, maybe if we had to summarize our culture today in America, is this not exactly what we want?

[20 : 39] I think as a country, maybe most of the individuals in our country, we want the blessing without the relationship.

We don't want to have a relationship with God. We just want what he'll give us. And I think that's true culturally in the sense of we become obsessed with what we can consume.

We're a consumer culture. I want more, more, more. And let me tell you, it was eye-opening again to be back in Africa and see some of those neighborhoods and think what we take for granted.

But we want more. I think even within the church, there are ways in which we want the blessings that God gives. God is just something else we add on top of the American dream.

It's another additional, something else to consume without having the relationship. And how much more so we've seen our culture, now that we have experienced blessing, there's less and less dependence upon God, less desire to want to have a relationship with God.

[21 : 48] Think of Israel, even the cycles that they would go through. Remember what would happen. God would bless them. And after a while of being blessed by God, what would happen?

They'd forget about God. And they'd worship other gods. And so God would curse them. And then they would repent. They'd draw close to God. God would bless them again. And what would happen? They'd turn away from Him again.

And I think as a culture, is that not where we are? The time of turning away? Where we still desire what God will give us, but just, we don't want to have the relationship. So how do they respond?

And maybe even now is a good time to be thinking, how would you respond to that? What if God told you He's going to bless you materially way beyond your imagination?

He's going to give you, you're going to win the lottery. Well, maybe you don't play that. But anyway, you're going to win it. Somehow you're going to get this huge amount of money. money. And so that money and possessions never become something that you have to be worried about in the sense of obtaining.

[23 : 05] But, no relationship with Him. Or maybe even in terms of Christians, we tend to think some people look at salvation in terms of, I've heard it called fire insurance.

Just some guarantee that I won't get hell. I want to live however I want to live now, just as long as I don't go to hell. I don't want relationship with God. I just don't want the bad stuff.

And so, how would you respond? And then even asking, how do they respond? So let's look at their response. Verse 4.

When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned and no one put on His ornaments. Well, I'm struck that they consider this a disastrous word.

I think they're viewing it properly. They realize that everything's ruined now. This is a disaster. Even if God gives us the land, if He won't be there with us, what's the point?

[24 : 11] What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world yet forfeits his soul? What good is it? This is a disaster.

This is horrible. And so we see that they mourned. Their sadness. I think their sadness and mourning for their sin as well as the consequences of their sin.

The loss of relationship. The absence of God's presence. It was the relationship to God that ultimately mattered, not the stuff. The land is figurative.

The land is meant to point them to a greater reality of heaven and an eternal reality. But that's not ultimately where it's at. It was ultimately about the relationship and now they've lost it.

And so we read in verse 4 that they put, no one put on his ornaments. And we have an explanation in verse 5. For the Lord had said to Moses, Say to the people of Israel, You are a stiff-knit people.

[25 : 15] If for a single moment I should go among you, I would consume you. So now, take off your ornaments that I may know what to do with you. Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mount Horeb onward.

So we see in verse 5 that this is a response to what God had commanded. He told them to take off their ornaments. And I would even argue there's a bit of hope here.

Look at the end of this. Take off your ornaments that I may know what to do with you. As you would hear that, what would you think? God has already said if I come among you, you'll be consumed.

But do this so that I can know what to do with you. What is there left to do with me at this point other than consume me? And so, the one glimpse of hope we have in this passage is shed the ornaments and we'll see what happens.

Show repentance, contrition, and maybe, maybe there's something else that would come. And the ornaments here, I know some of you not all of you, some of you with your Christmas trees, ornaments, decorations there.

[26 : 31] I'm thankful for those who were here yesterday decorating the church. That's not the ornaments we're talking about. I know my wife and I have seen for the beard they had these, you know, those little ornaments you'd hang in your beard like in the Christmas tree.

Okay, that's not what we're talking about either. This is literally the jewelry or the fine things that they might put on. flashy stuff that they might wear.

Exodus 35, 22. So they came, both men and women, all who were of a willing heart, brought brooches and earrings and sydney rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the Lord.

And so that gives us some example of what they possessed. Brooches, brooches, brooches, I don't wear those, so okay. Earrings, sydney rings, armlets, and all sorts of objects of gold.

And so, when it says ornaments, this is what it's speaking of. They had these things. And then not wearing them is symbolic of their mourning and their repentance.

[27 : 42] things are not happy right now. I don't feel up to wearing all my fancy stuff.

It would be inappropriate in light of what's happened with God. I shouldn't flaunt this. I shouldn't be decorative, I guess, when the relationship is broken down.

I mentioned announcements that I've been sick this week and I didn't feel like wearing a tie, so forgive me. But I think how much more so they are before God and the relationship is broken down and how can I get dressed up when God's mad at me.

Maybe this is even equivalent to the idea of putting a sackcloth and ashes before God. verse 6.

Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves. That word stripped themselves or that phrase there stripped themselves is related to the same word that we saw earlier in Exodus that was translated as plunder.

[28 : 54] So they plundered the Egyptians to gain their ornaments. They stripped the Egyptians of their ornaments and now they are plundering themselves.

They're stripping themselves. They now have become in the place of the Egyptians. When God judged them he plundered them. Now God is plundering the Israelites by the Israelites.

They're self-plundering. there's also the fact that their ornaments their jewelry was used in making the golden calf. Now it talked about all of Israel maybe obviously some of them did not give all their gold to them but their gold ornaments were given to the making of the golden calf.

And there may have even been this connection between the ornaments and idolatry. And so they're giving it up as one way of symbolically saying we're having nothing to do with idolatry.

It was our ornaments that made the golden calf and now we won't even wear them. I think in Matthew 6 21 for where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

[30 : 09] And they're saying I have no treasure other than God. And we're told in verse 6 that from Mount Horeb onward they did not wear ornaments. Now we don't know exactly when this might have ended but it seems like at the very least for the 40 years in the wilderness they're not going to be wearing these anymore.

They have them we saw in chapter 35 they give them later on for other purposes but they do not wear them anymore. There's this symbol of mourning and repentance.

We also see a response of worship in verse 10 and when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent all the people would rise up early and worship each at his tent door.

So they could not approach God but when they saw God's presence there outside the camp they would look in that direction they would bow down and they would worship God where they were as they could.

They're bowing in reference to their covenant king. There's a desire to meet with God but they are not able to go there and meet with him outside the camp. We see something similar with Joshua.

[31 : 25] It says that Joshua in verse 11 it says Joshua would not depart from the tent. Now remember where were Moses and Joshua when the golden calf was being made?

You may remember Joshua went with Moses up the mountain and stopped short of where Moses went all the way up. Joshua was the next closest person to the presence of God on the mountain.

Both of them were up on the mountain when the golden calf was made so neither one of them had participated in the sin of the golden calf. They were able to be there at this meeting place with God.

It seems to me obvious that Joshua valued the presence of God. Moses would go and meet God face to face but Joshua the son of none a young man would not depart from the tent.

He wouldn't leave it. Some have wondered maybe even if he waited there all the time for when God would descend so he could go get Moses and say come meet with him. But either way he stayed close to where God was.

[32 : 33] Again there's this symbolism of God's drawn away from his people so they're far off and here we have Joshua who goes outside the camp that he might be in God's presence away from the sinful people as close to God as he can get.

Another idea is that people said perhaps he even stayed there to guard the tent so that none of the people would profane the tent in attempting to enter it they messed everything up so far we have a tent meeting God's still meeting with us but it's outside the camp what would happen now if they messed that up so maybe not only a desire to stay close to God but a desire to uphold the honor and glory and worship of God rightly and then Moses we see in verse 11 thus the Lord used to speak to Moses God would speak to Moses and we're given this explanation of face to face now hopefully we understand this is an anthropomorphism God the spirit God the father does not have a face but Moses is communing with God in a way closer than any other man has almost like you could think of a friend that you would stand there and talk to later on we actually see that

Moses is not allowed to see a manifestation of the face of God lest God's holiness consume Moses so it's not literally a face to face but he is closer than any man has been entering into the presence of God and having fellowship and communion with God and in that way Moses serves as a mediator for the people we've seen this all throughout he's a mediator for the people he's standing on behalf of the people meeting with God because God's people cannot approach him because they would be consumed and so what they need is a mediator who can enter into the presence of God much like we understand Christ to be our mediator that enters into the presence of God on our behalf so even though this meeting is occurring outside the camp they do have a mediator and they are still having the ability to meet with God though remotely distanced and through the person of a mediator in

Moses so in light of all this how does this apply to us what might we say in application well I think are there ways in which we are a lot like the Israelites in our pursuit of other gods we leave no room for the right and true worship of God remember we read earlier where your treasure is there your heart will be also what is it that we treasure are there things that we treasure more than God and I mean I can almost hear your thoughts no of course not right but if we really take our time and think what would I be okay having even if it meant even if I said what about less communion with God because I think we make that sacrifice a lot don't we we know that we could grow closer to God in our relationship but what would it mean what would it mean a time commitment more meditation the word more prayer and so what are the things that we choose instead of closer communion with God secondly

I want us to understand there's no greater chastisement than separation from God what he threatens them with what he says it it's disastrous one commentator Tim Chester he says this he says you want God to bless you to forgive you to rescue you from hell to protect you to provide a spouse or a job or good health but you don't really want God himself you don't want the demands his presence makes you don't want to make the changes his presence demands you don't want holiness and I think that's true of many of us understand this that today because of the work of Jesus Christ we have immediate access to God we I started to say we as it were could go into the tent of meeting but there's a sense in which we have become the tent of meeting his Holy Spirit indwells us we meet with God in spirit wherever we are not in some central location his spirit dwells within us he's made his home already with us we sang earlier

[37 : 43] O come O come Emmanuel God with us he is tabernacled among us so that one day we may be at home with him that we might dwell with him that we might be in his presence and prayer really is our speaking to God and by God's grace sometimes it ought to be like face to face with God we can speak to him we can approach his throne as his children whom he loves we have communion with the holy God even though we are sinners because those of you who have trust in Jesus Christ are covered by the blood of Christ and approach in the righteousness of Christ his own son now as I say that I know that there are times in which we sin and not times there's often that we sin and sometimes that we doubt that God is with us or close to us does God still love us has my sin somehow cause God like in this instance to withdraw from me and I want to encourage you that God's word tells us that our relationship with God is not based on our behavior our sin if it were none of us would have relationship with God would we what is our relationship based on it's based on our union with

Jesus Christ that we are in Christ and so has God stopped loving you when you sin no I think that's even true here God's giving them a second chance for repentance but God hasn't stopped loving us because he will only love us as long as he loves his son right and that relationship hasn't changed there's nothing that I I'm not powerful enough in my sin to somehow disrupt God's love for his own son and so God loves us with that very same love I think of Matthew 28 20 Jesus says to the disciples and behold I'm with you always to the end of the age there's nothing they were going to do that was going to end that relationship I would even say look at verse 11 thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend now without watering this all down I want you to understand that as Christians God is our friend let me give you two examples of this

John 15 verses 13 through 15 greater love has no man than this that someone laid down his life for his friends Jesus speaking says you are my friends if you do what I command you no longer I call you servants for the servant does not know what the master is doing but friends for all that I have heard from my father I have made known to you and then again in Ephesians 3 16 through 17 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his spirit in your innermost being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith so Christ dwells in our hearts and the same Christ has called his disciples his friends no longer simply servants as we look at this passage I think there's not one of us that we could say that could deny that

God desires a deeper relationship with us God wants to be in their presence he wants to dwell among them they're the ones who have rejected him and how do we do that today how do we draw close to God how do we enter into his presence prayer we speak to God in his presence his word God speaks to us by the spirit through his word and so God speaks to us when we speak to him I think even in terms of our corporate and private times of worship we gather together to worship God and the understanding presented to us in the New Testament is that the church is as it were raised up into the very heavenlies in the presence of God in worship we want to think sometimes of God descending down to the church it's not that way we are lifted up into his presence in worship but God desires a deeper relationship with him and so we ought to consider what are our golden cast what are those things that are hindering a deeper relationship with

God and then secondly we have the but our last point is that there's an eternal reality that we have at stake what we see represented here speaking to us of eternal realities even if we think of redemptive history I think we've seen this already in the exodus but because of the fall we have lost relationship with God and God is working now through the exodus the tabernacle to restore relationship with his people he's going to bring them into a land they're going to have a permanent temple where God will dwell and he will be with them in their very presence but even that pales in comparison to the fact that one day those who love God will enter into his presence for eternity we will dwell with God forever and so that really is our hope that's what we long for that that would be true of us and so listen to 1 Corinthians 13 12 for now we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face now

[43 : 43] I know in part then I shall know fully even as I have been fully known some of you may have followed this or been aware of this but while I was in Zambia Conrad and Bayway son passed away Votie Bauckham was one of the ones who spoke at the funeral and he said it's always amazed me how people spend their lives not having time for God being too busy for him but hoping to go to heaven for all eternity and be with newflash when you die you will continue your same relationship with God I thought that was powerful if we were to continue for all eternity our current relationship with God what would that look like and why should we imagine that our hope really is relationship with God if we are not pursuing that now

I may have mentioned the past but I saw one time this sign at a man's house and it said if my dogs are not in heaven then I don't want to be there and surely that was surely somewhat in humor but as I thought about that I thought what are those conditions that we might put upon heaven or God that when we get to heaven what we really want is more time with adults I don't know not for me since I have adults maybe even more time with our spouse or family and yet we know that in heaven we're not given in marriage and why is that marriage marriage is only a shadow of our relationship with Christ and so what is it that we want in heaven maybe

I'm probably speaking for many of you here but maybe you think in heaven I'll have a glorified body and be as good at football or soccer as messi maybe that's not what some of you are dreaming of but there may be something else that you have in your mind that you dream of and imagine the only desire that should consume us about eternity in heaven is that we will have relationship with God unhindered perfect communion with God that's what we desire and we've seen here in essence how in their sin they have messed up that relationship that communion with God I want to encourage you one is to pursue that relationship build that communion now as preparation for eternity as a foretaste of that glory but secondly that we would put to death whatever sin or idols that compete with relationship with God those things that we would rather do than spend time with

God let's pray together dear dear heavenly father we thank you that you have initiated relationship with us lord we know that we were not deserving of it lord that we have sinned in no less grievous and disastrous ways than the Israelites and yet lord you and your mercy have sent Christ to pay the price for our sins and to impute to us his righteousness lord we pray for all who are in this room that they would put their trust and hope in Christ that they would know that forgiveness of sin that they would know that relationship lord we thank you that you have sent your spirit to indwell us that we might have communion with you in a way deeper than has ever been lord even greater than Moses who saw your presence face to face lord we pray that there would come a day when in glorified bodies we will see you in your presence that we would be with you as a friend lord we know that the friendship is true now but we long for the consummation of that the reality to be fully experienced lord help us to have relationship with you lord that would be a reflection of what we will experience in heaven lord don't allow us to deceive ourselves and think that we can have communion and fellowship with the world now and with you later and so we get the best that

America has to offer and that you have to offer lord what will it profit us if we gain the whole world and forfeit our soul so lord we pray that we would store up for ourselves treasures in heaven that we would set our sights on heaven and not on the things of this world we pray this in christ name amen